

"COMPLAINT" CALLS

Effective immediately, all support staff shall follow the following policy for "complaint" calls and or walk-ins.

Part 1203 of Title 19 of the Official Compilation of Code, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York requires that all municipalities develop procedures for complaints. This document is created to establish guidelines that will allow complaint-driven inspections to be performed uniformly.

A) Exterior only complaints.

Complaints that are received where the only violation(s) noted are on the exterior of the property and do not involve refuse in the right of way, toters, or animal control-related issues shall be handled as listed below. **(Note: For standalone grass or trash on the private property complaints where there is no existing case covering that issue, an email will be sent to the area CEO and copying in their supervisor.)**

1. Suppose there is no currently open case on the property in question. In that case, the support staff person taking the call will initially assess as to whether or not the Building Owner Registry information has been supplied for the subject property then generate a case and assign it to the area CEO using case type "3" for complaint case source "1" for Neighbor. If the Building Owner Registry information has not been supplied, the support staff will indicate that in the case details so that the Inspector can follow up. The relative Inspector will then conduct an inspection following the inspection permission procedures outlined in document #28 and, when necessary, add PC027 if the Building Owner Registry information is needed. **(Note: If the property in question has an existing case, the case will be brought down to the inspectors pen-tablet and the complaint will be added to the case event notes, and the Inspector who is managing the current case will be sent an email advising them of the new complaint)**
2. If the Inspector is unable to visualize the violation(s) in question, he/she will use all methods available to contact the complainant to identify the caller's concern. If the complainant is anonymous or if they cannot be contacted, the case can be closed after properly documenting all attempts that were made.
3. Once the violation(s) in question have been identified, if they are health and safety-related and or causing a blighting effect for the surrounding neighborhood, a notice and order shall be issued. When contact information is available, the Inspector will inform the complainant of the actions taken. If the complainant expresses concern over the case's disposition, they will be offered an opportunity to speak to the Inspector's immediate supervisor.

B) Interior complaints.

Complaints that are received where the violation(s) noted are in the interior of the structure shall be handled as follows:

1. The support staff person taking the call or handling the walk-in shall ask the complainant if he/she is a legal occupant of the property in question and inquire as to what their concern is and if they have contacted the landlord. If the complainant indicates he/she has not contacted the owner, the support staff will advise them to do so. If the complainant expresses concern for a suspected Lead problem, the need for a wipe test, or an interior painting deficiency, the following action shall be taken: if there is an existing case opened on the property, the complainant information shall be entered into the case event notes, and an inspection shall be, per Document 35,

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1. scheduled for the Inspector who is currently managing the open case; if the property does not have an existing case, a case should be generated for the area CEO using case type "3" for complaint and case source "9" for "Lead Concern" and an inspection shall be scheduled. In either situation, the support staff will initially assess as to whether or not the Building Owner Registry information has been supplied for the subject property, and where it has not been provided, the support staff will indicate that in the case details so that the Inspector can follow up. For all other concerns, the following shall apply.
2. If the complainant indicates he/she has been unsuccessful in contacting the landlord or the landlord has been unresponsive, the support staff person shall attempt to contact the owner. The complainant information shall be entered into the case event notes, and an inspection shall be scheduled for the Inspector who is currently managing the open case; if the property does not have an existing case, a case should be generated for the area CEO using case type "3" for complaint case source "T" for tenant.
3. Support staff shall make every effort to resolve the problem by phone on the day of the complaint. Suppose the landlord is contacted and they are responsive to the tenant's concern. In that case, the support staff person who handled the call will relay that information to the complainant and document the conversation with the owner in the open case. The complainant will be advised to call back if the owner fails to meet those expectations. The standalone complaint case shall then be administratively closed.

*****Note:** If the complainant does not have a means of being contacted by phone, an appointment shall be scheduled upon the initial contact, according to the instruction in item #1 above. In this situation, when possible, the owner must still be informed of the concerns and that an appointment has been scheduled.

4. If support staff cannot resolve the problem that day by phone, the complainant will be contacted, and an appointment will be scheduled, according to the instructions in item #1 above.
5. Any time an appointment is scheduled for the same day, in addition to bringing the case down and placing the relative notes in the case events, the support staff handling the call will also contact the Inspector by phone to advise them of the appointment.
6. Upon inspecting the property, the Inspector will inspect with focused attention on the area(s) of concern, except in situations where there are other obvious hazardous situations, including deteriorated paint. If the violation(s) in question presents a threat to the occupant's health and safety or are of a blighting nature, a notice and order will be issued. When applicable, PC027 will be added to the case if the Building Owner Registry information is needed. If the violations do not fall into one of these categories, the Inspector will notify the complainant and the owner, and the case will be closed as too minor to pursue. If the complainant continues to express concern over the violations, they will be offered an opportunity to speak to the Inspector's immediate supervisor.

*****Note:** Concerning the areas designated by the Lead Ordinance as "High Risk," the entire unit will be inspected for deteriorated paint, and any necessary wipe test will be scheduled.