



CORRESPONDENCE POLICY (BOARD)

Applicability: All CVRD

Effective Date: June 11, 2025

PURPOSE:

To ensure correspondence received at the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) addressed to the Board, or a Committee, is acknowledged and distributed in a consistent and timely manner and that the appropriate records are managed in accordance with the CVRD's Records Management Program.

BACKGROUND/SCOPE:

This policy is applicable to all CVRD staff, and those that wish to submit correspondence to the Board or a Committee. This policy is established and enforced in accordance with the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and respective CVRD policies and bylaws.

DEFINITIONS:

Committee(s)	means Select or Standing Committee, who have been appointed by the Chair and Board (Committee of the Whole, Governance Committee, Accessibility Committee, Electoral Area Services Committee).
Author	means any person writing correspondence to the Regional District.
Board Information Package	is a collection of documents or document containing accepted Correspondence that is packaged by Legislative Services Division staff, and distributed via electronic to the Board members on Fridays (except statutory holidays).
Confidential Correspondence	means correspondence that should not be publicly released, as determined by the Corporate Officer based on legislative requirements and other bylaws and policies of the Regional District.
Corporate Officer	means the municipal officer position assigned the responsibility of corporate administration which includes the powers, duties and functions defined in the <i>Community Charter, Sec. 148</i> .
Correspondence	means written communication addressed to the Regional District's Board, or Committees.
Meeting	means a regularly scheduled Board or Committee meeting.

Meeting agenda	means a structured outline to guide Regular Board or Committee meetings.
Petition	A formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority in respect of a particular cause.
Regional District	means the “Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)”.

POLICY:

1. Acceptable correspondence:
 - a. Correspondence may be delivered via the following methods:
 - i. Webforms on the CVRD website;
 - ii. Electronic mail (email);
 - iii. Post Mail/Courier;
 - iv. In person, at the CVRD located at 175 Ingram Street, Duncan.
 - b. Submissions addressed to the Regional District Board, or a Committee should contain:
 - i. The full name of the Author;
 - ii. The civic address of the Author; and
 - iii. Contact information for the Author (personal information may be redacted according to legislation).
2. Submissions *may* not be accepted if they contain:
 - i. No Author or contact information;
 - ii. Video or audio files, and other formats that CVRD does not have the capacity to open;
 - iii. External website URLs, redirects or other electronic codes or links, due to security risk to the CVRD;
 - iv. Vulgar, derogatory, or defamatory language;
 - v. Confidential or personal information of third parties; or
 - vi. Content that violates the Regional District Respectful Workplace policy.
3. Board Information Package
 - a. The Board Information Package is a record of documents containing information that may not regularly be included on a Board Agenda.
 - b. Samples of items in the Board Information package can include press releases from CVRD or other organizations, upcoming events, invitations, or a staff response to citizen who have addressed Correspondence to the Board, of an operational matter.

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- c. Directors who wish to discuss an item from the Board Information Package at an associated meeting may advise the Corporate Officer or designate, to ensure it is placed on the next agenda in the “Correspondence” section.

4. Record of Hard Copy Submissions

Submissions via Canada Post, courier, hand delivered (i.e.: hard copy) to CVRD Reception at 175 Ingram will be:

- a. Received, time/date stamped, and recorded in the correspondence tracking sheet; and
- b. CVRD Reception will scan and distribute (hard copy and electronic) to the Legislative Services Dept. for routing.

5. Submission Deadline and Timelines

- a. Committee agenda: correspondence that pertains to an agenda item must be received by Legislative Services no later than noon (12:00 p.m.) the preceding day of the Committee meeting. Some items on the agenda may be subject to the *Local Government Act* Sec. 464 which prohibits public input, verbal or written.
- b. For Board agenda: correspondence that pertains to a Board Agenda item must be received by Corporate Officer no later than 48 hours prior to the Board meeting. Some items on the agenda may be subject to the *Local Government Act* Sec. 464 which prohibits public input, verbal or written.
- c. Addressed to the Board or Committee: Any correspondence sent to the Board will be acknowledged by the staff member who receives it, with an aim to provide acknowledgment within 48 hours, excluding weekends and statutory holidays. If the correspondence sent to the Board or Committee has a question of an operational matter, acknowledgement may include to where the correspondence is being redirected for the subject matter staff person to respond. Upon a response from a subject matter staff person, the Author’s original correspondence and staff response will be included in the Board Information package, for information.
- d. Petitions, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority in respect of a particular cause, may be submitted to the Corporate Officer, and circulated to the Board by way of the Board Information Package, for information. If the submission has a lead person with contact information, they may be acknowledged.

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6. General routing of Board Correspondence

Received correspondence addressed to Board			
Acknowledgement from staff recipient and redirected to Legislative Services			
Matters that require <u>action</u> from the Board or by way of resolution to a Committee. Pertaining to an item on the next Board agenda.	Matters that require additional information or a response from staff subject matter expert.	Matters that relate to the purpose and scope of a Committee as defined in the Terms of Reference are referred to that Committee.	Matters for general information.
Correspondence Section	Response from Subject Matter Expert Include original correspondence and response to Leg. Services	Referred to Committee	For Information
On Agenda (Board then Committee)	Board Information Package		

7. Response and Communication

- a. If an Author submits correspondence to one or more Directors with a request or question necessitating a response from a staff subject matter expert, and it is relevant to the full Board, the correspondence should be forwarded to Legislative Services (legislativeservices@cvrd.bc.ca) to ensure acknowledgement, and appropriate routing. Upon the subject matter expert response, Legislative Services and the original Director should be copied (cc). Legislative Services will include original Author correspondence and staff subject matter response in the Board Information Package to ensure all Directors are apprised alike.
- b. If an Author submits correspondence to one or more Directors related to their electoral area(s) with a request or question necessitating a response from a staff subject matter expert, the Director(s) will be copied (cc) on the staff response.
- c. If an Author submits correspondence addressed to the Board expressing themselves, with no question(s) or reference to an upcoming agenda item, it will be included in the Board Information Package and an acknowledgement from receiver will be sent.
- d. Directors who receive Correspondence from the public of an operational matter, or that may pertain to a statutory prohibition *should* forward it to the Legislative Services Department (legislativeservices@cvrd.bc.ca) to ensure it is acknowledged and directed accordingly for a response, based on the classification of the correspondence.

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- e. If the Correspondence, originally addressed to the Board, requires a staff response, it will be withheld from the Board Information Package until the Response is ready. Staff will provide a response to the Author within 30 days, depending on the nature, scope and content of the submission. If additional time is required, staff will notify both the Author and Legislative Services. All staff responses must be clear, concise, and respective of the correspondent's inquiries or concerns. Staff should also copy (cc) Legislative Services (legislativeservices@cvrld.bc.ca) in the response, to ensure that both the Author's submission and staff response are included in the Board Information Package.

8. Exemptions

For clarity purposes, submission exemptions to the Policy *may* include:

- a. Public Notice responses (e.g. Public Hearings or other statutory notices inviting the public to provide input or submit feedback). Deadlines, requirements, and details for submissions for public notices are indicated on the specified notice.
- b. Correspondence related to a public hearing for an official community plan, zoning, or land use bylaws may or may not be forwarded to Board or for inclusion in the public hearing, in accordance with the *Local Government Act*, Section 464. Development Services staff (ds@cvrld.bc.ca) will notify the Author if any correspondence is prohibited.

Once a Public Hearing has adjourned, the Board is **not** permitted to receive any new correspondence. Any received correspondence will be forwarded to the Planning Department (ds@cvrld.bc.ca) for acknowledgment and notification of the prohibition.

- c. Physical mail that is addressed to an individual Board Director will be opened, recorded, and forwarded, to the Executive Office at CVRD, 175 Ingram Street. Staff will notify the Director of any mail received (if necessary).
- d. Confidential: if the envelope/package is marked *Personal and Confidential*, and addressed accordingly, it will be forwarded to the recipient, unopened. It will not be included on a public agenda or in a Board Information Package. If necessary, it may be provided to the Board through the closed portion of the Board Agenda (per *Community Charter* Sec. 90) or provided to the appropriate authority or staff member.

9. Public Record

- a. Correspondence submissions that are placed on a Board or Committee agenda become part of the permanent public record for the Regional District. Personal information about the Author may be redacted accordingly per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- b. Correspondence that is submitted that contains personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Personal

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information, other than first name, street name or local area, will be withheld (redacted) from public disclosure. The use, storage and retention of personal information in the Board Information Package is under the authority of the Corporate Officer and in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

- c. All Correspondence and responses shall be filed and managed as corporate records as per the CVRD's current Records Classification and Retention Schedule. Access to these records may require a formal request under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

10. Accessibility

Accommodation for accessibility purposes in relation to this Policy are available to individuals by contacting the Legislative Services Department email: legislativeservices@cvrd.bc.ca or phone 250-746-2500.

Approved by: CVRD Board Approval date: June 11, 2025 Amended:
