

Contra Costa Commission for Women and Girls

Proposed Complaint Intake and Administrative Handling Combined Procedure, Screening Checklist, and Outcome Guide

Overview

This packet is designed to be adopted and used together so the Commission has:

- One clear administrative process
- One structured screening tool
- One step-by-step guide for Screening Officer decisions

This ensures consistency and prevents the Commission from drifting into investigative or adjudicative roles.

SECTION I. Complaint Intake and Administrative Handling Procedure

A. Purpose

To establish a clear, consistent, and non-adjudicative process for receiving, screening, and administratively handling complaints related to Commission operations or conduct.

The Commission is an advisory body and does not investigate, determine facts, or assign fault.

For purposes of this procedure:

- **Administrative handling** means intake, scope screening, threshold review, and routing
- **Adjudicative activity** includes fact-finding, credibility determinations, or conclusions of wrongdoing and is expressly excluded

B. Submission and Routing of Complaints

Complaints shall be submitted in writing and routed as follows:

- **Standard routing:** to the Chair and Staff Liaison
- **If the Chair is the subject:** to the Vice Chair and Staff Liaison
- **If the Staff Liaison is the subject:** to the Chair and the Complainant's District Supervisor (*for administrative intake purposes only*)
- **If both the Chair and Staff Liaison are subjects:** to the Vice Chair and the Complainant's District Supervisor (*for administrative intake purposes only*)

This routing ensures administrative intake while avoiding conflicts of interest and maintaining neutrality.

C. Referral Authority

Complaints that meet threshold may be referred to:

- The **Complainant's District Supervisor's Office**
- The **Respondent's District Supervisor's Office**
- **Other appropriate County administrative authority**, as determined by the Chair in consultation with the Staff Liaison

D. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Commission meetings, operations, and procedures
- Actions taken in an official Commission role
- Issues tied to bylaws, attendance, committees, or meeting conduct

This procedure does **not** apply to:

- Policy disagreements
- Differences in viewpoint or vote
- Personal disputes unrelated to Commission duties
- Matters outside Commission jurisdiction

E. Screening Officer Role

The Vice Chair serves as Screening Officer unless unavailable or conflicted.

The Screening Officer:

- Conducts **administrative threshold review only**
- Determines scope, authority, and threshold
- Routes the complaint appropriately

The Screening Officer does **not**:

- Investigate
- Interview witnesses
- Compare competing accounts
- Determine credibility
- Make findings of wrongdoing

Screening is a **routing function**, not a decision.

F. Screening Process (Step-by-Step)

1. Intake review
2. Scope determination
3. Authority determination
4. Threshold determination
5. Select one outcome only

G. Notice and Response

If threshold is met:

- Provide complaint and materials to subject
- Allow 14-day response period
- Make no conclusions at this stage

H. Commission Consideration

If brought forward:

- Item appears on a regular meeting agenda
- Commission may take administrative action only

The Commission does **not**:

- Investigate
- Adjudicate
- Determine credibility
- Resolve disputed facts

I. Permissible Actions

The Commission may:

- Receive and file
- Take no action
- Clarify policy and expectations
- Refer the matter

All actions must occur in a noticed meeting.

J. Committees

No committee may:

- Screen complaints
- Deliberate outside meetings
- Make recommendations outside public session

K. Documentation

- All complaints and outcomes are logged by screening officer
- Screening determinations are administrative only

L. Governance Alignment

This procedure operates within bylaws and does not amend them.

SECTION II. Screening Checklist and Decision Questions

A. Before Screening Begins

- Am I the correct Screening Officer?
- Am I conflicted?
- If yes → transfer immediately to Chair

B. Intake Questions

- Is the complaint written?
- Is it understandable?
- Are parties identified?
- Is conduct described?
- Is timeframe provided?

👉 If NO → **Stop: Insufficient Detail**

👉 If YES → **Continue to Scope**

C. Scope Questions

- Is this related to Commission business?
- Is it tied to official duties?
- Is it more than a policy disagreement?

👉 If NO → **Stop: Outside Scope**

👉 If YES → **Continue to Authority**

D. Authority Questions

- Is investigation needed?
- Does it require credibility judgment?
- Would it require discipline beyond Commission authority?

👉 If YES → **Stop: Outside Authority**

👉 If NO → **Continue to Threshold**

E. Threshold Questions

All must be YES:

- Sufficient detail
- Commission-related
- Administratively handleable
- Accounts do not conflict

👉 If YES → **Proceed**

F. Decision Rule

If...	Then...
Too vague	Insufficient Detail
Not Commission-related	Outside Scope
Requires investigation	Outside Authority
To be handled elsewhere	Referral to District Supervisor
Meets all criteria	Proceed

G. Guardrails

- Do not investigate
- Do not compare accounts
- Do not deliberate outside meetings
- Do not use evaluative language

SECTION III. Outcome Guide (Step-by-Step)

1. Insufficient Detail

Use when: Complaint is too vague

Steps:

1. Mark outcome
2. Record missing elements
3. Note insufficient detail
4. Do not assess credibility
5. Close or request clarification
6. Log outcome

2. Outside Scope

Use when: Not Commission-related

Steps:

1. Mark outcome
2. Record reason
3. Stop screening
4. Optional: note referral
5. Log outcome

3. Outside Authority

Use when: Requires investigation or adjudication

Steps:

1. Mark outcome
2. Record reason
3. Do not investigate
4. Consider referral
5. Log outcome

4. Proceed to Notice and Response

Use when: Threshold met

Steps:

1. Mark outcome
2. Prepare threshold note
3. Send complaint to subject
4. Set deadline for response
5. Track response

6. Compile materials
7. Prepare agenda item

5. Referral

Use when: Better handled externally

Steps:

1. Mark outcome
2. Identify authority
3. Prepare neutral note
4. Forward materials only
5. Log referral
6. Close screening

Model Administrative Note

“This screening determination is administrative only and does not reflect any finding regarding the truth, validity, or merits of the complaint.”

Specific Bylaw Citations (Contra Costa Commission for Women and Girls)

1. Advisory Role

Article II – Purpose

- “The Commission is an advisory body”
- Does not include investigation or adjudication

2. Officer Roles

Article IV, Section 3 – Officers (Chair, Vice Chair duties)

- Screening Officer authority
- “...assist the Chair as directed by the latter...”
- Chair administrative coordination
- Delegation of administrative tasks

3. Meeting Requirements

Article V, Sections 1–3 – Meetings, Quorum, Voting

Article V, Section 4 – Brown Act Compliance

- “All actions must occur in a noticed meeting”
- Agenda placement
- No action outside meetings

4. Committee Limitations

Article VI, Sections 1, 2, and 5 – Executive Committee and Committees

- “Committees cannot act independently”
- “No off-meeting deliberation”
- “Only full Commission takes action”

5. Governance Authority

Article VII – Governance

- Authority to adopt procedures