

COMPLAINTS (EXTERNAL PARTIES)

Background

This policy relates to Code 7 of the Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice, which outlines the legal requirements for complaint handling.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the most appropriate way for Alpine FM to respond to complaints, and other comments from members of the public.

Policy

1. Alpine FM acknowledges the right of our listeners, members and volunteers to comment and make complaints in writing concerning:
 - a. alleged non-compliance with both the licence conditions in the Act and the requirements outlined in the Codes,
 - b. program content, and
 - c. the general service provided to the community.
2. Alpine FM broadcasts at least one on-air announcement each week that contains information about the Codes and where listeners can get a copy.
3. Should a complaint be received by the station about human resources related issues, it will be forwarded to The Secretary to manage through the HR complaints process.
4. Alpine FM will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints, except where a complaint is clearly frivolous, without sufficient grounds or not made in good faith.
5. Alpine FM will ensure that:
 - a. Complaints will be received by a responsible person in normal office hours and a receipt is acknowledged in writing.
 - b. complaints will be conscientiously considered, investigated if necessary and responded to substantively as soon as possible,
 - c. complaints will be addressed at the next committee meeting and responded to in writing within 60 days of receipt (as required in the Act), and the response will include a copy of the Codes,
 - d. complainants are advised in writing that they have the right to refer their complaint about a Code matter to ACMA provided they have first:
 - i. formally lodged their complaint with Alpine FM (the licensee), and

- ii. received a substantive response from Alpine FM and are dissatisfied with this response or did not receive a response from Alpine FM within 60 days after making the complaint.

A written complaint or response can be a letter, fax or email addressed to The Secretary. In investigating the complaint, the Committee of Management will refer to this policy statement (located in the Policy Folder in the office and on Alpine FM's website), the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice namely, Codes 1, 2 and 3, but specifically Code #7 Complaints Handling.

6. A responsible officer of Alpine FM will maintain a confidential record of complaints and responses in a secure location for a period of at least two years from the date of the complaint.
7. The record of complaints and responses will be made available to ACMA on request.

Procedure for Presenters

1. Complaint during business hours (Station Manager is in office)

The following procedure applies to Alpine FM presenters who receive a complaint. Presenter should thank the complainant for their feedback and ask them to hold while you transfer them to the Station Manager.

If they do not wish to be transferred, ask for their name and contact details, including their postal address and preferred contact phone or mobile number and email address.

Assure them that you will have someone contact them at the first opportunity, or they can email the station manager at manager@alpineradio.com.au marked for the attention of The Secretary, who is authorised to take complaints on behalf of the station.

Presenters must use the Alpine FM Complaints Form to record details of the complaint.

Station Manager will use the Manager's Complaints Checklist to track the progress of the complaint.

Note: Presenter should make a note of the time, what they said, and what the caller said, and politely hang up if they don't want to comply with the request.

2. Complaints outside business hours (Station Manager not in office) - The following procedure applies to Alpine FM Presenters who are alone in the studio (especially outside of business hours) and a caller rings in with a complaint about the station, or a program, or even their program.

Presenter should explain to the caller that:

“There is no one from management or the committee who is available right now, so I will take a message and have someone contact you at the first opportunity. Can I have your name and phone number please or you can email the station manager at manager@alpineradio.com.au marked for the attention of The Secretary, who is authorised to take complaints on behalf of the station. I am sorry, but I am not able or authorised to take details at this time.”

For personal safety, presenters should not let the caller know you they are alone in the studio – just that there is no-one from the committee available right now. If the caller persists, the presenter should ask them again for their name and number and say they will arrange for someone to call them or give them The Secretary’s number.

Note: Presenters should make a note of the time, what they said, and what the caller said, and politely hang up if they don’t want to comply with the request.

3. *Complaints on the weekend* - If it is a weekend, Alpine FM has a **weekend roster** and the name of the person on duty (and their mobile number) is on a notice on the wall directly facing the main studio console. Follow the above procedure to obtain the caller’s contact details.
4. *Complaints relating to an urgent matter* - If the complaint is an urgent matter, eg. our broadcast or our internet stream is not working, make a note and call The Secretary or the Station Manager or the Technical Officer.

Reporting and Record Keeping

To ensure Alpine FM can make a full response to ACMA if requested, the station will include in its procedures the following steps:

Alpine FM will keep a confidential secure record of material relating to complaints, including logging tapes or audio copies of broadcast material, and written documentation for two years, including:


1. the date and time the complaint was received,
2. the name and address of the complainant,
3. the substance of the complaint, and
4. the substance and date of Alpine FM’s response.

Related documents

- Alpine FM Complaints Form
- Alpine FM Manager’s Complaints Checklist
- Alpine FM External Complaints Record (Excel)

- Alpine FM Presenter's Handbook 2024
- Community Broadcasting Code of Practice at:
www.cbaa.org.au/resource/community-radio-broadcasting-codes-practice

Policy updates

Version Control	Date Amended	Author
Version 1.01	14 August 2024	Linda Parkinson
	Date Reviewed	Reviewer(s)
	13 August 2024	Cath McDowall
Authorised by name and position: Michael Ahearn, Station Manager	Signature: 	
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