

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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**LOCAL DISPUTES, LOCAL SOLUTIONS**  
**Town Adopting More Efficient System for Bylaw Disputes**

Starting this December, the Town of Creston is adopting a new system to deal with bylaw disputes for infractions such as noise complaints, animal control and unsightly property. In the past, bylaw disputes were handled by the Provincial Court system. Arguing minor bylaw infractions in court was often impractical, due to the costs and time involved.

Mayor Ron Toyota is pragmatic about the change. "The number one reason we're adopting this new system is because the old one was so cumbersome. It just didn't work. If someone disputed a \$50 ticket, because we don't have a court registry in town our bylaw officer would have to travel to Cranbrook. Then they'd have to issue a summons to the disputant for a court hearing, and it just went on from there. The whole process didn't make any sense."

The new Bylaw Dispute Adjudication System system empowers both local residents and authorities by providing a clear process for resolution. The first step involves discussion with a locally appointed screening officer, with firsthand knowledge of the particular bylaw in question. For example, if a notice is issued for improper parking, the screening officer is a staff member from that department.

The local screening officer provides information directly to the disputant, who can then accept the decision and pay the fine; work with the screening officer on a compliance agreement for a reduced fine; or provide a reason for the infraction. For example, if they were illegally parked due to a family medical emergency, a screening officer can use their discretion to reduce or even cancel the fine.

If the disputant still wishes to contest a bylaw notice, a third-party adjudicator assesses the dispute. The disputant does not need to appear in person, and can choose to submit their statement in writing or over the phone. The adjudicator is appointed by the Attorney General, and simply decides whether or not the bylaw was violated.

Since 2004, over 50 BC municipalities have voluntarily transitioned to this alternate system of adjudication for minor bylaw infractions. In the vast majority of cases, the dispute is settled with the local screening officer, saving everyone involved both time and money.

As a transitional measure, for the month of December notices will be issued as warnings only, with the new system coming fully into effect in the new year. For more information, please visit [www.creston.ca](http://www.creston.ca)



## TOWN OF CRESTON - BYLAW NOTICE - FLOW CHART

