

Mentor Text - Sample Complaint Letter

James Santoni
316 Hedgewood St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

March 29, 2011

Doug Washington, Director
Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
2230 Platt Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Dear Mr. Washington,

My dog and I are frequent users of the Swift Run Dog Park at the corner of Platt and Ellsworth Roads. I am writing to express deep concern about the lack of enforcement of the park rules posted both at the park and on the Recreation Commission's website. My dog was attacked by another dog at Swift Run last Saturday. But because there are no park employees who police the grounds, the aggressive dog and his owner will go unpunished. Meanwhile, my dog has ten stitches in his left ear and this same vicious dog could attack others at Swift Run in the future.

On Sunday afternoon, March 27, I took my dog, Macy, a border collie, to Swift Run to play. She has her current registration, license and vaccination tags, and I obtained a permit for her to use the park last fall. After half an hour of playing, Macy befriended a group of four dogs. Macy is a submissive, sweet dog. They were all having a good time and romping around until one of the larger dogs, an Airedale, attacked her. He approached her, grabbed her by the throat, shook her, and in the process ripped her ear. The dog would have continued the attack if I hadn't pulled him off of Macy. The Airedale's owner, an elderly woman who clearly didn't have control of her dog, said once the fight ended, "I just don't know what sets him off when he does things like that." Clearly, the dog has attacked before. There was blood all over my hands and my dog, so I left the park quickly to take Macy to the vet. I did not get the Airedale owner's name or phone number.

I want my dog and all other dogs to be safe when they're playing at Swift Run. But this clearly isn't the case. I have witnessed other aggressive dog encounters. In fact, just last week, a Husky became highly aggressive with Macy. When I intervened and pulled the dog off of Macy, the Husky's owner told me I shouldn't come to the park if I didn't want my dog to play. But this was not play. It was highly aggressive behavior. After the woman took her dog to another part of the park, another dog owner informed me that just a few months ago, the same Husky had attacked his Boxer, sending his dog to the vet with a serious eye injury. Sadly, this kind of aggressive behavior is common and unchecked at Swift Run. This is especially surprising since according to the park website: "Dogs that fight or exhibit aggressive behavior must be immediately removed from the park by their owner," and "Individuals failing to comply with posted rules are subject to citation, expulsion, or arrest, as well as dog impound." These rules are wonderful in theory, but if they are not enforced, what's the point of having them?

For the sake of Macy and all the dogs that enjoy the wonderful fenced 10-acre space at Swift Run, I implore you to have a staff person on site during peak hours both during the week and on weekends. This will ensure that the park can be used as it is intended. Just as there are park personnel at many county parks collecting admission, answering questions, and dealing with crises, Swift Run should have someone present to enforce the dog park rules. During off-peak hours, park volunteers could play this same role. Otherwise, the threat of citation, expulsion, or arrest if rules are not followed is just an empty threat.

Sincerely,

James Santoni

cc: City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Services

Mentor Text - Sample Complaint Letter

Jane Myers
111 Walnut Street
Avondale, PA 43211

July 1, 2008

Mr. Shawn Gray
President
Gray Travel Agency
111 Main Street
Warren, PA 42111

Dear Mr. Gray,

After successfully using your agency for many years, I recently experienced a terrible problem. I am writing to obtain compensation for a huge mistake for which I believe your firm is responsible.

On May 1, 2008, I used Gray Travel to book my family vacation for four people to Hawaii. Your agent, Carla Drysdale, made all of the arrangements for us. She booked my family on the American Airlines flight to Honolulu (Flight 444) on June 14, which was scheduled to arrive at 6 am on the morning of June 15. Our timely arrival was essential, as we were scheduled to participate in a tour group, which began its journey on the afternoon of June 15.

Upon our arrival at the San Francisco Airport, we discovered that our reservations had not been confirmed and the airline had overbooked the flight. Sadly, we were unable to get seats on the plane, which was the last American Airlines flight to Hawaii that day. We were reluctant to book seats on another airline, as we had already paid for this trip in full, using a Visa card (account #3374 7796 0039 0072). Our card was charged, yet we had no flight. Unfortunately, our credit limit was inadequate to book four seats on another airline.

The bottom-line: my husband, children, and I missed our flight to Hawaii, along with our tour group's departure in Honolulu. Instead of lying on a tranquil beach, we spent the first days of our vacation in the Airport Hilton in San Francisco, trying to sort out this mess. We were unable to speak with Ms. Drysdale until Monday, June 16, which was two days after our scheduled departure. She was extremely apologetic, but could not explain what had caused the problem. She was unable to book us on an alternative flight to Hawaii on such short notice, but did offer to clear our credit card of all charges. She offered us no further explanations or compensation.

My husband and I are both livid. We planned this trip for over a year and were excited about visiting Hawaii as a family. Ms. Drysdale's mistake cost us our chance to fulfill a significant family goal—to see the volcanoes of Hawaii. In fact, we not only missed the trip; we are still fighting to recover our deposits at the hotel in Honolulu!

Because your agency caused the problems, we expect you to work with us to obtain a satisfactory resolution. Specifically, we expect you to:

- 1) Verify that our Visa card has been credited for the \$8539 we paid for the aborted family trip.
- 2) Reimburse us for the \$760 in deposits we are unable to recover from the Honolulu Sheraton Islander Hotel.

3) Reimburse us for the two nights we spent stranded at the San Francisco Airport Hilton (\$347)

4) Provide us with four first class round-trip tickets on a flight to Hawaii, which will be good for the next calendar year (dates of travel to be our choice).

Your agency can't give us back our trip, but we expect you to provide a future trip comparable to the one we were denied because of your booking mistake. We also expect a full apology from Ms. Drysdale and assurance that she takes responsibility for her error.

From our experience, this situation was a dramatic letdown from the superlative service that we usually receive from Gray Travel. In fact, we have always been loyal to your firm because of the exemplary treatment we have received from you and your attentive staff. We suggest that you coach Ms. Drysdale in proper booking procedures and in customer relations. Her behavior does not reflect positively on Gray Travel.

Please call me before July 15 with confirmation that our requests will be honored. If I don't hear from you, I will report you to the appropriate regulatory agencies in California and Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Jane Myers
111 Walnut Street
Avondale, PA 43211
717-555-7777

cc: Better Business Bureau
American Society of Travel Agents
US Department of Transportation: Consumer Affairs Division
Federal Aviation Authority: Consumer Protection Division
Office of Consumer Protection: State Office of the Attorney General

Mentor Text – Sample Complaint Letter

Kim Shelton
87 Morris Drive
Yorktown, TX 49813

August 1, 2010

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
U.S. Treasury Department
Customer Assistance Group
1301 McKinney Street, Suite 3450
Houston, TX 77010-9050

To Whom It May Concern:

I was recently hit with 7 overdraft charges by Great Financial Bank during a single weekend, totaling \$217, and I believe this is unfair. I had every reason to believe my account was positive by more than \$1,000 when these fees were levied. I request your office intervene in my attempts to get these fees refunded.

On Thursday March 15, my account balance was \$45.05, and I deposited a payroll check for \$1,200 at the Great Financial Bank Yorktown branch. I asked the teller if I would be able to withdraw money from my account by the weekend, and she said more than likely, I would. I asked for a more definitive answer and she refused, but told me I should attempt to withdraw money from an ATM and if the transaction was approved, I was "good to go."

On Saturday morning, I attempted to withdraw \$50 from an ATM in Yorktown and my withdrawal was approved. Assuming my check had cleared, I proceeded to use my debit card six times during the rest of the weekend. The purchases were small – one was for \$3.89. In total, the purchases added up to less than \$50. My total transactions for the weekend were less than \$100.

Two weeks later, when my statement arrived, I discovered fees of \$217 on my \$100 in transactions. It appears from the statement that my payroll check didn't clear until Monday, putting me well into the black. But by then, the damage had been done.

I was unaware that I could repeatedly overdraw my account without being told. Furthermore, I believe the bank's teller encouraged me to overdraw my account with her advice. I don't understand how a bank can charge me overdraft fees while holding onto a check for well over \$1,000. And finally, I don't understand how the overdraft fees of \$217 -- could be twice the amount of the transactions -- \$100.

I have asked the bank to refund the fees and have received no response. The fact that banks can levy these kinds of charges to unknowing customers borders on being criminal. I request that you intervene on my behalf, help me obtain a refund, and investigate this company's overdraft and check-clearing policies. I am concerned not only about the charges I received, but the fees other banking customers are being hit with and have little or no power to recover.

Sincerely,

Kim Shelton

cc: Great Financial Bank