



Community Advocacy & Legal Centre

ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN TIP SHEET

(UPDATED: JAN 2009)

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What Does the Ombudsman Do?

The Ombudsman's job is to investigate complaints about organizations. When he finds something wrong he can make recommendations to resolve the problem, and if these are not acted upon, he can report the case to the Legislature. The Ombudsman can also help resolve complaints informally. If a provincial government organization has treated you in a way that is unfair, illegal, unreasonable, mistaken, or just plain wrong, you should bring your matter forward to the Ombudsman.

Examples of Complaints

The Ombudsman has jurisdiction over all provincial government organizations as an office of last resort. This means that all available complaint and appeal procedures whenever possible should be used before the Ombudsman conducts an investigation. Some examples of complaints that may be investigated:

- drivers' licenses
- health insurance (OHIP)
- disability benefits (ODSP)
- workplace safety and insurance (WSI)
- Family Responsibility Office (FRO)
- treatment of inmates
- access to government services
- patient care in provincial psychiatric hospitals
- Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT) appeal

What kind of complaints can't be investigated?

The Ombudsman cannot investigate complaints outside his jurisdiction, although referrals may be provided. Some types of complaints that cannot be investigated:

- private companies or individuals

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Your community legal clinic



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- police
- doctors or lawyers
- decisions of judges or courts
- decisions of Cabinet
- employment insurance, or Canada Pension, which are federal programs
- garbage collection, or by-law enforcement, which are municipal matters

Does it Cost Anything?

No. The Legislature funds all the Ombudsman's services. The Ombudsman's work is confidential and free and often results in early correction of problems which could otherwise be very costly and time-consuming to fix.

The Complaint Process

The Ombudsman is generally an office of last resort. This means that you should first try to resolve your problem by using the complaint and appeal procedures offered by the government body you are dealing with. Many complaints can be resolved quickly by first approaching the government organization involved and using its internal complaint mechanisms. If you are not certain what complaint procedures are available to try and resolve your problem, you can consult with that body directly or the Ombudsman can assist you by providing referral information on how to address your problem.

It is important that you bring your complaint forward to the Ombudsman in a timely fashion. Generally, the Ombudsman will not investigate a complaint which is more than 12 months old, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

More information on the complaint process can be found at their [website](#).

Registering a Complaint

You can complain in writing, by telephone, TTY, fax, e-mail or cassette recording. Fill out an [online complaint form](#) or a [printable form \(PDF\)](#). This can be mailed or faxed to the Ombudsman. (Both a general complaint form and an administrative tribunal complaint form is attached at end of this document).

How to Contact the Ombudsman - <http://www.ombudsman.on.ca>

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario, Bell Trinity Square
483 Bay Street, 10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

1-800-263-1830 - English
1-800-387-2620 - French
1-866-411-4211 - TTY, hard of hearing/deaf

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