



Office of the Citizens' Representative

Tips for Completing a Complaint Form

1. Think about the problem you face with a focus of identifying the five Ws: who what, where, when and why.
2. Write clearly. While you do not need to type your Complaint Form, it is important that we are able to read your writing.
3. If you cannot complete or answer in the space provided on the form, then supply additional pages.
4. Enclose as many documents as you feel is necessary to provide a background to your complaint. If you have a question about the type or number of documents to enclose, please contact us.
5. If English is not your first language, we will endeavour to find a translator to assist in the completion of your form.

If you have any questions when completing the form, contact us.

Office of the Citizens' Representative

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Are *you*
having a
problem
with
provincial
government
services and
programs?



Preparing to
Complete a
Complaint Form



Seeking fairness...
finding solutions

Have you ever made a three course meal for a large number of family or friends? Have you tried to undertake a home renovation project like building a deck or constructing a shed? If you have, then you know the importance of preparation. It is frustrating to be half way through a recipe only to discover that you are missing an ingredient or have started a construction project without the proper tools. Without adequate preparation, these tasks can fail or take longer to complete than they should.

Filing a complaint with the Office of the Citizens' Representative also requires some preparation. Failure to put one's mind to the question asked can lead to delays in processing your complaint. The Office may have to wait for documents from government departments or agencies to shed light on your problem even though you are already in possession of them. It can lead to misunderstandings between you and the staff of the Office. The short amount of preparation time it takes to complete your complaint form can greatly enhance the chances of having a satisfactory resolution of your concerns.

The **Complaint Form** has three parts. The *first* part identifies the person who wishes to make a complaint and outlines contact information. It is important that we are able to contact you during an investigation to request additional information and/or to provide status reports. If you work and can only be reached after standard work hours, don't hesitate to mention that information in the first part of the Complaint Form.

The *second* part of the form outlines a series of questions. Here is why we ask each:

1. What authority (government department or agency) is your question or complaint about?

This information lets us know which department or agency we must contact to determine if a quick resolution of your problem is possible and, if not, which departments or agencies you feel should be investigated.

We also review this information to see if we have the legal right to investigate the department or agency you identify.

2. Who have you dealt with?

If we know the names of the individuals you have had contact with within the Public Service, we can write or interview them or their supervisors to obtain information about your complaint or ways in which it can be resolved.

3. Summarize your complaint and any steps you have taken to try and resolve it.

In trying to investigate a citizen's concern we need as much information as possible about the problem including:

- where it began;
- when it began;
- what persons, policies, departments or agencies caused it; and
- if known, why it occurred.

4. Did you file an appeal or apply for a review?

Our Office needs to know if you have the option to file an appeal because we do not have the power to address your complaint until all appeals have been exhausted.

5. Why do you believe the actions are unfair?

Here is your opportunity to outline why you believe you have been treated differently from others in similar circumstances or why, having regard to all the circumstances you find yourself in, you are treated unjustly.

6. How can this complaint be settled?

The focus of our work is to resolve citizens' complaints and we can only do that if we have a clear idea about what a citizen is seeking.

Often it is not clear how a complaint can be resolved. A citizen may not be aware of the administrative options available and therefore cannot easily identify an appropriate one. In that case, just state that solutions are not currently known.

7. If you consider this matter urgent, explain why.

While we try to process complaints on a "first come, first service" basis, we recognize that there may be circumstances where the lack of provision of basic public services may endanger a person's health and welfare. We will address these cases on a priority basis.

The *third* part of the Complaint Form requests your signature and authorizes the Citizens' Representative or his staff to access any and all information pertaining to your complaint held by a government department or agency. It is important to remember that government bodies are legally bound to keep your private information confidential. It is only with your consent that they can provide access to that information to us and it is only with that information that we can adequately address your concerns.