



Lodging a Complaint

All banks, and all federally regulated trust, loan and insurance companies, and retail associations must, by law, have a complaint-handling process in place for consumers who want to file a complaint. This complaint-handling process is filed each year with the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC).

If you have a complaint or a problem with a federally regulated financial institution, you can take the following steps to have it resolved. These steps are general. For more detailed information on your own financial institution's complaint-handling process, visit their Web site or contact them directly. You can also visit FCAC's Web site at: www.fcac.gc.ca, or call us toll-free at: 1-866-461-3222.

Step 1: Local level

First, you must try to get your problem resolved by dealing directly with the manager or customer service representative of your financial institution. This would involve speaking with branch staff or the branch's local representative, or someone at a call centre.

Step 2: Senior level and/or internal ombudsman

If your complaint cannot be resolved at the branch or local level, it may be referred to a senior staff member, a customer care group and/or an internal ombudsman.

Step 3: Third-party review

In most cases, if your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you can have it reviewed by an independent complaint-resolution body. This service is non-binding and is available to any individual or small business with a complaint.

For banks and trust companies, you may contact the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments (OBSI) through their toll-free telephone number: 1-888-451-4519, or visit their Web site at: www.obsi.ca.

For concerns and complaints about life and health products and services issued by life insurance companies, you can call the Canadian Life and Health Insurance OmbudService (CLHIO) toll-free at: 1-888-295-8112, or visit their Web site at: www.clhio.ca

For problems concerning home, car and business insurance, you can contact the General Insurance OmbudService (GIO) by telephone at: 416-299-6931, or visit their Web site at: www.giocanada.org.

Step 4: Provincial regulator (optional)

In some cases, depending on the type of financial institution you deal with, you may also contact your provincial regulator. For a list of the regulators in your province, call FCAC toll-free at: 1-866-461-3222.

Tips for lodging a complaint

- Make sure you take notes at each step in the complaint-handling process. When you go to the next step, you will be asked to provide the following details: who you spoke to, the dates these discussions took place and what (if anything) was resolved. Always keep the original copy of any important documents. If you must send a document, send a copy (not the original).
- Do not skip any of the steps in the complaint-handling process, and follow the steps in order. This will speed up your request.
- The complaint-handling process is a less expensive alternative to going to court to have your complaint resolved. Therefore, you have a choice — either using the complaint process or going to court.

Where to go for more information

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) provides timely, objective information to help consumers choose the best banking products and services for their needs. FCAC also informs Canadians about their rights and responsibilities when dealing with financial institutions and makes sure that banks and federally regulated trust, loan and insurance companies respect the laws and agreements that protect consumers. You can reach us by calling our Consumer Contact Centre toll-free at: 1-866-461-3222 (our TTY number is 613-947-7771 or, toll-free, 1-866-914-6097), or by visiting our Web site at: www.fcac.gc.ca.

Part of FCAC's role is to ensure that financial institutions have a complaint-handling process in place. If you are having trouble finding out about your institution's complaint-handling process, call us toll-free at the number indicated above. However, please keep in mind that FCAC monitors complaints about the complaint-handling process but does not provide redress or compensation and cannot get involved in individual disputes.