

Ombudsman
Annual Report

2021



Canada Post • Postes Canada

Ombudsman



Highlights of 2021

Since the pandemic began in early 2020, the number of appeals filed with our office has increased and remained well above the 2019 level. Canada Post made several changes to how it delivers mail during the pandemic and this drove up the number of appeals to the office.

In 2021, the total number of appeals filed with our office increased by 2 per cent compared to the previous year. We received 4,792 appeals, up from 4,700 in 2020. This also represents an increase of 39 per cent over 2019.

While the number of appeals decreased steadily between 2015 and 2019, dropping from 6,092 in 2015 to 3,449 in 2019, the number of appeals has increased during the pandemic for a variety of reasons:

1. In 2020, Canada Post introduced some changes to the way it delivered mail, which extended through most of 2021. These changes included new parcel safe-dropping procedures, modified delivery guarantees and a new signature collection process. This created some confusion with customers who reported they were not aware of the changes at the time of mailing.
2. Canada Post also implemented new safety protocols in its plants and depots in 2020 that extended through all of 2021, which resulted in delivery delays that customers complained about.
3. Some customers did not want to wear a mask when going to a post office, which violated Canada Post's safety protocols. Customers objected to this practice, sometimes resulting in confrontations with staff.
4. The floods in British Columbia washed away roads, bridges and railways, which impacted mail delivery. Customers complained about how long it took to deliver mail to or from the province.

We attribute most of the increase in appeals in 2020 and 2021 to postal issues related to the pandemic. We do not believe this increase is a sign of deeper, more systemic issues. For example, the return of delivery guarantees and the launch of verbal signatures in the fall of 2021 reduced the number of appeals.

The number of appeals related to the Canadian Postal Service Charter decreased by 335, or about 10 per cent, compared to the previous year. This decrease was due primarily to fewer reported issues with the reliability of mail delivery and fewer missing items.

Of the 2,125 cases for which we completed an in-depth investigation, 37 per cent resulted in corrective action. For the rest, our investigation supported Canada Post's actions.

We heard mostly from consumers and small businesses, and not as much from commercial customers.

More than half the files received did not result in an in-depth investigation because customers withdrew their submission before our investigation concluded, did not provide the necessary documents, or reached out to us before Canada Post had the opportunity to fully address their issue.

In order to prevent issues from recurring, the Office of the Ombudsman proposed 20 changes to Canada Post's policies and procedures during 2020, 18 of which are being implemented and one of which has been partially implemented.





Key statistics

In line with higher parcel volumes due to increased online shopping during the pandemic, the number of appeals we handled increased in 2021.



Appeals received:

4,792

(2% increase)



In-depth Investigations:

2,125

(44% of all appeals)



Investigations resulting in Canada Post's remediation:

775

(37% of all investigations)

Top appeals



Missing or damaged item:

595

(10% increase)



Compensation deemed unfair:

487

(48% increase)



Late delivery:

175

(1% decline)

Leading types of appeals submitted in 2021

- The customer's parcel went missing or the content was damaged during delivery.
- The customer felt Canada Post's indemnity in a claims dispute was unreasonable.
- The customer was unhappy with their experience when interacting with Canada Post staff (at a retail counter or with a delivery agent or customer service agent).
- The customer was not aware of a change to how mail was delivered during the pandemic.
- The customer's parcel arrived late.
- The customer reported issues accessing the mail.
- The customer reported issues when the item was returned to sender.

Who we are

The Office of the Ombudsman is independent of Canada Post staff and management and reports directly to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

It gives Canadians another avenue if they feel Canada Post did not live up to its service commitments.

We get involved when Canada Post's own processes have not resolved the issue, and we are the final appeal forum when a disappointed customer seeks redress beyond Canada Post's complaint resolution process. We investigate customer complaints, seek clarification, confirm the facts and recommend fair and equitable solutions.


We also complement Canada Post's continuing commitment to quality and customer experience. By identifying trends, focusing on prevention and recommending changes where warranted, we provide Canada Post with another perspective to improve service. We see every case as a learning opportunity for the Corporation to identify preventative or mitigating measures. This feedback loop is an integral element of our day-to-day work – and of our value to Canadians.





How we operate


We promptly acknowledge and review customers' appeals. We communicate our next steps within five business days. Then, the complexity and severity of the issue determine how quickly we are able to investigate an appeal. The process works this way:

 **1 Submit** your appeal at canadapost-postescanada.ca/ombudsman.

 **2 Triage** based on severity and impact.

 **3 Investigate** with corporate and local management, and third parties as required, and mediate a resolution.

 **4 Feedback** to customer, local management and senior executives.

 **5 Follow up** as required, to ensure solutions are sustained.

To avoid having a postal issue, we recommend that you:

1. Ask about the options to insure a parcel for loss or damage, especially for valuable items, if you're mailing at a post office.
2. Know who you are dealing with when you buy goods online. Canada Post cannot assume liability resulting from fraud by a shipper or a receiver.
3. Do not send money to someone you do not know through MoneyGram, to avoid being defrauded.
4. Use proper packaging. Only you know the physical characteristics of your item and how to secure it as it goes through processing equipment.*
5. Address your shipment properly to a specific address, not just a person. If the mailing address is incomplete, Canada Post will not speculate on where to deliver it.*
6. Canada Post's Mail Forwarding and Hold Mail services are for Lettermail™, not parcels. If you order online or expect a parcel, tell the sender your new address.

Some common requests that we cannot help with:

1. Intercepting an item in Canada Post's network before delivery. This is extremely difficult and illegal without proper authorization.
2. Changing the destination address of an item after it is posted.
3. Settling a claim for loss or damage with the receiver rather than the sender, who is the party who contracted with Canada Post to deliver it.
4. Setting corporate policies, such as product specifications or pricing, and recommending disciplinary actions that involve Canada Post's relationships with its employees, contractors and suppliers.

Contact us:

Office of the Ombudsman at Canada Post

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OTTAWA ON K1V 1J8

Telephone: 1-800-204-4198

Fax: 1-800-204-4193

* Find packaging and addressing tips at canadapost.ca.

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