

# Conciliation

## INFORMATION SHEET

When a complaint alleging discrimination is accepted at the Alberta Human Rights Commission, two methods may be used to reach a resolution to the complaint. The first is conciliation; the second is investigation. For more information about investigation, please see the Commission's *Investigation* information sheet, which is available at [albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca).

After a complaint is accepted at the Commission, the Commission may offer conciliation to the complainant and respondent (the parties). Conciliation is a voluntary, non-adversarial way to resolve disputes quickly. The success rate of conciliation is high: more than half of complaints are resolved at the conciliation stage.

If the parties agree to conciliation, the Commission assigns a conciliator to work with them. The conciliator is knowledgeable about human rights law and the Commission's complaint process. The conciliator will help the parties understand the human rights issues in the complaint and what types of resolutions are common in such complaints.

The conciliation process is an exchange of information about how each party sees the situation. The parties may meet together with the conciliator, or each party may meet with the conciliator individually, in person or over the phone. The conciliator's job is to help make the respondent's position clear to the complainant and the complainant's position clear to the respondent and help search for common ground.

The conciliator does not take sides or investigate the complaint. If the parties cannot resolve the complaint, the complainant will be asked if

they want their complaint to be investigated. If they do, the complaint will normally be scheduled for assignment to an investigator in its turn, or it may be expedited to the Director of the Commission for review. Under section 22 of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, the Director may, at any time, dismiss or discontinue the complaint or continue the complaint, including referring the complaint to a tribunal.

All offers of resolution made by the parties during conciliation are made on a "without prejudice" basis. Without prejudice is a legal term that means any offer or admission made during conciliation is only for use during conciliation and cannot be used anywhere else. If the complaint proceeds to the investigation stage, the investigator will not know what was discussed during conciliation, and the parties are not to tell the investigator about the resolution offers made during conciliation.

## For more information

For detailed information about the human rights complaint process, see the following publications, which are available on the Commission website at [albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca) or by calling the Commission and requesting printed copies.

1. *The Human Rights Complaint Process information sheet*
2. *The Human Rights Complaint Process: A guide for complainants*
3. *The Human Rights Complaint Process: A guide for respondents*
4. *Human Rights Complaint Form and Guide* 

## Contact us

The Alberta Human Rights Commission is an independent commission of the Government of Alberta. Our mandate is to foster equality and reduce discrimination. We provide public information and education programs, and help Albertans resolve human rights complaints.

For our **business office and mailing addresses**, please see the **Contact Us** page of our website ([albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca)), or phone or email us.

**Hours of operation are 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Northern Regional Office (Edmonton)**  
780-427-7661 Confidential Inquiry Line  
780-427-6013 Fax

**Southern Regional Office (Calgary)**  
403-297-6571 Confidential Inquiry Line  
403-297-6567 Fax

To call toll-free within Alberta, dial 310-0000 and then enter the area code and phone number.

For province-wide free access from a cellular phone, enter \*310 (for Rogers Wireless) or #310 (for Telus and Bell), followed by the area code and phone number. Public and government callers can phone without paying long distance or airtime charges.

### **TTY service for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing**

780-427-1597 Edmonton  
403-297-5639 Calgary  
1-800-232-7215 Toll-free within Alberta

**Email** [humanrights@gov.ab.ca](mailto:humanrights@gov.ab.ca)

**Website** [albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca)

**Please note:** A complaint must be made to the Alberta Human Rights Commission within one year after the alleged incident of discrimination. The one-year period starts the day after the date on which the incident occurred. For help calculating the one-year period, contact the Commission.

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Upon request, the Commission will make this publication available in accessible multiple formats. Multiple formats provide access for people with disabilities who do not read conventional print.