

## Complaints and Enquiries

### Regarding Insurance Companies, Trust Companies and Credit Unions

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**Complaints and Enquiries**

BCFSA has processes for handling complaints and enquiries related to matters that fall within our mandate.

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**Who we regulate**

BCFSA regulates insurance companies, credit unions, and trust companies operating in British Columbia.

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**Who we do not regulate**

We do not license or regulate:

- insurance agencies, agents (brokers), salespersons or adjusters. That is the responsibility of the Insurance Council of British Columbia ([www.insurancecouncilofbc.com](http://www.insurancecouncilofbc.com)).

We do not regulate:

- the securities industry, such as investment dealers. That is the responsibility of the British Columbia Securities Commission and the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada ([www.bcsc.ca](http://www.bcsc.ca) or [www.iiroc.ca](http://www.iiroc.ca));
- banks, such as Royal Bank of Canada, BMO, etc. That is the responsibility of the federal Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions ("OSFI") ([www.osfi-bsif.gc.ca](http://www.osfi-bsif.gc.ca)); as well as the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada ("FCAC"); or
- mandatory coverage by Insurance Corporation of British Columbia ("ICBC"). Complaints about ICBC Basic Auto plan should be directed to ICBC at [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com).
- third party lenders and other high interest lenders, such as easyfinancial or Spring Financial. Complaints should be directed to Consumer Protection BC ([www.consumerprotectionbc.ca](http://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca))

All contact information is listed below.

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**Before filing a complaint about a credit union or a trust company**

We are responsible for regulating the operations of credit unions and corporations carrying trust business in BC.

We do not generally get involved in individual disputes about business decisions, service quality, legal, civil and/or contractual matters. However, we do track complaints by subject matter and institution to determine whether review of an institution's procedures or market conduct is warranted.

Before filing a complaint with BCFSA, you should first try to resolve the issue with the credit union or the trust company directly.

We expect all credit unions to have an established complaint handling process. Most credit unions have their complaint resolution process and contact information posted on their websites. However, those steps, in order, typically are:

- contacting the credit union to discuss your concerns with the branch manager;

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- contacting the head office to bring the issue to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer, or General Manager (check the credit union's website for the name and address); and
  - bringing the matter to the attention of the Board of Directors.

If your concern involves any sort of legal matter you should obtain legal advice. You can contact the Lawyer Referral Service of the BC branch of the Canadian Bar Association at 604-687-3221 or toll free at 1-800-663-1919.

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## **Before filing a complaint about an insurance company**

Our primary responsibility is to help ensure insurance companies are, and remain, able to meet their financial obligations to policyholders. BCFSA also has regulatory oversight of insurance company conduct in the marketplace.

We do not generally get involved in individual disputes about business decisions, claim disputes, service quality, legal, civil and/or contractual matters. However, we do track complaints by subject matter and institution to determine whether review of an institution's procedures or market conduct is warranted.

Before filing a complaint with BCFSA, you should first try to resolve it with the company directly. All insurance companies must have dispute resolution processes in place and disclose that information to policyholders. Typically those steps, in order, are:

- Contact the local manager or representative of the insurance company;
- Refer to the senior management of the company, or its internal ombudservice;
- Obtain a third-party review (see below);
  - General Insurance Ombudsman ("GIO") for property and casualty insurance company disputes;
  - OmbudService for Life and Health Insurance ("OLHI") for life insurance company disputes; or
  - Legal counsel to obtain legal advice and pursue the matter through the courts. You can contact the Lawyer Referral Service of the BC branch of the Canadian Bar Association at 604-687-3221 or toll free at 1-800-663-1919.

At any point of the above steps, please contact us if there is a concern about the insurance companies' conduct. Please keep in mind that we cannot provide redress or compensation and we cannot mediate, or otherwise get involved in individual disputes or claims.

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## **What happens to a complaint?**

In order to address your complaint, some or all of the details of it may be sent to the financial institution. This allows the financial institution the opportunity to provide a complete response to the issue for our review. We will consult with you on what information is shared, and your participation in any regulatory hearing which may be undertaken to resolve the matter may be requested.

Allegations of any sort of misconduct should be accompanied by some evidence to allow us to begin an inquiry. If such evidence cannot be provided, our ability to conduct any type of review of the matter may be limited.

Please note that the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Information Act* applies to BCFSA records and information.

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**What to include**

To expedite the review process, we ask that all complaints include copies of related documentation. This would include copies of correspondence to and from the financial institution as well as of any insurance policies that are part of the dispute.

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**What if a complaint falls outside BCFSA's mandate?**

If a complaint involves an issue that is about an institution which BCFSA regulates but is a matter which does not generally fall within our mandate, you can still submit it (these complaints will not be provided to the financial institution at that time).

You will receive correspondence acknowledging we have received it, but no inquiry will be conducted.

The complaint will be logged and kept in our file on the institution. As these complaints are kept in our files, they help to identify trends which we may bring to the attention of the institution or industry involved in order to rectify problems voluntarily. If BCFSA considers it appropriate, orders and penalties may also be considered.

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## Contact Information

**Insurance Council of British Columbia**

1400-745 Thurlow Street  
Vancouver BC V6E 0C5

**Phone:** 604-688-3021  
**Toll Free:** 1-877-688-0321  
**Website:** [www.insurancecouncilofbc.com](http://www.insurancecouncilofbc.com)

**Insurance Corporation of British Columbia**

151 West Esplanade  
North Vancouver BC V7M 3H9

**Phone:** 604-661-2800  
**Toll Free:** 1-800-663-3051  
**Website:** [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

**British Columbia Securities Commission**

701 West Georgia Street  
Vancouver BC V7Y 1L2

**Phone:** 604-899-6500  
**Toll Free (BC):** 1-800-373-6393  
**Email:** [inquiries@bcsc.bc.ca](mailto:inquiries@bcsc.bc.ca)  
**Website:** [www.bcsc.ca](http://www.bcsc.ca)

**Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions**

1095 West Pender Street

PO Box 11  
Vancouver BC V6E 2M6

**Toll Free:** 1-800-385-8647  
**Email:** [information@osfi-bsif.gc.ca](mailto:information@osfi-bsif.gc.ca)  
**Website:** [www.osfi-bsif.gc.ca](http://www.osfi-bsif.gc.ca)

## **Financial Consumer Agency of Canada**

427 Laurier Avenue West, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ottawa ON K1R 1B9

**Toll Free:** 1-866-461-3222  
**Website:** [www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/corporate/contact-us.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/corporate/contact-us.html)

## **Consumer Protection BC**

PO Box 9244  
Victoria BC V8W 9J2

**Toll Free:** 1-888-564-9963  
**Email:** [operations@consumerprotectionbc.ca](mailto:operations@consumerprotectionbc.ca)  
**Website:** [www.consumerprotectionbc.ca](http://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca)

## **General Insurance OmbudService**

4711 Yonge Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M2N 6K8

**Toll Free:** 1-877-225-0446  
**Email:** [info@giocanada.org](mailto:info@giocanada.org)  
**Website:** [www.giocanada.org](http://www.giocanada.org)

## **OmbudService for Life and Health Insurance**

820-20 Adelaide Street  
PO Box 29  
Toronto ON M5C 2T6

**Toll Free:** 1-888-295-8112  
**Website:** [www.olhi.ca](http://www.olhi.ca)

## **Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments (OBSI)**

2400-20 Queen Street West  
PO Box 8  
Toronto ON M5H 3R3

**Phone:** 416-287-2877  
**Toll Free:** 1-888-451-4519



**Email:** [ombudsman@obsi.ca](mailto:ombudsman@obsi.ca)

**Website:** [www.obsi.ca](http://www.obsi.ca)