



talk to us

step-by-step
how to make a complaint against the police



table of contents

what is the office of the independent police review director?	3
who can make a complaint?	4
what can I complain about?	5
how to make a complaint.	5
what to expect when making a complaint.	6
how will you be kept informed?	9
what happens once your complaint has been investigated?	9
what to do if you are not happy with how your complaint was handled	10
complaint form	13



what is the office of the independent police review director?

The Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) is an arms-length agency of the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, staffed entirely by civilians. This means our decisions are independent from the Ontario government, the police and the community.

The OIPRD is responsible for receiving, overseeing, monitoring and dealing with all public complaints

against the police in Ontario. This includes municipal and regional police services and the Ontario Provincial Police. A complaint may be about the services or policies of a police department, or it may be about the conduct of a specific officer or officers.

The OIPRD's goal is to provide an independent, transparent, accessible and effective oversight system that will build confidence and trust in the public complaints process. The OIPRD will deal with complaints against the police efficiently and in a way that is fair to both the public and the police. We will work to enhance the positive relationship between the police and the communities they serve.

who can make a complaint?

You can make a complaint about a police officer if you:

- Have a concern or were offended by something a police officer(s) said or did to you
- Were a witness to an incident involving a police officer(s) that concerned or offended you
- Are concerned or distressed as a result of the way a relative or friend has been treated by a police officer(s)
- Are acting on behalf of an individual listed above, for example a person who has been given written permission to make a complaint on another's behalf
- Have a complaint that a police department has not provided proper service
- Have a complaint about a policy of a police department.

Some people are not allowed to file a complaint with the OIPRD. The following people cannot file a complaint with the OIPRD:

- The Solicitor General (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services)
- An employee of the Office of the Independent Police Review Director
- A member or employee of the Ontario Civilian Police Commission
- A member or auxiliary (civilian) member of a police service cannot complain about their own service
- An employee of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) cannot complain about the OPP
- A member or employee of a police services board cannot complain about their own service
- A person selected by the council of a municipality to advise another municipality's police services board cannot complain about that service
- A delegate to an OPP community policing advisory committee cannot complain about the detachment they advise.

what can I complain about?

The police have a code of conduct to follow that includes:

- To act with honesty and integrity
- To treat people with respect
- Not to abuse the extraordinary powers and authority police officers are granted
- To act in a manner that does not discredit or undermine public confidence in the police service.

Police organizations have rules called policy and service standards that guide how they operate. Complaints about policies and services of a police organization are screened by the OIPRD but are **not** investigated by the OIPRD. These complaints are sent to the appropriate police service for investigation and a final report, with oversight by the OIPRD.

how to make a complaint

there are many ways to file a complaint

You may file your complaint in English or French:

- With the OIPRD by fax, on our website, in person, or by mailing in the form at the back of this booklet
- At any municipal, regional or provincial police station in Ontario.

If you require assistance in filling out this form:

- Many local community organizations can give you assistance with filing your complaint and often provide translation services
- You do **not** require a lawyer to file a complaint, but a lawyer or legal clinic may assist with your complaint.

For more information about the OIPRD, please visit our website at www.oiprd.on.ca.

what to expect when making a complaint

consent to proceed

The OIPRD needs your consent before we can look into your complaint, and you will be asked to sign the complaint form indicating you consent to the complaints process. If you do not sign the form, we are unable to record and process your complaint.

recording your complaint

All complaints will be recorded by the OIPRD regardless of where the complaint is filed. If you make a complaint at a police station, the police are required to inform the OIPRD and forward your complaint, even if your complaint was resolved at the police station (Local Resolution). Please take a copy of the form with you for your records.

The OIPRD is required to forward your complaint to the appropriate authority, including a police service or its professional standards department.

The OIPRD, the police service in question or another police service may investigate a conduct complaint. It is up to the Independent Police Review Director (Director) to decide how a conduct complaint will be investigated. The OIPRD must forward policy and service complaints to the police service concerned for review.

For more information about Local Resolution, please see our brochure *Dealing with your complaint by Local Resolution*.

after your complaint has been recorded

Once your complaint is recorded, the OIPRD makes a decision on how to classify your complaint. The police will investigate the majority of complaints, with oversight by the OIPRD. This means the police will provide updates to the OIPRD on the investigation and inform the Director once a decision has been made.

referred police investigation

The police service will appoint an officer to investigate your complaint. The investigating officer will tell you how your complaint will be investigated, what cooperation they require from you, how a decision will be reached and what action will be taken at the end of the investigation.

The OIPRD will receive the same information as you throughout the process. If the Director does not agree with the way the police are investigating your complaint, it is possible to direct the police to take certain action, or the OIPRD may take over the investigation.

informal resolution

It may be determined that your complaint is suitable for Informal Resolution. Informal Resolution is a simple and flexible way to resolve a complaint. Your complaint can only be dealt with by Informal Resolution if you and the police officer(s) agree to this.

For more information, please visit our frequently asked questions (FAQ) page at www.oiprd.on.ca.

OIPRD investigation

In some cases the Director may choose to have the OIPRD investigate the complaint. The OIPRD can only investigate conduct complaints, however, the Director can choose to review other complaints to determine if they are systemic or ongoing.

conduct investigation

The Director will assign an OIPRD investigator to look into your complaint. The investigating officer will tell you how your complaint will be investigated, what cooperation they require from you, how a decision will be reached and what action will be taken at the end of the investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the OIPRD will inform you and the Chief/Commissioner how your complaint will be dealt with and will provide a summary of the investigation.

systemic review

If the OIPRD finds that there is a pattern of complaints about a policy, service or conduct, the Director may choose to do a systemic review. The OIPRD will look into the complaint and write a report with recommendations for improvement, and this report will be provided to the police service and any other person or organization the Director feels is necessary. All reports will be posted on the OIPRD website.



how will you be kept informed?

Whether the OIPRD or the police are investigating your conduct complaint, you will be provided periodic updates. You will be told how your complaint will be dealt with, what action may be taken and how decisions will be made. The OIPRD will provide you with updates: by mail, email or using our website. If your complaint is about a policy or service, you and the OIPRD are provided with a final written decision.

what happens once your complaint has been investigated?

When the OIPRD or police have investigated your complaint, you will be advised about what they have decided to do. The possible outcomes are:

- Your case may be referred for Informal Resolution
- The police may take disciplinary action without a hearing against the officer(s) being complained about
- The police may decide to hold a disciplinary hearing
- The police may decide to improve or change their procedures
- In some cases there may not be enough information to take any action on your complaint. If this happens to you it may simply mean there is not enough evidence available.



If your complaint has been dealt with by Local Resolution (you went directly to the police and resolved your complaint), the OIPRD will receive a summary of your complaint and how it was resolved. Please ask for a copy of this summary for your records.

what to do if you disagree with how your complaint was handled

If you disagree with the way your complaint has been dealt with you may be able to ask for a review. You may request a review at different stages in the process of your complaint.

There are different types of review that apply at different stages of the complaint process and with different outcomes:

- You have 30 days from notification to request a review by the OIPRD if the police determine your conduct complaint is unsubstantiated (there may not be enough evidence)
- You have 30 days from notification to request a review by the OIPRD if the police determine your conduct complaint is not of a serious nature.

You may not appeal a classification by the OIPRD or the result of an OIPRD investigation.

The OIPRD does not deal with discipline appeals or policy and service reviews. You may:

- Appeal the result of a disciplinary hearing by the police service to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission
- Request a review by your police services board if you do not agree with a Police Chief/Commissioner of the OPP's decision about a policy or service complaint.

if you are filing a complaint:

Please fill in all sections of the complaint form and sign your name at the end. The complaint form begins on the next page. Please tear the complaint form out of this booklet along the perforations and submit the completed form.



please send your completed form to:

Office of the Independent Police Review Director
655 Bay Street
10th floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2K4

You may contact the OIPRD using the following:

Toll-free phone: **1-877-411-4773**

Local phone: **416-246-7071**

TTY: **1-877-414-4773**

Toll-free fax: **1-877-415-4773**

Local fax: **416-327-8332**

Website: **www.oiprd.on.ca**

Do you have questions? Visit the frequently asked questions (FAQ) page on our website or contact us at: **OIPRD@ontario.ca**

To assist us in serving you better, if you are sending mail to the OIPRD please put attention to one of the following:

- Complaints
- Reviews
- Local Resolution
- Case Management
- Investigations
- Outreach and Education
- General Inquiry
- Freedom of Information Request
- Media Relations.

All of our brochures are available on our website and at various locations throughout the province including ServiceOntario. For additional information about the OIPRD, how to make a complaint or how to request a review of your complaint, please visit our website at **www.oiprd.on.ca**.

All complaints must be submitted on the OIPRD complaint form.

4. a. DECLARATION

I certify that the information provided is true, and I am not excluded from making a complaint about this police service. I understand the information on this form will be forwarded to the appropriate authority for consideration. **(This includes a professional standards department or police authority of the relevant police service).**

Name (please print):

Signature:

Date: I am represented by an agent: Yes No

Name of agent:

Please attach the contact details of your agent.

4. b. TRANSLATOR'S DECLARATION

I, (print name)

declare that I have accurately translated the entire content of this form for the complainant from the English/French language to language.

I am proficient in both languages and was able to communicate fully with the complainant. The complainant has indicated that she/he fully understands the entire content and the answers provided.

Signature:

Date:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please indicate if you need to be accommodated in the event of an interview by checking the appropriate boxes or filling in the section below:

- I used a translator to fill out this form, and I will need to arrange for a translator in the event of an interview.
- I will require a telephone typewriter service for interviews over the phone and my translator to be present for in-person interviews.

If there is any other information you feel is important please indicate it below:

INTAKE AT A POLICE STATION

If this form has been filled in or received at a police station, please provide the name and badge number of the intake officer:

Name:

Badge No.:

Date received:

This form must be sent to the OIPRD for processing by fax at **1-877-415-4773** or a scanned copy by email to **OIPRDcomplaints@ontario.ca**

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Personal information on this complaint form is collected and provided to the OIPRD by the Police Services Act (section 57 and/or 58) and will be used to investigate your complaint. If you have any questions about privacy protection and the Ontario government, please call the OIPRD at **1-877-411-4773** or visit our website at **www.oiprd.on.ca**



OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT
POLICE REVIEW DIRECTOR

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Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K4
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