



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Our aims

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) is committed to providing quality service for its members and to working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all stakeholders. We continue to improve our service by listening and responding to the views of our members, customers, and stakeholders, responding positively to complaints, and seeking to find a resolution.

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- the complaint is treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for immediate attention;
- we deal with complaints promptly and politely; and
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and annually review our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognize that many concerns will be raised informally. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly; and
- ensure discretion whenever possible.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. For concerns that cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, the *Formal Complaints Procedure* should be followed (see below).

Preamble

Definition: CDHA considers a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction with CDHA, a CDHA staff or board member, which requires a formal response.

Purpose: The formal complaint procedure is intended to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring the complaint, in writing, to a member of CDHA's staff promptly and directly within eight weeks of the incident;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow CDHA time to assess and develop a response; and
- recognize that some circumstances may be beyond CDHA's control.

CDHA's responsibility is to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond in a timely manner;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take appropriate action.

Responsibility for action: All staff and board directors of CDHA.

Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that CDHA maintains strict confidentiality. However, the nature of the complaint may preclude confidentiality (with each complaint assessed individually). In this case, the confidentiality and any necessary disclosures will be communicated to the complainant.

Monitoring and reporting: On an annual basis, the Chief Executive Officer submits a report to the CDHA Board of Directors detailing any complaints made (names omitted) and their resolution. CDHA does not discriminate against anyone who makes a complaint.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Step 1

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, provide your written concern to the CDHA staff member concerned, or to his or her supervisor, so that staff has an opportunity to put things right. If your complaint concerns a board director of CDHA, write a formal complaint to that person. The complaint should outline all the details, the impact it has had on you, and the remedy being sought.

The complaint will be acknowledged within five business days of receipt followed by a full response and explanation within fifteen working days. If you are unsure of who should receive your letter of complaint, send it to CDHA's Director of Finance & Operations.

Our contact details can be found on the [Contact Us](#) section of the CDHA Website.

Step 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, you may write to CDHA's Chief Executive Officer, and ask for both your complaint and CDHA's response to be reviewed. You can expect the CEO to acknowledge your request within five business days of receipt and a response within fifteen business days.

CDHA aims to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. Some issues will be more complex and therefore may require more time to be fully investigated. Timelines for acknowledging and responding to complaints are approximate; if an issue requires a more detailed investigation,

you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Final Step

If you are not satisfied with the reply from CDHA's CEO, you may then write to the President of CDHA, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. This must be done within ten days of receiving the written response from CDHA's CEO.

The President (or delegate) will respond within ten business days to advise that an investigation will be undertaken, and when an outcome is expected.

If your original complaint was about a CDHA board director, then the second and final steps will be handled by the president or president-elect of CDHA.

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