



Suite 150 - 2401 Saskatchewan Drive  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 4H8

Tel: 306.787.6211  
Toll free: 1.800.667.7180  
Fax: 306.787.9090  
Email: [ombreg@ombudsman.sk.ca](mailto:ombreg@ombudsman.sk.ca)

For Immediate Release

December 16, 2009

## OMBUDSMAN'S GUIDE DESIGNED TO MAKE APPEALS EASIER

Today, Saskatchewan's Ombudsman, Kevin Fenwick, announced the release of *Practice Essentials for Administrative Tribunals*, a new guide that will help tribunals improve their processes for the thousands of Saskatchewan citizens who come in contact with them each year.

For many citizens, a tribunal is where they go when unhappy with a decision of a government ministry or agency. Administrative Tribunals – also called boards, commissions or appeal committees – are to be the affordable, effective and timely alternative to the courts and government bureaucracy.

Like the courts, administrative tribunals are decision-making bodies and their decisions can profoundly impact the lives of the individuals who appear before them. For example, they can decide whether you can be evicted from your home or whether your vehicle should have been impounded or whether you ought to have been paid out for a crop insurance claim.

Fenwick said. "Every day, people appeal government decisions and it is vital that the tribunals reviewing those decisions operate effectively and fairly. If you think a government decision is unfair to you, very often your next step is an appeal. That sounds logical enough – but what if the appeal itself is a problem? What if you don't know what kind of information the tribunal will be looking for? What if you have to wait a long time for the decision? What if you get a written decision that doesn't make sense to you? What if you later realize that the issue could have been resolved by mediation?"

These are the kinds of problems that prompted the Ombudsman in 2007 to release *Hearing Back*. That review looked into the effectiveness of the province's administrative tribunals and made 27 recommendations to government. Now, his office has produced a guide designed to assist tribunals in providing better services to the public. "That's not to say that every problem we've identified happens at every tribunal. Many of the tribunals are doing many things well. *Practice Essentials for Administrative Tribunals* is a best practices guide designed to help all of the tribunals and the people who come before them," said Fenwick.

The guide outlines what are the essential best practices for administrative tribunals when hearing appeals. It begins with what should happen the very moment an individual first contacts them to request an appeal, through to the hearing process itself.

promoting fairness

The guide is intended as a reference for any tribunal member and as a training tool for new members. A workshop based on the guide will be available to tribunals through the Dispute Resolution Office and several tribunals have already expressed an interest in the course. Those who are interested are welcome to contact the Dispute Resolution Office at 306-787-5747.

Electronic copies of the guide may be downloaded at no cost from [www.ombudsman.sk.ca](http://www.ombudsman.sk.ca) (click on Brochures & Reports) or from the Queen's Printer at [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). Paper copies will be available from the Queen's Printer.

- 30 -

For more information:

Leila Dueck  
Director of Communications  
Ombudsman Saskatchewan  
Phone: 306-787-7369  
Fax: 306-787-9090  
E-mail: [ldueck@ombudsman.sk.ca](mailto:ldueck@ombudsman.sk.ca)