

# Solving Problems on Your Own



**Ombudsman  
Saskatchewan**  
*Promoting Fairness*

## Having Problems?

A misunderstanding or difference of opinion can often be resolved by taking the time to talk and listen to the other side.

## Suggestions

Here are some ideas to consider that may help avoid problems or resolve complaints before you call for help from a third party such as the Ombudsman.

- **Be prepared.** Know what questions you are going to ask. (It helps to write them down.) Be sure to have any relevant information you need before you contact the agency. Be prepared with dates, times, names, decisions and actions that relate to your complaint.
  - **Be pleasant.** Treat employees the way you would like to be treated. Being nasty or rude will mark you as a crank, not as a reasonable person who has been wronged. It is a good idea to say that you have a problem and need help solving it.
  - **Keep records.** Take notes, ask for the names and titles of employees you speak with, and save copies of all your correspondence.
  - **Ask questions.** Ask why the agency made the decision or took the action it did. Ask employees to identify the rules, policies or law that governed their actions. Ask for copies.
- **Talk to the right people.** Don't get angry if the first employee you meet cannot resolve your complaint. Instead, ask to talk to a supervisor. Persist until you get to someone who has the power to change decisions. Keep asking questions until you understand what happened and why.
  - **Read what is sent to you and pay attention to the details.** Many agency decisions may be appealed, but there are deadlines. Be sure to follow appeal rules and deadlines. If you mail your appeal, it's a good idea to have the mail certified and keep the receipt.
  - **Pick worthwhile fights.** Most of us need to be selective about our disputes because of the time and energy it takes. In pursuing disputes, there should be clear-cut benefits and the goal should be worth the effort.

## Need Help?

If you have a problem with a provincial or municipal government ministry, agency or health entity, first discuss the matter with the agency involved. They will often be happy to explain a specific policy or correct the problem to your satisfaction.

If you follow these suggestions but still cannot resolve the problem, call us at 1-800-667-9787. We may be able to help.