

# Making a complaint about the police

## GUIDE AND COMPLAINT FORM





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## GUIDE AND COMPLAINT FORM

The Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) is responsible for receiving, managing and overseeing all public complaints about the police in Ontario. As a civilian arm's-length agency of the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, our decisions are independent from the government, the police, and the public.

Our goal is to provide an independent, effective, transparent and accessible public complaints system that is fair to both the public and the police, and builds confidence and trust in the public complaints process.

Our office cannot investigate, recommend or lay criminal charges.



## WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Any member of the public can make a complaint; however, the OIPRD screens complaints to ensure that the person complaining is:

- Directly affected by the incident
- A witness to the incident
- A person in a personal relationship with the directly affected person **and** has suffered loss, damage, distress, danger or inconvenience
- A person who has knowledge of the conduct, or has possession or control of anything that the Director feels constitutes evidence that establishes misconduct or unsatisfactory work performance
- Acting on behalf of an individual listed above and has been given written permission to make a complaint on someone else's behalf (this person is known as an agent)

The following people are **not** allowed to make a complaint with the OIPRD:

- The Solicitor General
- An employee of the OIPRD
- A member or employee of the Ontario Civilian Police Commission (OCPC)
- 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



## WHO CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

The OIPRD can only deal with complaints about sworn police officers in Ontario. This includes all municipal, regional and provincial (OPP) police officers. The OIPRD does not have jurisdiction over RCMP officers, TTC Special Constables, GO Transit police, First Nations police officers, court officers, corrections officers, campus police, provincial offences officers or special constables.



## WHAT CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

The OIPRD accepts complaints about the conduct of officers and the policies or services of a police service.

**Conduct:** How a police officer behaves.

**Policies:** The rules and standards that guide an officer in delivering police services.

**Services:** How effectively and efficiently a particular police service performs its duties.



## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT

The OIPRD needs your consent before we can look into your complaint. You must sign the complaint form indicating you consent to the complaints process; otherwise we will be unable to process your complaint. The OIPRD does not accept anonymous complaints.



## HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You may make your complaint in English or French:

- With the OIPRD on our website: **[www.oiprd.on.ca](http://www.oiprd.on.ca)**, in person, by fax, by sending the form as an email attachment to **[oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca)**, or by mailing the form at the back of this booklet.
- At any municipal, regional or provincial police station in Ontario. The police service must forward the complaint to the OIPRD within three business days.

If you need accommodation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), including alternative formats of this brochure, please email: **[oiprd.accommodation@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprd.accommodation@ontario.ca)** or call 416-246-7071, toll-free 1-877-411-4773.

You do not need a lawyer to make a complaint, but a lawyer or legal clinic may assist you with your complaint.



## WAYS TO RESOLVE A COMPLAINT

The OIPRD offers confidential early resolution at various stages of the process. The Early Resolution (ER) program resolves issues and builds trust between the police and the public. ER is a voluntary process that is faster than an investigation and gives parties full control over the outcome. Through open discussions, the complainant is given the opportunity to create a resolution that addresses their feelings and concerns.

If you are interested in ER, please indicate this on the form. For more information, please visit **[www.oiprd.on.ca](http://www.oiprd.on.ca)**.



## SCREENING YOUR COMPLAINT

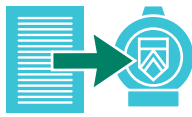
Every complaint is processed and screened by the OIPRD. Each complaint will be classified as a conduct, policy or service complaint and will then be screened to determine if it will go to investigation.

If your complaint has been classified as a conduct complaint and is screened out, meaning it will not be investigated, you will receive a letter outlining the reasons for the decision.

If your conduct complaint is screened in and continues to investigation, the OIPRD will decide who will investigate: the OIPRD, the police service you are complaining about or another police service. Many police services in Ontario have professional standards branches, sections, bureaus or units that investigate complaints referred to them by the OIPRD. You will be notified as to who will conduct the investigation.

The OIPRD is required to forward conduct complaints (whether screened in or out) to the chief of the relevant police service, or the OPP Commissioner, and the police officers against whom the complaint is made. A complaint about a chief or deputy chief will be sent to the police services board.

Policy and service complaints are screened by the OIPRD but are not investigated by the OIPRD. If they are screened in, these complaints are sent to the appropriate police service for investigation by the chief or Commissioner. A written report will be sent to you, the police services board and the OIPRD.



## REFERRED INVESTIGATION

When an investigation is referred to a police service, their professional standards unit or a designated officer will investigate your complaint. The investigator will collect evidence and contact relevant parties including you, the respondent officer and any witnesses. When the investigation is complete, the chief/ Commissioner will send you, the respondent officer and the OIPRD the results in an investigative report.

The OIPRD maintains oversight throughout all complaint investigations conducted by a police service and reviews all investigative reports.



## OIPRD INVESTIGATION

When the OIPRD retains a conduct complaint, an OIPRD investigator is assigned to investigate your complaint. The investigator will collect evidence and contact relevant parties including you, the respondent officer and any witnesses. When the investigation is complete, the OIPRD will send you, the respondent officer and the chief or OPP Commissioner the results of the investigation in an investigative report.



## WHAT HAPPENS ONCE YOUR COMPLAINT HAS BEEN INVESTIGATED?

When the OIPRD or police have investigated your complaint, you will be notified of the outcome. The possible outcomes are:

- Your case may be referred for Informal Resolution, with your consent.
- The police may take disciplinary action against the officer(s) being complained about without a hearing if misconduct of a less serious nature is substantiated (that means, there is enough evidence to believe, on reasonable grounds, that misconduct has occurred).
- The chief must hold a disciplinary hearing when misconduct of a serious nature has been substantiated.
- The complaint may be unsubstantiated if there is not enough evidence to believe, on reasonable grounds, that misconduct has occurred.
- For service and policy complaints, the chief or Commissioner may decide to improve or change the policies and/or services of their police service.





## WHAT TO DO IF YOU DISAGREE WITH HOW YOUR COMPLAINT WAS HANDLED

**Screening decision:** There is no statutory right of appeal from a screening decision of the Director. If you disagree with a screening decision, the only way to review that decision is to bring an application for judicial review in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

**Investigation referred to a police service:** If you disagree with the way that your complaint about an officer's conduct was investigated by a police service, or the result of that investigation, you may request a review of the conduct investigation. A Request for Review should be made within 30 days from the date that you were notified of the results of the police investigation, otherwise, the OIPRD may not conduct the review.

**Investigation conducted by the OIPRD:** There is no statutory right of appeal from the findings of the Director after an OIPRD investigation. If you disagree with the outcome of the investigation, the only way to review the Director's decision is to bring an application for judicial review in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

**Result of a disciplinary hearing:** If you disagree with the outcome of a disciplinary hearing, you may appeal the result to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission.

**Investigation of a policy/service complaint:** If you disagree with the chief's decision about a policy or service complaint, you may request a review by the police services board. There is no review process of the decision of the OPP Commissioner regarding a provincial OPP policy or service complaint.



## IF YOU ARE MAKING A COMPLAINT

All complaints must be submitted on the OIPRD complaint form. The form begins on the next page. Please read all the instructions carefully and fill in all sections of the complaint form. Make sure to include as much relevant detail in your complaint as possible and sign your name at the end.

Please detach the complaint form from this booklet and submit the completed form to:

Office of the Independent Police Review Director  
655 Bay Street, 10th floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2T4

You may also submit the form by:

Scanning and emailing it to: **[oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca)**

Faxing the form to:

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

Local fax: 416-327-8332

You may contact the OIPRD using:

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

Local phone: 416-246-7071

TTY: 1-877-414-4773

Email: **[oiprd@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprd@ontario.ca)**

Our brochures are available on our website, at police services and at various public locations throughout the province.

For additional information please visit: **[www.oiprd.on.ca](http://www.oiprd.on.ca)**.

# Complaint About the Police



## COMPLETING THE FORM

The OIPRD must have a signed complaint form in order to process your complaint. The OIPRD does not accept anonymous complaints. Please sign the declaration in section six on this form.


Please note that the information on this form will be sent to the police chief or the OPP Commissioner, in care of their professional standards unit, or to the police services board, and the police officers against whom the complaint is made.


If you have questions about filling out this form or about the complaints process, visit our website at: [www.oiprd.on.ca](http://www.oiprd.on.ca) or call us at: 1-877-411-4773 or 416-246-7071.

 Have you previously filed a related complaint with the OIPRD? Yes  No

If yes, please provide the file number(s) of your other complaint(s):

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 Is this complaint related to an ongoing Special Investigations Unit investigation? Yes  No

 Is this complaint related to an ongoing criminal court proceeding? Yes  No

If yes, please describe the type of charge and the next court date:

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 Is this complaint about something that happened to you? Yes  No

 How would you like correspondence from the OIPRD to be sent to you? Mail  Email

**I would consider early resolution or mediation for this matter.**

# 1

## YOUR DETAILS (COMPLAINANT)

Title (e.g., Mr./Mrs./Ms.):

First (given) name:

Last (family) name:

Date of birth: Day   Month   Year

If under the age of 16, please provide your guardian's name and contact information:

Street address:

City:

Province:  Postal code:

Main phone number:

Alternate phone number:


Email:

# 2

## POLICE DETAILS

 Name of police service your complaint is about:

\_\_\_\_\_

 What police station/division/detachment does the officer(s) work at? (If known)

\_\_\_\_\_

 Who is your complaint about [specific officer(s)]?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Badge #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Badge #: \_\_\_\_\_

If there are more than two officers involved, please include that information in your complaint details in section three.

### 3 YOUR COMPLAINT DETAILS

Where did the incident(s) that led to your complaint happen? If you do not know the address or street names please include landmarks etc.

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

Nearest intersection: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

When did the incident(s) happen? If there is more than one incident, include each date.

Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Time [ ] [ ] : [ ] [ ] AM  PM

Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Time [ ] [ ] : [ ] [ ] AM  PM

If there are many incidents that happened over a period of time include that information.

From: Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

To: Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

From: Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

To: Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

From: Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

To: Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]



# 4

## TRANSLATOR'S DECLARATION

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_

declare that I have accurately translated the content of this form for the complainant from English to (insert language) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Day [ ] [ ] Month [ ] [ ] Year [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

I used a translator to fill out this form and I will need to arrange for a translator in the event of an interview. Yes  No

# 5

## ACCOMMODATION

If you have a disability, accommodations are available under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

For more information about the AODA please email [oiprd.accommodation@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprd.accommodation@ontario.ca) or call 1-877-411-4773 or 416-246-7071.

Please indicate how we may accomodate you:

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# 6

## DECLARATION

I certify that the information provided on this form is true. I understand that the information on this form will be provided to the police chief or the OPP Commissioner, in care of their professional standards unit, or the police services board, and that this complaint may be investigated by the professional standards unit of the service I am complaining about, with oversight by the OIPRD.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Day   Month   Year

If you are represented by an agent, please have them contact the OIPRD.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

The personal information that you have provided on this complaint form is collected by the OIPRD under the Police Services Act. The information will be used to investigate your complaint. As an agency of the government, the OIPRD must adhere to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). If you have any questions about privacy protection, please contact the Freedom of Information and Privacy Office at the Ministry of the Attorney General at 416-326-4300.

## INTAKE AT A POLICE STATION (FOR POLICE)

Intake Officer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Badge #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date received: Day   Month   Year

This complaint form and additional information provided by the complainant must be sent to the OIPRD for processing within three business days of receipt by a scanned copy to: **oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca**, by mail, or by fax at 1-877-415-4773.



# Race Data Collection

Under the authority of the Anti-Racism Act, 2017 (ARA), the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) is obligated to collect personal information from members of the public who make a complaint to the OIPRD. Under the Ontario Regulation 267/18, the OIPRD is required to collect race-based data on:

1. Indigenous identity,
2. ethnic origin,
3. race,
4. religion.

This information will be used to satisfy the requirements of the ARA and corresponding regulations. The sole purpose of the collection of this personal information is for eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity.

The OIPRD will de-identify personal information collected under the ARA, and may use the de-identified information in support of the OIPRD's powers under the Police Services Act, 1990, including sections 57 and 92. This de-identified information may also be used to meet the OIPRD's mandate, for program development, and to improve service delivery.

Answering these questions is completely voluntary. No program, service, or benefit will be withheld if you do not provide or refuse to provide the personal information requested. Your decision will not affect any service provided or decision made by the OIPRD. Personal information collected under the ARA will not be shared with police services or police services boards or any other entity, person or party, except as permitted or required under section 7(14) of the ARA.

You may also access and correct your personal information or withdraw your consent by contacting our office. As an agency of the government, the OIPRD adheres to the requirements of the ARA and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990 (FIPPA).

For more information about this initiative please contact the OIPRD Inquiries and Intake Assistant, at [oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca) or to **655 Bay Street, 10th floor, Toronto, Ontario M7A 2T4**. Telephone 1-877-411-4773.

Do you identify as First Nations, Métis, and or Inuit? Yes  No   
If yes, please select all that apply:

First Nations  Métis  Inuit

Ethnic origin refers to a person’s ethnic or cultural origins. Ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic, and/or religious characteristics.

What is your ethnic or cultural origins(s)?

(For example, Canadian, Chinese, East Indian, English, Italian, Filipino, Scottish, Irish, Anishinaabe, Ojibway, Mi’kmaq, Cree, Haudenosaunee, Métis, Inuit, Portuguese, German, Polish, Dutch, French, Jamaican, Pakistani, Iranian, Sri Lankan, Korean, Ukrainian, Lebanese, Guyanese, Somali, Colombian, Jewish, etc.)

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In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background. For example, some people are considered ‘White,’ while others are considered ‘Black’ or ‘East Asian,’ or a combination such as ‘White’ and ‘South Asian’.

Which race category best describes you? Select all that apply.


	<b>Examples/descriptions</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Black	African, Afro-Caribbean descent/African-Canadian
<input type="checkbox"/> East Asian	Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous	First Nations, Inuit, or Métis descent
<input type="checkbox"/> Latino	Latin American or Hispanic descent
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern	Arab, Persian, or West Asian, e.g. Afghani, Turk, Kurd
<input type="checkbox"/> South Asian	Indian Subcontinent descent, e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Southeast Asian	Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent
<input type="checkbox"/> White	European descent
<input type="checkbox"/> Another race category not described above (Please enter below)	

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Note: If you are entering in the “Another race category” section, please specify a race and/or select all that apply above. Do not enter “bi-racial”, or “mixed”.

 What is your religion and/or spiritual affiliation? Select all that apply.

- Buddhist
  - Christian
  - Hindu
  - Jewish
  - Muslim
  - Sikh
  - Indigenous Spirituality
  - No religion
  - Another religion or spiritual affiliation (Please enter below)
- 

 Answering these questions is completely voluntary. You may return your responses by regular mail or email. If you are using an email service be secure. Unencrypted emails may expose you to privacy risks, including that your personal information may be accessed by unauthorized parties, resulting in a privacy breach. Email encryption minimizes the risk of unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of information. The OIPRD encourages you to encrypt your email, if possible.

The OIPRD follows the Ontario Government protocols on implementing the appropriate security measures and tools, including data and email encryption within our internal servers. By completing and returning this form through an unencrypted email service to [oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca](mailto:oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca), you agree to taking the risk of potential privacy breaches during the transit of the email, outside of our control.

 **Please submit your completed Race Data Collection Form to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director only, via email or mail. Do not submit the Race Data Collection form to the police service.**