

Harassment Policy

Effective Date: May 30, 2019

Authority: Ombudsman, Sophie Petrillo

POLICY

The Office of the Hydro One Ombudsman strives to provide a high-quality complaint process that is timely, fair and accessible. When delivering this service, our Office works to ensure that any individual barriers to participating in this process are minimized, and that every complainant who contacts our Office has a fair chance to have their complaint reviewed. However, when providing these services we do not expect our staff to tolerate behavior that is offensive, abusive, threatening, or otherwise unreasonably interferes with our complaint process. This policy outlines what we expect from complainants who work with our Office, and how we address instances of unreasonable behaviour.

When our Office reviews a complaint, we rely on the complainant to co-operate with us to help ensure we fully understand the complaint. This co-operation includes providing any requested information and documentation. To allow for this co-operation, we are hesitant to limit a complainant's contact with our Office. However, in some instances such limitations may be necessary.

In situations where our staff is subjected to behaviour that we consider offensive, abusive or threatening, or other unreasonable behaviour that impedes our ability to complete our complaint process, we will take steps to address that behaviour.

When a complainant's behaviour is considered unreasonable, we will clearly state to them why we consider it unreasonable and ask the behaviour to change. If the unreasonable behaviour continues, the Ombudsman may make the decision to restrict the complainant's access to the Office ("Service Restriction"). Service Restrictions may include restrictions on how, who, or when the complainant may contact our Office, or any other reasonable and proportionate steps to support a safe and respectful workplace for our staff. When a Service Restriction with our Office is put in place, the Ombudsman will notify the complainant and advise of the specific restriction(s).

In some extreme instances, it may be determined that a complainant's behaviour is so extreme that the safety and welfare of our staff or others may be at risk. In such cases, we may decide to immediately cease all contact with the complainant and report the matter to the police or others for response. In such cases we may not advise the complainant before taking such steps.

Examples of unreasonable behaviour may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Repeatedly changing the grounds/basis of a complaint;
- Denying or changing statements made during the course of our review;
- Recording meetings and conversations without staff's knowledge;
- Providing falsified documents as part of a complaint;
- Making excessive demands of staff time and resources through the number and/or length of emails, letters and/or telephone calls;
- Persistent and unreasonable attempts at contacting staff;
- Using intimidating, abusive, harassing, aggressive or derogatory language;
- Threatening bodily harm;
- Damaging or threatening to damage property;
- Physically intimidating, stalking or otherwise attempting to engage with staff outside their regular work hours; and
- Threatening harm against self, staff or others.