

Service Standards



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1. OVERVIEW STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Hydro One Ombudsman (“the Ombudsman”) is committed to providing the highest level of service and ensuring that Services are delivered in a fair, timely and accessible manner to all Hydro One customers and stakeholders who contact the Ombudsman’s Office.
- 1.2 The Ombudsman’s Office will provide Services that are reliable, consistent, courteous and respects the Dignity of those who interact with the Ombudsman’s Office.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of these Standards are to set out the Ombudsman’s Office’s service standards and what Complainants can expect in terms of the Services they receive.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 These Standards apply to the Ombudsman’s Office in its interactions with Hydro One customers, Complainants and stakeholders during any aspect of the Ombudsman’s Office’s service delivery and includes, but is not limited to online, electronic, print and verbal communications.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 “**Accommodation**” means under human rights legislation, the duty to accommodate people with disabilities in a way that most respects the Dignity of the person. Accommodation will vary depending on the person’s unique needs.

- 4.2 “Complainant”** means customer, stakeholder, and any affected party or group who has dealings with Hydro One respecting its services and makes a complaint to the Ombudsman’s Office. A Complainant may include someone acting as a representative on behalf of a Complainant.
- 4.3 “Dignity”** means respecting and treating every person as valued, respected and deserving of Services as any other individual who contacts the Ombudsman’s Office.
- 4.4 “Early Resolution”** means facilitating a resolution or arriving at a resolution at the earliest possible stage without the need for an Investigation. Early Resolution may encompass the use of informal resolution techniques.
- 4.5 “Hydro One”** means Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries (together referred to as “Hydro One”).
- 4.6 “Information Submission”** means a submission to the Ombudsman’s Office that is a complaint, but does not necessarily require action to be taken, or submitted anonymously thus preventing further action.
- 4.7 “Intake”** means the process of gathering information at the outset of a complaint to find out what the concerns are relating to.
- 4.8 “Investigation”** is an independent fact-finding process to evaluate whether the Complainant’s allegation(s) of unfairness or unreasonableness by Hydro One are supported or substantiated by the evidence.
- 4.9 “Ombudsman’s Office”** means the Hydro One Ombudsman and the Ombudsman’s staff.
- 4.10 “Services”** means services delivered, including but not limited to interactions arising from phone contacts, Information Submissions, Intake, the provision of Support and Advice, Early Resolutions, and Investigations.
- 4.11 “Support and Advice”** means advising a Complainant of their options or providing general support in clarifying an issue or matter that does not require further action in terms of Early Resolution or an Investigation.
- 4.12 “Systemic Investigation”** means a formal Investigation initiated by the Ombudsman into practices, policies and/or procedures that may have

widespread impact beyond the impact to one customer. Formal notice to Hydro One's CEO is required for Systemic Investigations.

4.13 “Systemic Review” means an Investigation that is less formal and more co-operative in nature than a Systemic Investigation. A Systemic Review includes an examination of practices, policies and/or procedures that may have widespread impact beyond the impact to one customer and where there may be opportunities for the Ombudsman to make recommendations to improve processes and practices without the need for a formal Systemic Investigation. Formal notice to Hydro One's CEO is not required for Systemic Reviews.

5. SERVICE PROVISIONS

5.1 The Ombudsman's Office is committed to delivering excellent service, and carrying out its functions and responsibilities as follows:

5.1.1 Hours of Operation

5.1.1.1 The Ombudsman's Office's hours of operation are **Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**, excluding statutory holidays.

5.1.2 Telephone

5.1.2.1 The Ombudsman's Office is committed to providing accessible telephone Services to Complainants. If the Ombudsman's Office cannot answer your call, the voice mail will pick up within three rings (Complainants will not be placed in a queue).

5.1.2.2 Phone calls will be returned **within 1 business day**.

5.1.2.3 Voicemail for the Ombudsman's Office is routinely updated so that individuals contacting the Ombudsman's Office will be aware of any changes to operating hours.

5.1.3 Emails

5.1.3.1 Emails to the Ombudsman's Office will be acknowledged **within 2 business days** of receipt.

5.1.4 Regular Mail

5.1.4.1 Regular mail will be acknowledged within **3 business days** of receipt.

5.2 Method of Communication

5.2.1 Complainants contacting the Ombudsman's Office may choose the method of communication e.g. by phone, email, or in writing.

5.2.2 Unless a Complainant has requested otherwise, the Ombudsman's Office will usually reach out to the Complainant through the same method that they used to initially contact the Ombudsman's Office.

5.2.3 Members of the Ombudsman's Office will identify themselves by their name when communicating with Complainants.

5.2.4 Where a Complainant is not able to communicate in English, the Complainant should inform the Ombudsman's Office to see if alternative arrangements can be made (this may have an impact on response times).

6. EXPECTED TIMELINES

6.1 In some instances, it may be possible to resolve a matter on first contact with the Ombudsman's Office, but this may not always be possible. For complaints that cannot be resolved during the first contact, the Ombudsman's Office will inform the Complainant of what to expect in terms of next steps. The following general timelines apply:

6.1.1 Information Submissions

6.1.1.1 The Ombudsman's Office aims to address and respond to Information Submissions **within 3 business days**.

6.1.2 Support and Advice

6.1.2.1 The Ombudsman's Office aims to address and respond to requests for Support and Advice **within 5 business days**.

6.1.3 Early Resolution Complaints

6.1.3.1 The Ombudsman's Office aims to achieve Early Resolutions of complaints **within 15 business days**.

6.1.4 Investigations

6.1.4.1 The Ombudsman's Office endeavours to complete individual Investigations **within 30 business days**.

6.1.5 Systemic Reviews and Systemic Investigations

6.1.5.1 There are no set timelines with respect to Systemic Reviews or Systemic Investigations, as timelines may vary depending on the scope of the Investigation, availability of witnesses and evidence to be reviewed.

6.2 While the Ombudsman's Office aims to meet the expected timelines above, each complaint is unique and timelines may be affected by a variety of factors, including: the complexity of the complaint, the volume of relevant records, the availability of parties for interviews, volume of complaints being handled by the Ombudsman's Office, etc.

7. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS TO FACILITIES OR SERVICES

7.1. In the event that there are anticipated or unexpected service disruptions, the Ombudsman's Office will endeavour to provide as much advance notice as is possible under the circumstances.

7.2. The Ombudsman's Office will provide information regarding the reasons for the disruption as well as the expected duration of any disruption.

7.3. The Ombudsman's Office may post information about service disruptions on its website, voicemail, through direct contact or by posting information at its premises.

8. TRAINING

8.1. The Ombudsman's Office will routinely receive training on complaint handling as needed.

9. ACCOMMODATION

- 9.1.** If a Complainant contacting the Ombudsman's Office indicates that they require an Accommodation for a disability or other ground protected under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the Ombudsman's Office will work with the person to determine how best to accommodate their needs.
- 9.2.** While it is preferable for Accommodation requests to be made in writing, the Ombudsman's Office will consider requests for Accommodation regardless of the format in which the request is made. (*See Accessibility Standards for more information*).

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 10.1** The Ombudsman takes concerns about confidentiality seriously. The Ombudsman's Office shall maintain confidentiality in its operations subject to the Ombudsman's Mandate, Terms of Reference, the Duty of Confidentiality Standards, as well as applicable laws.

11. FEEDBACK PROCESS

- 11.1** The Ombudsman's Office strives to meet and surpass expectations while delivering Services. Feedback or comments may be sent to Ombudsman@HydroOne.com or through one of the following contact methods:

Mail: Office of the Hydro One Ombudsman
483 Bay St., South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2P5

Phone: 1-844-608-8756 or 416-345-1505

TTY: 416-345-5839

Fax: 416-345-6129

12. REVIEW OF STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

- 12.1.** These Standards will be reviewed and amended as may be required by the Ombudsman's Office. The Ombudsman's Office shall also update the procedures that accompany these Standards as needed.

13. RELATED DOCUMENTS

13.1 These Standards are accompanied by related procedures. Other documents related to these Standards are noted below.

Related Document	Effective Date of Document	Applicable Sections
Accessibility Standards	March 14, 2022	Entire Standards
Duty of Confidentiality Standards	March 14, 2022	Entire Standards
Terms of Reference	August 11, 2020	ss. 20 and 21

Approval Date: November 1, 2023