



Customer Service Complaint Protocol

talktobuilding@toronto.ca

The following information describes how you may submit a complaint to Toronto Building. To help process your complaint, information on the type of services Toronto Building provides is outlined along with key contact information including service related links.

Overview of Services

The mission of Toronto Building is to “ensure the construction, renovation and demolition of buildings achieves the health, safety, accessibility, conservation and environmental provisions of the Building Code Act and other applicable law.” [\[Mission and Vision Statements\]](#)

Key responsibilities:

- Review permit applications
- Issue Building, Demolition and Sign Permits
- Conduct field inspections

Toronto Building has a mandate to impartially apply the *Building Code Act*, its regulations and applicable law without influence. The City of Toronto also enacted a *Code of Conduct for the Chief Building Official and Inspectors* which guides the day-to-day activities of Toronto Building Staff. [\[Code of Conduct\]](#)

Other services include, preliminary reviews as part of the City's development approval process, providing zoning and Building Code information to the public and technical advice to City Council, committees, divisions and agencies.

Each year on average, Toronto Building issues 35,000 building permits and conducts 170,000 inspections.

You may check the status of your building permit application at the Building Application Status website [\[Click Here\]](#)

For information and requests about other City services you may visit the [\[311 website\]](#) or telephone 311 to speak to a customer service representative.

Complaint Policy

Toronto Building will manage complaints efficiently, fairly, effectively, and uniformly. Complainants are encouraged to first speak *directly* with the service area where you have an issue, in person or by telephone. Most complaints are received this way and resolved promptly. If you are not satisfied with how your verbal complaint is handled you may request to speak to the management in the service area. If you are still not satisfied you may submit a written complaint to Toronto Building or communicate your complaint verbally at the Customer Service Complaint office. (See contact information under complaint process below)

Once a written complaint has been submitted to Toronto Building, receipt will be acknowledged within the same day (working day). If the information regarding the complaint is incomplete, Toronto Building will contact the complainant within two days. Anonymous complaints will not be processed through this protocol.

All registered complaints will be investigated and responded to within 30 days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome the matter may be appealed to the Chief Building Official. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter identifying all options available to seek a resolution.

This *Customer Service Complaint Protocol* has been based on the corporate complaints handling guidelines. [[Customer Service Guidelines](#)] and Toronto Building will manage your complaint in accordance with these guidelines. Complaints will also be managed in accordance with the accessibility standards that have been established in accordance with *Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). To view policy statement [[Click Here](#)]

All complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner in accordance to the *Municipal Freedom of the Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA)

Complaint Procedure

Complaints may be made verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing (by email, fax or mail)

For the purpose of this protocol, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about a service, action or lack of action by Toronto Building or individual(s) providing a service.

A complaint differs from a service request, enquiry, feedback through an opinion, comment or expression of interest about a service or procedure. The following examples are common types of complaints.

Types of Complaints

- timeliness of a service (other than regulated timelines)
- failure to provide a service or action in accordance with policies and procedures
- error made by staff
- improper treatment or poor service by staff
- dissatisfaction with a policy or procedure
- services available inadequate

Toronto Building often receives inquiries and concerns that actually fall under the jurisdiction of other City Divisions or agencies. The following are some of the most common examples that come under the jurisdiction of *Municipal Licensing and Standards* (MLS) division.

- property standards issues
- no heat in apartment buildings
- construction noise
- fences
- complaints about existing structures

For fastest response to these type of complaints please contact MLS directly.

[\[MLS website\]](#)

Some other common complaints fall under the jurisdiction of the *Ministry of Labour*. Many of these complaints relate to unsafe construction practices related to balcony guards, scaffolding, construction methods and equipment. These complaints should be directed to the *Ministry of Labour Health & Safety Contact Centre* at 1-877-202-0008

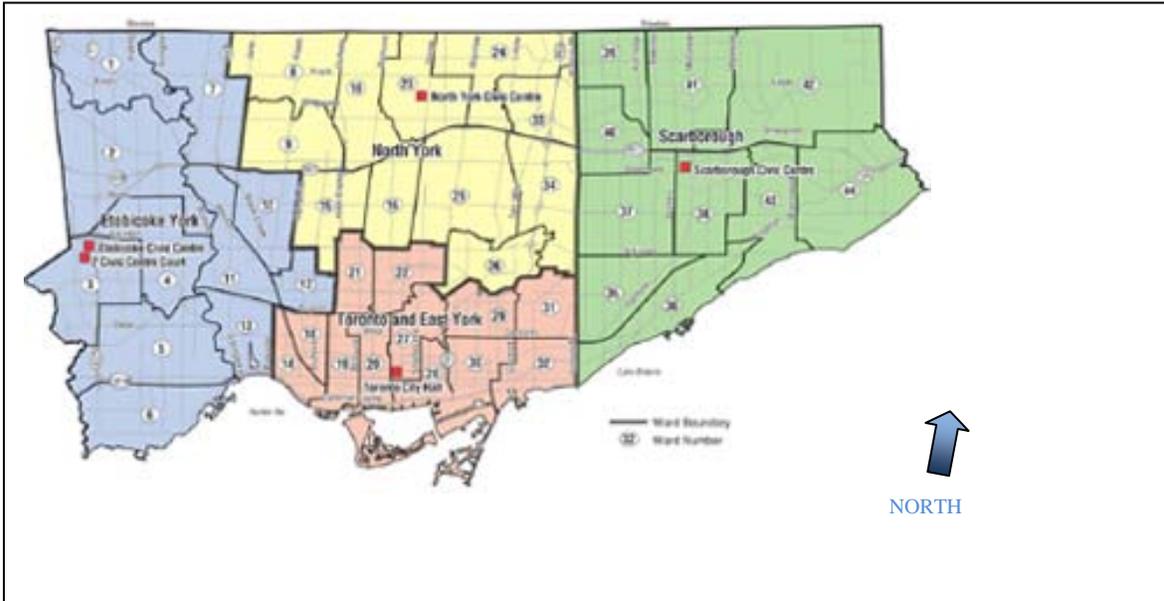
[\[Ministry of Labour website\]](#)

Service Requests

Toronto Building is responsible to respond to a number of issues that are handled as service requests. Although these do not fall under our *Customer Service Complaint Protocol*, we will be pleased to accept your requests for any service we handle or redirect you to the appropriate division or service area. The following are some common service requests:

- request to respond to construction proceeding without a permit
- request to respond to various issues related to construction with a permit
- inquiry about delays in permit issuance
- concerns related to billboards and signs

Who to contact with Service Requests



Service requests are accepted by telephone, or in person at the customer service locations.

<p>Toronto and East York District Wards: 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Toronto City Hall 100 Queen Street West Toronto, ON M5H 2N2 416-392-7539 (Permits) 416-392-8000 (Signs, all districts)</p> <p>Inspection Office 95 The Esplanade, Ground floor Toronto, M5E 2A2 416-338-0700 (Inspections)</p>	<p>North York District Wards: 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33, 34</p> <p>North York Civic Centre 5100 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M2N 5V7 416-395-7000 (Permits) 416-392-8000 (Signs) 416-395-7541 (Inspections)</p>
<p>Etobicoke York District Wards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17</p> <p>Etobicoke Municipal Building 2 Civic Centre Court, Toronto, ON M9C 5A3 416-394-8002 (Permits) 416-392-8000 (Signs) 416-394-8055 (Inspections)</p>	<p>Scarborough District Wards: 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</p> <p>Scarborough Civic Centre 150 Borough Drive, Toronto, ON M1P 4N7 416-396-7526 (Permits) 416-392-8000 (Signs) 416-396-7322 (Inspections)</p>

Complaint Process

How to make a complaint

Step 1

Speak directly with the service area where you have an issue, in person or by telephone. (See contact information under service requests above) The service area representative will provide an immediate response whenever possible. If the matter requires further investigation, the service area representative will provide a response within two days. (working days)

Step 2

If resolution was not accomplished under step one, you may request to speak to the management in the service area. You are entitled to discuss the matter with a Manager and/or Director in the service area. (A record of your complaint will be entered into the tracking system) Management will provide a response within seven days.

Step 3

If satisfaction is not reached under step two, you may submit a complaint to Toronto Building complaint office. To submit a written request, please complete the complaint form(s). [\[Link\]](#)

By mail:

Toronto City Hall
Customer Service Complaint Office
12th Floor, East Tower,
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

E-mail: talktobuilding@toronto.ca

Fax: (416) 696-4143

Telephone: (416) 392-2855 or

TTY: 416) 398-0889 (City's 311 Office general inquiry line)

Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged within the same day. If the information regarding the complaint is incomplete, Toronto Building will contact the complainant within two days. Your complaint will be assigned a unique tracking number and logged into Toronto Building's electronic tracking system. A management representative is assigned to resolve the matter with the complainant. The management representative will undertake the investigation into the matter as soon as the information is logged and received. Confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.

Complaint Process

How to make a complaint (Continued)

Step 4

Once a complaint has been filed under step three, Toronto Building will respond to the complainant with a resolution or options for resolution within 30 days. If the complaint involves a matter regarding a policy, procedure or service offered by Toronto Building, this information will be reviewed by Division management to determine if any changes or improvements should be implemented.

Step 5

If the complainant does not reach satisfactory resolution under step four, the matter may be appealed in confidence to the Chief Building Official in writing. The Chief Building Official will acknowledge and obtain any further information required within seven days. The Chief Building Official will respond to the complainant with a resolution or options for resolution within 30 days.

By mail:

Toronto City Hall
Office of the Chief Building Official
12th Floor, East Tower,
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Step 6

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome under step five, the matter may be directed to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is an office of last resort and should only be contacted after exhausting all means of resolution within Toronto Building and completing the process outlined in steps one to five above.

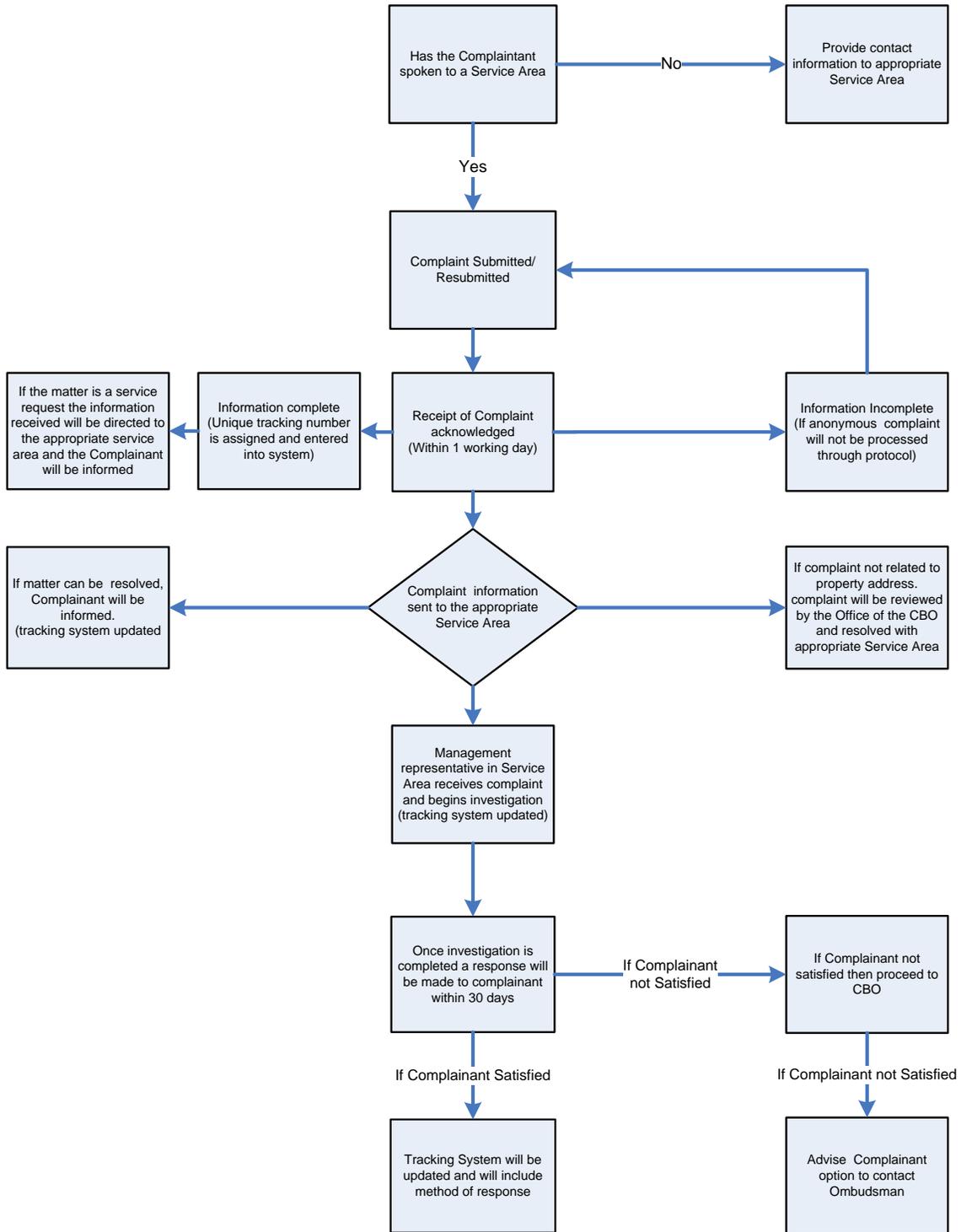
Office of the Ombudsman
375 University Avenue, Suite 203
Toronto, ON M5G 2J5

Tel: (416)392-7062

TTY: (416) 392-7100

E-mail: ombuds@toronto.ca

Toronto Building Complaint Process Diagram



Legislated Complaints and Appeals

Relevant Legislation

The *Building Code Act* and Regulations establish the powers and duties of the City with respect to the issuance of building permits. Building standards are established by:

- regulations (Building Code)
- other applicable law defined in the Building Code
- service level standards for making decisions on building permit applications or responding to inspection requests

Shared Jurisdiction with Province and Appeal Process

- The *Building Code Act* establishes the right to appeal to the Divisional Court any decision of the Chief Building Official – extended to staff (e.g., a stop work order, issuance or denial of a building permit). Building Code interpretations may be appealed to the Building Code Commission (BCC). For an application for a BCC hearing [[Click Here](#)]
- A technical issue can be referred to the Building Code Commission (BCC) A problem related to construction techniques or materials can be referred to the Building Materials Evaluation Commission (BMEC) For a BMEC application [[Click Here](#)]

Period within which a Permit Shall be Issued or Refused

The Building Code specifies the following time frames for the review of complete building permit applications:

- 10 business days for a house
- 15 business days for a small building
- 20 business days for a large building
- 30 business days for a complex building

Within the specified time frame, we will either issue or refuse to issue a building permit and provide in writing all reasons for the refusal. (See table below for detailed timeframe If you have a dispute about the timeframes not being met you may appeal to the BCC. For an application [[Click Here](#)]

Legislated Mandatory Inspections

The Building Code, Subsection 1.3.5.1, requires an inspector provide an inspection within two days once a notice for inspection has been submitted (See *Prescribed Inspections* below for details) If you have a dispute about the timeframes not being met you may appeal to the BCC. For an application [[Click Here](#)]

Period within Which Permit Shall be Issued or Refused

BUILDING CODE (Division C Table 1.3.1.3)

Row Number	Class of Building	Time Period
1	(a) A detached house, semi-detached house, townhouse, or row house where no dwelling unit is located above another dwelling (b) A detached structure that serves a <i>building</i> described in Clause (a) and does not exceed 55 m ² in <i>building</i> area (c) A tent to which Section 3.14 of Division B applies (d) A sign to which Section 3.15 of Division B applies.	10 days
2	(a) <i>Buildings</i> described in Clauses 1.1.2.4.(1)(a) of Division A, other than <i>buildings</i> described in column 2 of any of Rows 1 and 4 of this Table. (b) Farm <i>buildings</i> that do not exceed 600 m ² in building area.	15 days
3	(a) <i>Buildings</i> described in Clauses 1.1.2.2.(1)(a) or (b) of Division A, other than <i>buildings</i> described in Column 2 of any of Rows 1 and 4 of this Table. (b) Farm <i>buildings</i> exceeding 600m ² in <i>building</i> area.	20 days
4	(a) Post-disaster <i>buildings</i> (b) <i>Buildings</i> to which Subsection 3.2.6. of Division B or any provision in Articles 3.2.8.3 to 3.2.8.11. of Division B applies.	30 days
Column 1	2	3

Prescribed Inspections

BUILDING CODE (Division C 1.3.5.3.)

- (1) Except as provided Sentence (2), an *inspector* or *registered code agency*, as the case may be, shall, not later than two days after receipt of a notice given under Sentence 1.3.5.1.(2), undertake a site inspection of the *building* to which the notice relates.
- (2) Where a notice given under Sentence 1.3.5.1.(2) relates to matters described in Clause 1.3.5.1.(2)(k) or (l), an *inspector* or *registered code agency*, as the case may be, shall, not later than five days after receipt of the notice, undertake a site inspection of the *sewage system* to which the notice relates.
- (3) When undertaking an inspection required under Sentence (1) and (2), the *inspector* or *registered code agency*, as the case may be, may consider reports concerning whether the *building* or part of the *building* complies with the Act or this Code.
- (4) The time periods referred to in Sentences (1) and (2) shall begin on the day following the day on which the notice is given.
- (5) The time periods referred to in Sentences (1) and (2) shall not include Saturdays, holidays, and all other days when the offices of the *principal authority* are not open for the transaction of business with the public.

Further Resources

Building Code Commission Contact for Time Period Disputes for Permit Processing and for Site Inspection:

Nella Auciello, Secretary
Building Code Commission
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Building & Development Branch
777 Bay Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2E5

Tel: (416) 585-6645

Fax: (416) 585-7531

Email: nella.auciello2.@ontario.ca

City of Toronto Building Permit By-law

[\[Click Here\]](#)

City of Toronto Sign By-law

[\[Click Here\]](#)

Building Code Act 1992, CHAPTER 23 and Building Code

[\[Click Here\]](#)