



Complaint Form Information Sheet

What types of complaints will the Law Society deal with?

The Law Society of British Columbia is the regulatory body for the legal profession in British Columbia. The Law Society has authority to review the conduct and competence of lawyers practising in BC, including lawyers in private practice, legal aid lawyers, government lawyers and Crown prosecutors. The Law Society can also review the conduct of a lawyer outside the practice of law if the conduct reflects badly on the legal profession.

We cannot help you with all of your concerns. For example the Professional Conduct Department at the Law Society is not able to assist in the following matters:

- We cannot provide you with legal advice. You need to see a lawyer.
- We cannot intervene in, or change, the decision of a court.
- We cannot intervene in or delve into the merits of ongoing legal proceedings.
- We cannot review complaints about Judges.
- We cannot insist that a lawyer take a case, remain on or withdraw from a case or do something specific in a case.
- We cannot reduce your fees. If you believe the fees charged by your lawyer were not reasonable please contact the Supreme Court Registrar in your area. For more information please visit the Public section on the Law Society website at lawsociety.bc.ca.
- We cannot pay you money or make a lawyer pay you money because of a lawyer's mistake. If you believe a lawyer has made a mistake you may wish to seek legal advice about your options. *

* In those rare instances in which a complaint involves the misappropriation or possible misappropriation of trust funds by a lawyer, the complainant should also be aware of the Law Society's trust protection coverage. See our website for further information.

What can you do prior to lodging a complaint?

If you have questions or concerns about your lawyer's conduct, a good first step is to talk to your lawyer or another member of the lawyer's firm. Misunderstandings can arise because of a lack of communication. You may be able to resolve the matter by simply discussing your concerns. If you are unable to settle your differences, or if you are concerned about a lawyer other than your own, you can call the Law Society's Professional Conduct Department. If you call the Law Society, a staff member will be available to speak to you.

The confidentiality of your complaint and our process

The Law Society *cannot* guarantee the information that you or any other person has provided will remain confidential because:

- The Law Society will share some or all of the information and copies of documents that it receives from you and any other person with the lawyer complained about;
- The Law Society may at its discretion talk to any third parties who may have relevant information concerning the matters raised in the your complaint; and
- Our records are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and as a result, information gathered by the Law Society may be disclosed, on request, to other persons whose interests are affected.

Also please note: Under Section 87 of the *Legal Profession Act*, this form and any other document relating to this complaint are not admissible as evidence in any proceedings without the consent of the author of the material or the Executive Director.

What does the Law Society need you to do?

Complete and sign the Complaint Form and attach a copy of all documents that are relevant to your complaint. Send the completed Complaint Form with copies of documents to:

The Professional Conduct Department
Law Society of British Columbia
845 Cambie Street
Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 4Z9

Attention: Intake Officer

Facsimile: 604.605.5399 or scan and email to: professionalconduct@lsbc.org

What happens next?

After receipt of your complaint, including your address and telephone number, we will send you a letter advising you that we have received your complaint. Your complaint will be reviewed and may be assigned to one of our staff lawyers. We may require that you provide further information, including supporting documents, before we commence an investigation. That lawyer will keep you informed about the status of your complaint.

If you have any questions about how to file your complaint, please request to speak to an Intake Officer at 604.669.2533 or 1.800.903.5300. For more information please visit the Law Society website at lawsociety.bc.ca. Please keep this information sheet for your records.