



COMPLAINT PROCESS FAQs for Occupational Therapists

How can I avoid having a complaint filed against me?

Although there is no way to guarantee that you will never have a complaint filed against you, the best way to minimize your risk is to always follow the highest possible standards of practice. This includes meeting or exceeding ACOT's practice standards and guidelines, following ACOT's Code of Ethics and using the highest standards of client care.

Additionally, one of the most important elements in your relationship with your clients is effective communication. Listen carefully so you understand what your clients hope to gain from your occupational therapy services. Ensure that you have tailored your informed consent process to meet your clients' needs [hyperlink to ACOT consent GL].

Communication breakdowns often stem from misunderstandings regarding:

- the role of the occupational therapist,
- the role of other service providers,
- the limitations of what the occupational therapist can do, and/or
- the limitations of the system the client is in.

To avoid such communication breakdowns, ensure that your clients understand the occupational therapy service you are proposing, what results can be reasonably expected, potential risks and benefits, and the fees that will be charged.

If a client raises a concern, deal with it immediately. A formal complaint may be avoided if the client feels that their concerns have been dealt with respectfully and honestly. In some cases, however, a formal complaint may still result, so it is prudent to keep careful notes of your client interactions and any concerns that are raised.

For more communication tips please refer to: <https://acot.ca/enews/communication-tips-from-acots-complaints-director/>

What should I include in my response to the Complaints Director?

The response letter should:

- Describe in general terms the circumstances involved
- Address all the issues identified in the complaint letter
- Explain the reasons for your actions and opinions expressed, and outline any extenuating factors
- Include a copy of the supporting documentation relevant to the complaint

Ensure you respond by the date identified in your letter from the Complaints Director. If you anticipate a delay in responding, notify the Complaints Director as soon as possible to request an extension.

Do I need a lawyer to represent me during the complaint process?

Retaining a lawyer is your right, and a decision you have to make. We recommend you contact your insurance provider to see whether you qualify for free legal advice.

Does the complainant see my response to the Complaints Director?

Generally, no. However, the Complaints Director may quote your response and/or the investigator may include a summary of it in the investigation report. Write your response as if the complainant will see the contents. If there is information you feel the complainant should not see, please indicate this in your response and why.

Ensure that you have tailored your informed consent process to meet your clients' needs. See ACOT's [Informed Consent](#) guideline under [practice resources](#) for more information

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