



Office of the Ombudsman
2016 Annual Report

407 ETR
Express Toll Route
FAST. SAFE. RELIABLE.

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A Message from the Ombudsman's Office



The Ombudsman's Office (the "**Office**") is pleased to present the 2016 Annual Ombudsman Report for 407 ETR. The number of customer contacts with the Office decreased significantly in 2016. This downward trend remains consistent with an overall decrease in contacts to 407 ETR's Customer Service Department for the same period.

We continue to commit to providing an objective, professional, transparent and consistent experience to those customers who appeal to the Office. It is through these customer engagements that we are able to ensure equal and fair application of 407 ETR policies and also make recommendations to the organization for change.

The implementation of these recommendations would not be possible if not for customers bringing their concerns forward, and 407 ETR stakeholders being open and collaborative in wanting to affect such changes within the organization. The Office would like to extend its gratitude to all involved for the diligent work and effort contributed over the past year.

February, 2017

The Office exists to objectively listen to customers' issues as they relate to Highway 407 ETR and, commencing February 2017, the Province of Ontario's Highway 407 (east of Brock Road) and Highway 412. The Office gathers the facts regarding a customer's complaint and conducts an investigation if it falls within the mandate of the Office. To be clear, the Ombudsman is not an advocate for 407 ETR, the Province, or the customer. In the event that an issue is based on verbal accounts that are not easily verifiable, the Office limits the investigation to the confirmable facts.

As a corporate Office, we have no legislative power and therefore cannot make recommendations to change, amend or influence laws or regulations, or otherwise impact customer pricing or fees. It is beyond the mandate of the Office to review matters that are before the courts or have a legal ruling, or matters related to damage claims, highway infrastructure and design, or policing and enforcement. In addition, the Office does not engage in financial settlements on customer accounts or award punitive damages.

For a fair and reasonable resolution, the Office collaborates with other stakeholders, including the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, where appropriate, and based on the nature of the issue focuses on providing a timely resolution.

What We Do



Listen

In order to understand the issue, we listen to both sides of the dispute.



Gather

We review all cases that are received by the Office. We will request from the customer and the company all pertinent information before considering a final resolution.





Recommend


We will provide a resolution/recommendation that ensures the procedure is fair and reasonable to both parties.

Contact Customer Service

407 ETR's Customer Service Department is the first point of contact when addressing a service matter. Customer Service Representatives are well equipped with the tools, support and training to resolve most complaints and issues. Customer Service Representatives are available Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and may be reached by:

 1-888-407-0407

 www.407etr.com

 6300 Steeles Avenue West
Woodbridge, ON L4H 1J1

Escalate to the Office of the President

If a customer is not satisfied with the outcome or resolution provided by the Customer Service Representative the call may be escalated to the Office of the President. The Office of the President has a well-defined dispute handling process and will review the complaint and the resolution provided by the Customer Service Representative. In order for the Advocate to review a complaint, we recommend that the customer state why they are not satisfied with the resolution provided by the Customer Service Representative.

Contact the Office of the Ombudsman

After a complaint is reviewed by the Office of the President, and a complaint remains unresolved, a customer may contact the Office for an impartial review of a case.

In order to ensure a fair and reasonable recommendation, all documentation must be forwarded with the complaint, in writing.

Once the Office has received a complaint, an Ombudsman Advisor will conduct an assessment to ensure that the issue(s) falls within the mandate of the Office.

In the event that the issue is not within the mandate, the matter will be referred to the appropriate department. If the issue falls within the mandate it will be reviewed by an Ombudsman Advisor and we endeavor to provide a resolution or recommendation within 10 business days after the initial review.

In efforts to assist customers, an Ombudsman's Contact form was designed to assist in outlining dispute. In addition, a customer may contact the Office directly for general information by calling 905-264-4485 or toll-free at 1-866-675-4457.

4 Types of Contact

The Office of the Ombudsman classifies customer contacts into the following four categories:



Informational

Enquiries that do not involve complaints or concerns. They are requests for general information.



Advice

Complaints or concerns that have not been through Step 1 or Step 2 of the Dispute Resolution Process. The issue is generally forwarded to the appropriate business unit for an investigation or resolution, prior to proceeding to the Office.



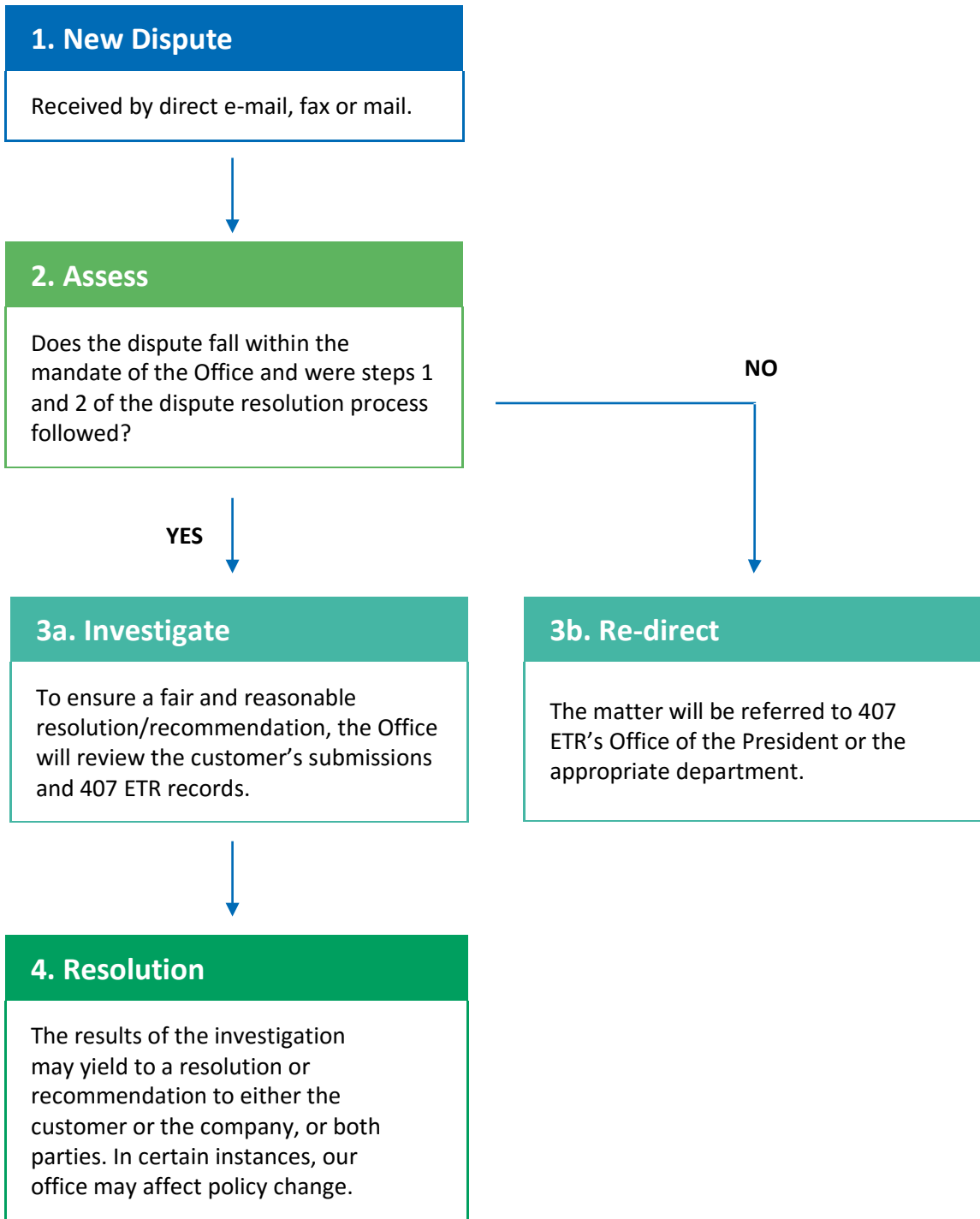
Informal Intervention

Complaints or concerns that have been responded to at Step 2 of the Dispute Resolution Process, but do not require a full investigation as the information provided to the Office does not contravene the resolution previously provided by the organization.

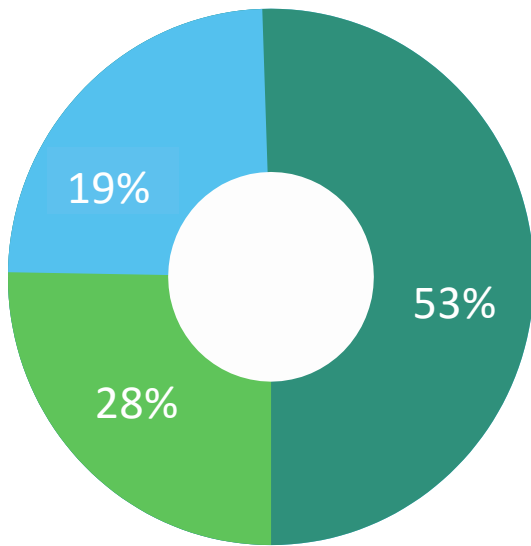


Intervention

Complaints or concerns that have been reviewed in Step 2 of the Dispute Resolution Process whereby the Complainant provides compelling information warranting a full investigation by the Office.



Method of Contact

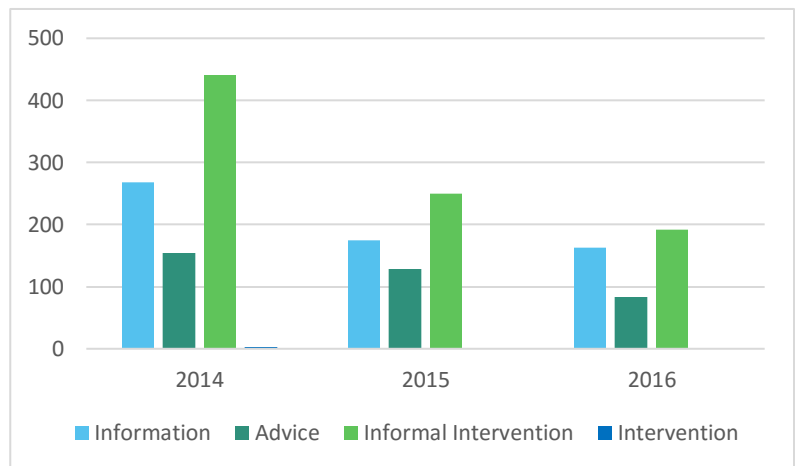


- E-mail
- Telephone
- Letter / fax

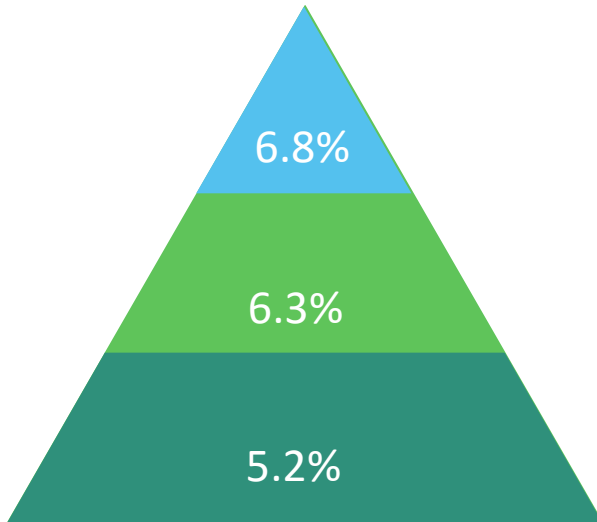
In 2016, 438 contacts were received in the Office, a 21% decrease from 2015. In the same year, 407 ETR’s Customer Service Department received 641,416 calls, and sent out 17.8 million paper and electronic invoices that resulted in less than a 0.2 of 1% dispute rate (calls) to the Office.

Of the 438 contacts to the Office, no intervention was required. The remaining contacts were comprised of:

- 37% (163) informational
- 19% (83) advice referrals
- 44% (192) informal interventions



Top Issues Reviewed 2016



For 2016, the top 3 issues outlined for 2016 are reflective of informal interventions. 61% of customers were satisfied with the resolutions provided in these cases.

2016 Top Trends

- Camera Charges/with transponder
- Camera Charges/with no registered transponder
- Interest

Outside of Mandate

6.8% of contacts to the Office fell outside of its mandate in 2016.



Exceptional Hardship Plans

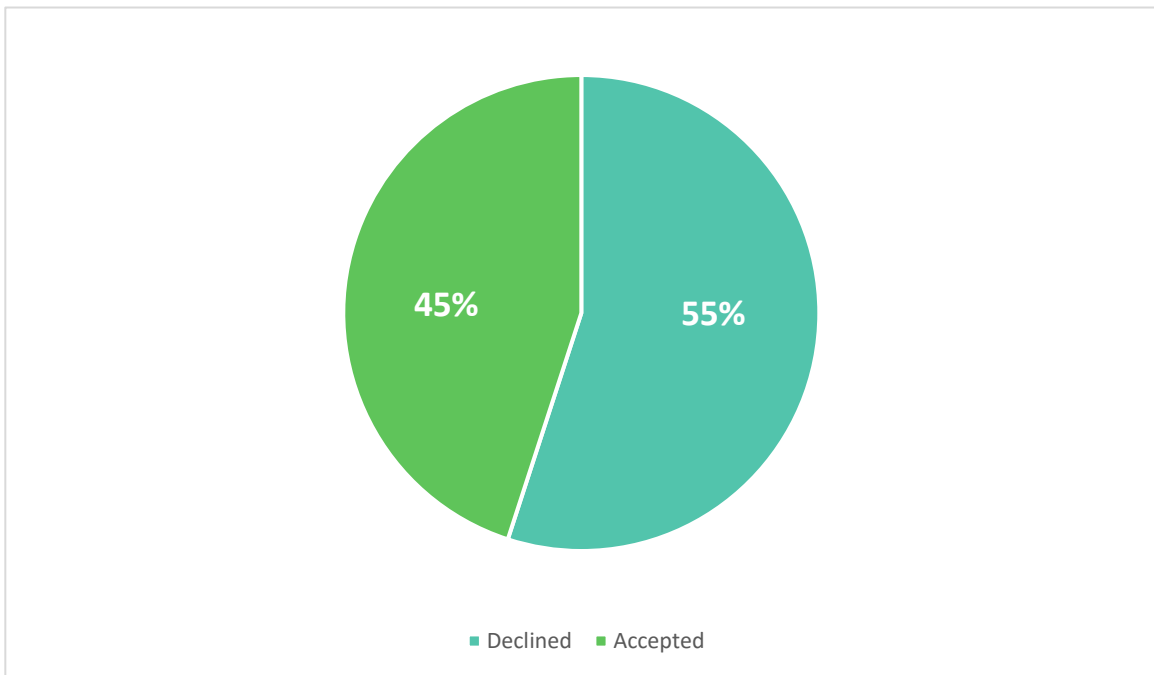
407 ETR offers an Exceptional Hardship Payment Plan, in an effort to assist those customers who have accumulated significant debt with 407 ETR, and would suffer an exceptional hardship through the denial of their vehicle licence plate permit. The review of these applications remains part of the responsibility of the Ombudsman’s Office. For details regarding the plan, please visit www.407etr.com.

In 2016, the Office received a total of 53 applications; a 9% increase from 2015. Of those applications received, 45% were accepted into the program while 55% were declined.

Customers declined for the Exceptional Hardship Payment Plan were referred to 407 ETR’s Financial Hardship Plan or settlement.

Applications

Exceptional Hardship Payment Plan



Disputes under the Highway 407 Act and Highway 407 East Act

Although 407 ETR has a thorough dispute resolution process for customers to dispute issues as they relate to Highway 407 ETR and the Province of Ontario's Highway 407 (east of Brock Road) and Highway 412, there is also a legislative dispute process under each of the *Highway 407 Act* and the *Highway 407 East Act*. The legislated dispute process under each *Act* is the same, and remains separate from 407 ETR's 3-step dispute resolution process.

Under each respective *Act*, 407 ETR may send a notice of failure to pay to a customer whose account is 37 days past due.

If a customer receives a notice of failure to pay, the notice may be disputed on one or more legally prescribed grounds, and such a dispute must be filed within 30 days of the date of the notice.

Once the dispute is received by 407 ETR's Dispute Administrator, they will review the dispute to ensure that the dispute has been received within the allowed time and that all supporting documentation is provided by the disputant. The Dispute Administrator has 30 days to review, investigate and respond to the dispute.

If a customer's dispute is unsuccessful, an appeal of the decision may be made to an independent arbitrator as outlined under the respective *Acts*.

The independent arbitrator is appointed by the Ontario government.

There are critical timelines to adhere to when filing an appeal of the decision of 407 ETR's Dispute Administrator. Therefore, it is incumbent on the customer to be aware of the requirements in order for the appeal to be heard.