

407 ETR Ombudsman Report

2009



- » The mandate of the Ombudsman is to act as an advocate for fairness and to address customers' unresolved issues or concerns related to customer service matters. The Ombudsman reviews and investigates a customer's concern in an unbiased and impartial manner, ensuring the procedure is fair and reasonable to both the customer and 407 ETR, and that all 407 ETR's policies are applied on a fair basis. The Ombudsman makes recommendations based on fairness and good business practices. The Ombudsman reports directly to the President and CEO of 407 ETR.
- » While the primary mandate of the office of the Ombudsman is to assist with unresolved issues, the Office also guides customers through the dispute resolution process. Our goal is for customers to be aware of the options available to them for assistance so they can obtain a resolution prior to engaging the Office of the Ombudsman.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Step 1: Customer Service Department

Call 1-888-407-0407 to speak with a Customer Service Representative (CSR).

Step 2: Team Manager or Resolution Specialist

If you are unable to resolve the issue with a CSR, you can ask to speak with a Team Manager or Resolution Specialist.

Step 3: Customer Advocacy Group (Representing the Office of the President)

If you are still not satisfied, outline your issue in writing to the Customer Advocacy Group. A detailed investigation will be conducted and a reply will be issued.

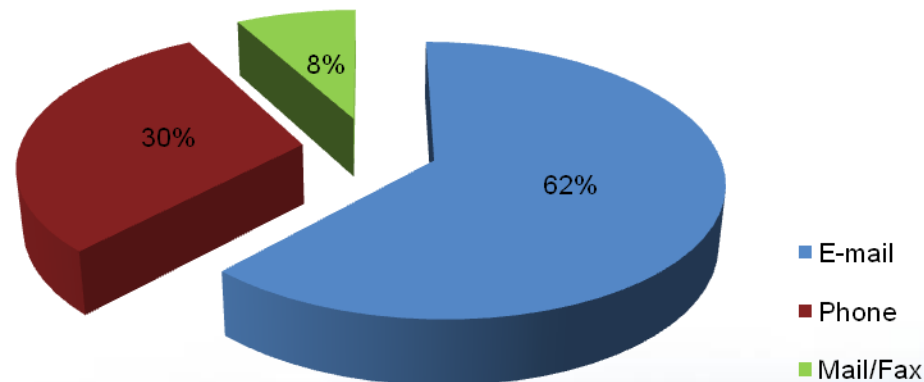
Step 4: Office of the Ombudsman

If the previous steps have been followed, and you feel that you have not received a fair resolution to your issue, please contact the Ombudsman's Office.

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

- » In 2009, the Ombudsman's Office received a total of 1432 contacts (0.00009%) out of 15.4 million bills mailed from January to December. This represents a 34% increase in contacts, in comparison with 2008. The increased contacts are reflected in both the Informational contacts and Informal interventions. A customer can contact the Ombudsman via e-mail, telephone call, letter or fax. The preferred method of contact remains via e-mail (62%) followed by phone.
- » Of the 1432 contacts to the Ombudsman's Office, where only 2% (28) of the contacts required action by the Office of the Ombudsman-a 52% decrease from the previous year. The remaining contacts were comprised of 47% (677) informational; 32% (459) advice referrals and 19% (268) informal interventions.

Method of Contact

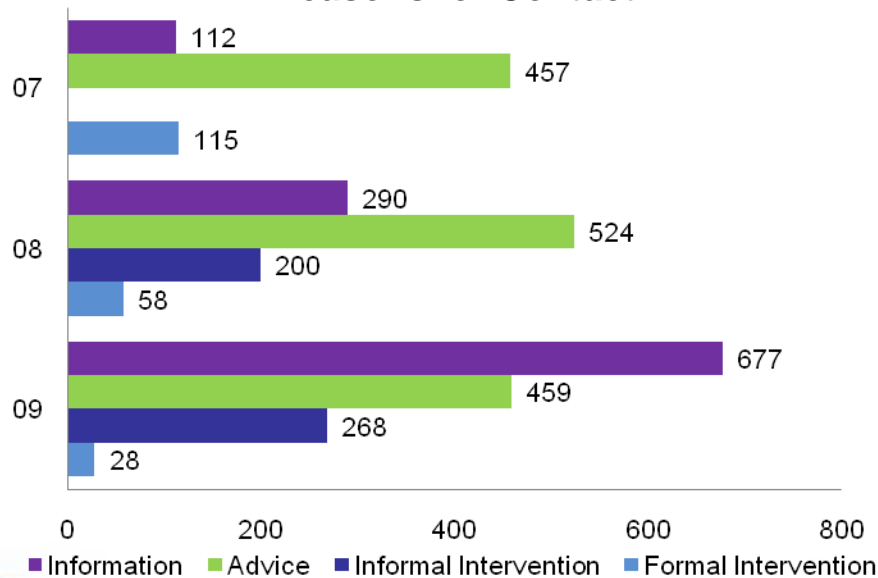


- » The following charts depict total contacts by reason as a percentage, and the top issues investigated by the Ombudsman's Office. Reasons for contact are divided into four categories which are defined below.
- » *“Informational” contacts are enquiries that do not involve complaints or concerns. They are requests for general information that are forwarded to the appropriate business unit for a direct response.*
- » *“Advice” contacts are complaints or concerns that have not been through Step 2 or Step 3 of the dispute resolution process. These contacts require the opening of a file within the Ombudsman's office and the issue is forwarded back to the appropriate business unit for an investigation and resolution.*
- » *“Informal Intervention” contacts are complaints or concerns that have been reviewed by Step 3 of the dispute resolution process, but do not require a full investigation as the information provided does not contravene the resolution previously provided by the organization.*
- » *“Intervention” contacts are complaints or concerns that have been reviewed by Step 3 of the dispute resolution process whereby the complainant provides compelling information warranting a full investigation by the Ombudsman's Office. A written response to the customer will endeavour to be provided within 10 business days, depending on the complexity of the investigation.*

- » The majority of the cases reviewed by the Ombudsman involved personal customers, as business customers represented less than 1% of the total volume. Of the 28 cases resolved by the Ombudsman's Office, full agreement was reached in 53% of the cases; 18% a partial agreement was reached and no agreement was reached in 29% of the cases. It is not within the Ombudsman's mandate to make financial settlements on customers' accounts; award punitive damages or reimbursement for stress and inconvenience.
- » It is worth noting that in 2009, 16 of the investigations completed by the Ombudsman's Office were related to plate denial matters. While 407 ETR offers an exhaustive dispute resolution process to resolve customer's service issues, plate denial is a legislated process. As such, the plate denial

process offers customers another avenue of dispute resolution, prior to being denied the renewal of a vehicle permit sticker due to outstanding debt to 407 ETR. Information regarding the legislated dispute process can be found by accessing the following link www.407etr.com/Products/platedenial.htm. We continue to encourage customers to review their statements on a monthly basis, and contact the organization immediately should an issue arise so that resolution can be obtained, prior to the impact of plate denial being levied.

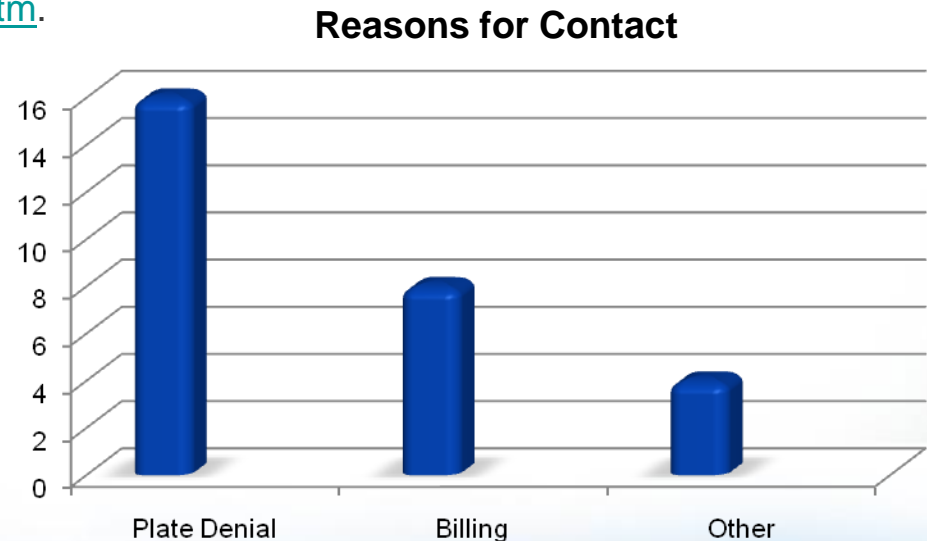
Reasons for Contact



STATISTICAL SUMMARY

- » The majority of the cases reviewed by the Ombudsman involved personal customers, as business customers represented less than 1% of the total volume. Of the 28 cases resolved by the Ombudsman's Office, full agreement was reached in 53% of the cases; 18% a partial agreement was reached and no agreement was reached in 29% of the cases. It is not within the Ombudsman's mandate to make financial settlements on customers' accounts; award punitive damages or reimbursement for stress and inconvenience.
- » It is worth noting that in 2009, 57% of the investigations completed by the Ombudsman's Office were related to plate denial matters. While 407 ETR offers an exhaustive dispute resolution process to resolve customer's service issues, plate denial is a legislated process. As such, the plate denial process offers customers another avenue of dispute resolution, prior to being denied the renewal of a vehicle permit sticker due to outstanding debt to 407 ETR. Information regarding the legislated dispute process can be found by accessing the following link www.407etr.com/Products/platedenial.htm.

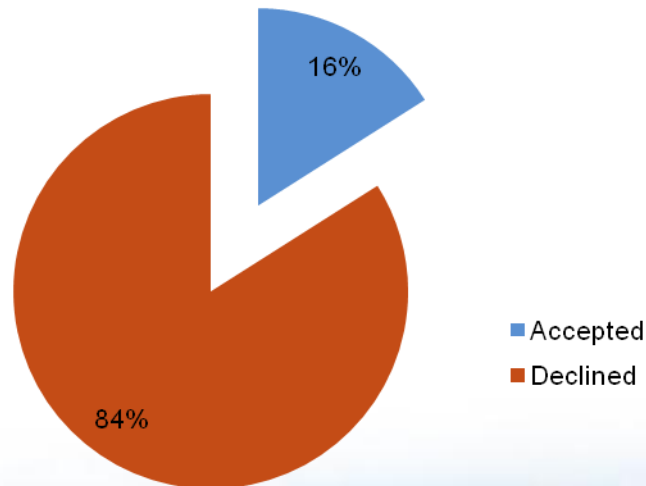
We continue to encourage customers to review their statements on a monthly basis, and contact the organization immediately should an issue arise so that resolution can be obtained, prior to the impact of plate denial being levied.



EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP CASES

- » 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.
- » The Ombudsman received 192 applications for the Exceptional Hardship Payment Plan in 2009. This is a 53% decrease from 2008. A total of 84% of these applications were declined. As with previous years, many of the applicants applied based on the grounds of a "financial hardship". Given this continued trend, the Ombudsman's Office made a recommendation to the organization to offer a payment plan that would be based on financial hardship. 407 ETR accepted this recommendation and have implemented such a plan in 2009. The management of the Financial Hardship Plan is outside of the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman's Office. Details regarding the Financial Hardship Plan can be obtained by contacting 407 ETR Customer Service.

Applications



What the Ombudsman Can Do For You

- » Listen to your complaint in an impartial and unbiased manner
- » Gather the facts regarding your complaint to conduct an investigation, if it falls within the mandate of the Ombudsman's office
- » Make recommendations to 407 ETR if the complaint is justified regarding your specific case or broader policy and procedure changes
- » The Ombudsman is neither an advocate for 407 ETR nor the client. In the event that a complaint is based on verbal accounts that are not easily verifiable, the Ombudsman's Office limits the investigation to the confirmable facts.

What the Ombudsman Does Not Do

- » The Ombudsman's Office does not intervene in matters that are before the courts or have a legal ruling
- » The Ombudsman has no legislative power therefore cannot make recommendations to change or amend the Highway 407 Act, 1998
- » The Ombudsman cannot make recommendations regarding toll rates or other administrative fees to 407 ETR

Making a Complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman.

- » You may refer your complaint in writing to this office, once you have received a final response from 407 ETR, in accordance with the dispute resolution process. The Ombudsman will only review complaints that have been raised with 407 ETR within the past 12 months, unless exceptional circumstances exist that would warrant the Ombudsman's Office to open an investigation.

In order to assist you with your complaint, we require the following information, in writing:

- » Name
- » Date
- » Mailing Address
- » Telephone Contact Number (including area code)
- » The Date the complaint began
- » The response given by 407 ETR (please include any responses from the organization)
- » Your requested resolution
- » Complaint Summary (please provide details regarding dates and names of individuals you communicated with)

For your convenience, please click [here](#) for the Ombudsman Contact Form which can be completed and forwarded to the Ombudsman's Office.