

Dealing with consumer problems

Handout 9-8

Speak to a manager

If you are unhappy with a product or service and you feel that the person you are dealing with is not helpful, you can always ask to speak to a manager or someone higher up in the company. Often, consumer issues are resolved on the spot, face-to-face. The best approach is to be calm and polite, but firm. Describe your problem and explain what you would like the company to do for you.

Call Customer Service

Many businesses have Customer Service departments. If a manager is not able to solve your problem, ask them for the company's Customer Service telephone number or website. Before you contact them, write down all the details of your concern. Including your problem, the date it happened, the names of the people you dealt with, and what was said. When speaking to a customer service agent, make sure to get their name as well and write down the details of your conversation.

Keep a file

Start a file where you keep all the details about the matter. That includes a description of your problem and what action you've taken, receipts or warranties, the names and contact information of the people you speak to, important dates, and what was said in any conversations.

Write a letter

If a call to customer service does not solve your problem, write a letter or email. Use all the materials in your file as evidence to support your claim. Address the letter or email to a general manager, owner, or head of customer service. Keep a copy in your file. They may try to mediate or investigate on your behalf.

Contact a consumer agency

If none of this works, you can contact a consumer protection agency. Each province has one. They are in charge of protecting consumers and dealing with consumer problems. These agencies can tell you what your rights are and the best action to take.

For a list, go to www.consumerhandbook.ca

Legal action

Going to court should be your last option. It is time-consuming and expensive. There are often time limits to filing lawsuits. Before you take any action, consult with a lawyer to learn more about the laws in your province.