

Ombudsman
Annual Report

2020



Canada Post • Postes Canada

Ombudsman



Highlights of 2020

In 2020, the overall number of appeals filed with our office increased by 36 per cent compared to the previous year. We received 4,700 appeals compared to 3,449 in 2019.

This is a change in the recent trend. The number of appeals had been decreasing steadily over the previous four years, going from 6,092 appeals in 2015 down to 3,449 in 2019. We attribute the increase in 2020 to postal issues related to the pandemic. More specifically:

- Canada Post introduced a variety of changes to how it delivered mail during the pandemic (i.e. new safe dropping procedures, delivery guarantees suspended, new signature process) and it created some confusion with some consumers who reported not being aware at the moment of mailing.
- Canada Post implemented new safety protocols in plants and depots, contributing in some delivery delays that consumers complained about.
- During the holiday period, we also saw a greater number of consumers mailing gifts that were not properly packaged, resulting in more claims for damaged items..

Compared to 2019, we saw an increase in six of the top 10 most common kinds of appeals.

The number of appeals related to the *Canadian Postal Service Charter* increased by 1,088, or by 51 per cent over the previous year. This increase was due primarily to more reported issues for damaged or missing items.

We heard mostly from consumers and small businesses, not from commercial customers.

Of the 1,822 cases for which we completed an in-depth investigation, 39 per cent resulted in corrective action. In the rest, our investigation supported Canada Post's actions. In comparison, corrective action was needed in 45 per cent of cases in 2019.

Over half the appeals did not result in an in-depth investigation because customers withdrew their submission before our investigation concluded, or they had reached out to us before Canada Post had time to fully address their issue.

In order to prevent issues from recurring, the Office of the Ombudsman proposed 15 changes to Canada Post's policies and procedures during 2020, 12 of which are being implemented.



Key statistics

In line with record volumes due to increased online shopping during the pandemic, the number of appeals filed with our office also increased in 2020.



Appeals received:

4,700

(36% increase)



In-depth investigations:

1,822

(39% of all appeals)



Investigations resulting in Canada Post's remediation:

717

(39% of all investigations)

Top appeals



Missing or damaged item:

543

(36% increase)



Compensation deemed unfair:

329

(34% increase)



Employee behaviour:

193

(35% decline)

Leading types of appeals submitted in 2020

- The customer's parcel went missing or the content was damaged during delivery.
- The customer felt Canada Post's indemnity in a claims dispute was deemed unreasonable.
- The customer was unhappy with their experience when interacting with Canada Post staff (at a retail counter or with a delivery agent or customer service agent).
- The customer's parcel arrived late.
- The customer reported issues accessing the mail.
- The customer reported issues when the item was returned to sender.

Who we are

The Office of the Ombudsman is independent of Canada Post staff and management and reports directly to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

It gives Canadians another avenue if they feel Canada Post did not live up to its service commitments.

We get involved when Canada Post's own processes have not resolved the issue, and we are the final appeal forum when a disappointed customer seeks redress beyond Canada Post's complaint resolution process. We investigate customer complaints, seek clarification, confirm the facts and recommend fair and equitable solutions.

We also complement Canada Post's continuing commitment to quality and good customer experience. By identifying trends, focusing on prevention and recommending changes where warranted, we provide Canada Post with another perspective to improve service. We see every case as a learning opportunity for the Corporation to identify preventative or mitigating measures. This feedback loop is an integral element of our day-to-day work – and of our value to Canadians.



How we operate

We promptly acknowledge and review customers' appeals. We communicate our next steps within five business days. Then, the complexity and severity of the issue determines how quickly we investigate an appeal. The process works this way:



1 Submit your appeal at canadapost-postescanada.ca/ombudsman



2 Triage based on severity and impact



3 Investigate with corporate and local management, and third parties as required, and mediate a resolution



4 Feedback to customer, local management and senior executives



5 Follow up as required, to ensure solutions are sustained

To avoid having a postal issue, we recommend that you:

1. Ask about the options to insure a parcel for loss or damage, especially for valuable items, if you're mailing at a post office.
2. Know who you are dealing with when you buy goods online. Canada Post cannot assume liability resulting from fraud by a shipper or a receiver.
3. Do not send money to someone you do not know through MoneyGram, to avoid being defrauded.
4. Use proper packaging. Only you know the physical characteristics of your item and how to secure it as it goes through processing equipment.*
5. Address your shipment properly to a specific address, not just a person. If the mailing address is incomplete, Canada Post will not speculate on where to deliver it.*
6. Canada Post's Mail Forwarding and Hold Mail services are for Lettermail™, not parcels. If you order online or expect a parcel, tell the sender your new address.

Some common requests that we cannot help with:

1. Intercepting an item in Canada Post's network before delivery. This is extremely difficult and illegal without proper authorization.
2. Changing the destination address of an item after it is posted.
3. Settling a claim for loss or damage with the receiver rather than the sender, who is the party who contracted with Canada Post to deliver it.
4. Setting corporate policies, such as product specifications or pricing, and recommending disciplinary actions that involve Canada Post's relationships with its employees, contractors and suppliers.

Contact us:

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* Find packaging and addressing tips at canadapost.ca.

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