

# Making a Complaint

## A Guide for Investors

Investment Industry Regulatory  
Organization of Canada

Protecting Investors and Supporting  
Healthy Capital Markets Across Canada



## The Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada (IIROC) **Protects Investors and Supports Healthy Capital Markets**

- **All** Canadian investment firms and individual investment advisors dealing in Canada's stock and bond markets **must** be registered with IIROC
- IIROC-regulated companies and their investment advisors **must** meet our high ethical and professional standards
- IIROC conducts regular reviews of registered investment firms to make sure they comply with our rules
- IIROC takes action if our rules are broken or our standards are not met

Do you have concerns about the conduct or behavior of your **IIROC-regulated investment firm or advisor?**



**You can make a complaint to any and/or all of the following:**

- Your investment advisor
- The supervisor/branch manager who oversees your investment advisor
- The firm where your advisor works
- Directly to IIROC

Account losses are not necessarily an indication that your advisor has engaged in misconduct, as most investments carry a degree of risk, with no guarantee of profitability. When you complain to IIROC, we will review your complaint to determine whether our rules have been broken.

First – check to ensure  
**your investment advisor  
is regulated by IIROC**



Make sure you are dealing with an IIROC-regulated investment firm and that your advisor is registered with us.

[www.iroc.ca](http://www.iroc.ca) provides a list of all the firms we regulate and a database of the advisors they employ.

**Our online database can help you find out more about**

- the background, qualifications and employment history of your advisor
- any record of IIROC disciplinary action.



Do you believe  
**your investment firm or  
advisor may have acted  
improperly or unethically?**

**For example by:**

- Buying or selling investments without your approval
- Making excessive trades in your investment account
- Recommending investments that are not suitable for you (such as too risky)

If you believe your investment firm or advisor may have broken IIROC's rules or failed to meet our professional standards, **we want to hear from you.**

If our investigation concludes that an investment firm and/or individuals working for the firm have broken our rules, we may take disciplinary action to hold them accountable. This could result in warnings, reprimands, fines, suspensions and/or permanent bans for advisors and firms.

Please note that IIROC discipline **cannot provide compensation** to investors or force firms or individual advisors to do so.

## Don't Delay!



Please make your complaint as quickly as possible. If too much time passes between the issue arising and your complaint, it might not be possible to investigate properly. As well, if you are seeking compensation through other channels (see page 9), there are time limits for taking action.

### How to file a complaint with IIROC

IIROC has a dedicated Complaints & Inquiries department, which you can contact in four ways:

**Use our secure downloadable form:**

[www.iiroc.ca/investors/makingacomplaint/pages/default.aspx](http://www.iiroc.ca/investors/makingacomplaint/pages/default.aspx)

**Send us an email:**

[investorinquiries@iiroc.ca](mailto:investorinquiries@iiroc.ca)

**Call us toll free:**

1-877-442-4322

**Fax us at:**

1-888-497-6172

## What we need to follow up on your complaint



- **Please provide IIROC with as much information as possible**, including your name and contact information, as well as the name and contact information for any individual or firm mentioned in your complaint.
- **Keep a file of all documents that relate to your account and your specific issue.** Include copies of letters and email messages. Keep records of conversations – dates, times and details of what was said, as well as any other information you feel is important.
- **You don't need to "prove" your case.** Just provide IIROC with the facts and your supporting documents. You can talk to IIROC staff to help you determine what information is important for our review.
- **Please be prepared to cooperate.** If we decide to take disciplinary action, you may be asked to participate as a witness.


## What happens when you file a complaint?



### When you file a complaint with IIROC:

1. We will let you know we have received it.
2. We will update you after we have reviewed your complaint and decided whether we will proceed with an investigation.

We carefully review all the information we receive to see if IIROC's rules have been broken and if we need to take further action.



IIROC helps protect you by ensuring **your complaints are investigated appropriately**

If you complain to the investment firm directly, IIROC requires that the firm abide by our rules for handling client complaints. IIROC-regulated firms must report all written client complaints about possible breaches of our rules so we can determine **whether to conduct our own investigation**.

While IIROC does not review customer service issues, we ensure that the firms we regulate respond to such complaints.

If you have a **customer service** complaint, for example:

- Difficulty getting in touch with your advisor
- Being asked to move your account to another firm

and you put your complaint in writing, the firm must provide you with a written response.

**If you complain to the firm or someone at the firm about their handling of your account**



**The firm is required to:**

1. Acknowledge your complaint within five business days
2. Provide you with their final response within 90 calendar days, including:
  - a summary of your complaint
  - results of their investigation
  - an explanation of their final decision and
  - options available to you for seeking compensation if you are not satisfied with the firm's response.

**What if I'm not satisfied with the investment firm's response?**

**If your complaint is not resolved with the firm, you have several options:**

- The **Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments** resolves disputes between participating investment firms and investors. Visit [www.obsi.ca](http://www.obsi.ca) or call 1-888-451-4519.
- Québec residents can contact the **Autorité des marchés financiers**. Visit <http://lautorite.qc.ca> or call 1-877-525-0337.
- Arbitration is available through **ADR Chambers** ([adrchambers.com/ca](http://adrchambers.com/ca) or 1-800-856-5154) and in Québec through the **Canadian Commercial Arbitration Centre** ([www.ccac-adr.org](http://www.ccac-adr.org) or 1-800-207-0685).
- You also have the option of going to court, but you should first get advice from a lawyer.

**How can I get money back?**

See our brochure online **How Can I Get My Money Back?** for more information.

# Questions?

## **CONTACT US:**

Tel: 1-877-442-4322

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Email: [investorinquiries@iiroc.ca](mailto:investorinquiries@iiroc.ca)

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