

Guide to Drafting a Human Rights Tribunal Complaint Form 1.1

This guide is to help you draft a Human Rights Tribunal Complaint Form 1.1. The Complaint is meant to lay out the basic facts of what happened to you, when it happened, and who was involved.

The Human Rights Tribunal will read the Complaint. If it is accepted, the Tribunal will share the Complaint with the Respondent(s) you listed on the form.

This guide provides explanations of how to fill out the Complaint and provides examples. The Complaint Form 1.1 itself has detailed instructions for each section. This guide is meant to provide additional guidance on how to fill out the form. You should use language you are comfortable with in preparing your Complaint.

See the Example Human Rights Tribunal Complaint for an example of how to draft a Complaint.

Step 1, Part B – Respondent Contact Information

For information about naming respondents, see the Tribunal's Complaint Process – [Naming Respondents](#).

Step 3 – Details of the discrimination

1. Describe the harm you experienced in a few words

- Describe the harm you experienced briefly and keep it general.
 - Example: "My manager sexually harassed me at work."
- Do not add details such as names or dates. You will be able to list what happened in more detail in another section.

2. Explain how the harm relates to the grounds you checked in Step 1, Part B above

Your Complaint must show that there was a connection between what the Respondent(s) did and a "[personal characteristic](#)" or "grounds of discrimination". Grounds of discrimination include age, ancestry, colour, criminal conviction, family status, gender expression, gender identity, Indigenous identity, marital status, mental disability, physical disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or source of income.

In sexual harassment complaints, the grounds of discrimination can be sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. However, you can select multiple grounds of discrimination if you have other protected characteristics that relate to your complaint.

Example: “My manager sexually harassed me because I am a woman” and/or “my manager made sexualized comments and advances because I am a woman.”

You can select multiple grounds of discrimination if you have other protected characteristics that relate to your complaint.

Step 3 – Respondent #1 (Describe what this Respondent did that harmed you)

In this section, write a timeline of what happened.

What to include:

1. Background information:
 - a. Information about yourself
e.g. “I am a lesbian woman and was 19 years old at the time I was hired.”
 - b. Information about your employment:
 - i. your job title/position
 - ii. How long you worked there
e.g. “In April 2021, I was hired as a server at The Restaurant. I worked there until October 29, 2021.
 - c. Information about the other people involved
e.g. “Dean Smith, the Manager, was approximately 35 years old and had the power to hire and fire staff members, and to change the shift schedule as he liked.”
 - d. Other important background
e.g. “The Restaurant was my only source of income, and I needed to a job earning high tips or a high wage to support myself.”
2. What happened to you and when
3. Name events that made you feel uncomfortable
4. The people involved in the behaviour/discrimination
5. Any witnesses to the events
6. Whether you still work there. If you quit or were fired, explain what happened.
7. Did you make a complaint to your employer or supervisor at work? Was there any action taken by the person you complained to? Did the people involved in the behaviour/discrimination or employer harass or threaten you after you made the complaint at work?

8. Describe the impact the events had on you. You do not need to include detailed medical information, but if a doctor or psychiatrist diagnosed you with a medical condition caused by the harassment, you should include that.

Tips for drafting a timeline:

- **List what happened in chronological order, starting with when the behaviour/discrimination began and when it ended.**
- **Stick to the facts you know are true and have direct knowledge about.** Instead of “he fired me because I refused his advances,” say “I refused his advances. The next day he fired me.”
- **This is your complaint, keep it simple and know it well.** It is possible you will later be cross-examined (questioned by the respondents or their lawyer) on the statements made in this application.
- **If you are unsure of anything, like a date or the way a series of events took place, state this.** For example, if on or about January 1st, then state “I can’t remember if it was January 1st or 2nd when I was sexually harassed by my boss”.
- **Avoid making strong negative statements about the Respondent(s) character.** It’s important to talk about what happened and how the behaviour affected you, but you should not use derogatory remarks or call the Respondent(s) names.
- **Don’t give every detail.** You don’t need to give every detail about events surrounding the discrimination/harassment. Give details that are important to proving that the discrimination happened, how it happened, and the effect it had on you, but try to keep it on topic.
- **Give some context.** There may be some places you will need to give some background information. There will be people reading your Complaint who don’t know who the people are you are talking about. Describe who each person is so they know how fit into the story.
 - Example: “Priya Dass was a shift supervisor at Central Perk. During my shift in November 2021, I mixed up a coffee order, and Priya said to me ‘you can’t get by on your looks alone.’”