



# Preparing for a tribunal

A Canadian Bar Association series supporting legal wellness

2017

Many legal problems are handled by tribunals. Tribunals can be less formal than courts and are typically faster, simpler and accessible for people without a lawyer. This Legal Health Check offers tips about the process.

**Are you in the right place?** Check the website. Review legislation, rules and past decisions from the tribunal, if available.

**Consider resolving your dispute without a hearing.** Some tribunals offer alternative dispute resolution, usually with a neutral third party's help.

**Filing your application.** Check the steps for completing your application and pay attention to time limits. Organize your documents, and check if they should be included. Is an application form provided? Do you need to send your application to the other party?

**Pre-hearing conference.** There might be a meeting with the other party before the hearing. Someone from the tribunal will be there to see if parties can agree on issues to simplify or shorten the hearing. Ask tribunal staff what will be discussed and what to expect.

**Disclosure.** You may need to send your documents or a list of witnesses to the other party or tribunal before the hearing. If you don't, you might be unable to proceed or rely on those documents or witnesses.

**The Hearing.** Hearings can be in-person, in writing or by phone. Prepare in advance. Gather and organize what you need to prove your case. Ensure your witnesses will be available.

**Costs.** If the tribunal can 'award costs', the losing party might have to pay the other party's expenses. Keep your receipts in case you win, to prove your own costs later.

**To get help.** Tribunal staff cannot give advice about your rights or case. They can give general information and may help with forms you need, filling them out, or wording your claim.

For complicated or serious cases, it could be worth getting legal advice. Ask your local law society for lawyers practicing in the area.

For links and resources, visit [cba.org/healthcheck](http://cba.org/healthcheck)



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