

CPCA Complaints and Discipline Committee Jurisdiction

Purpose

The complaints and discipline process exists to protect the public, uphold professional standards, and address alleged misconduct, unsafe practice, or breaches of the CPCA Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, or By-Laws. It is intended for concerns about a CPCA member's professional conduct and fitness to practise within the Association's framework. The process is **not** meant to replace the courts, police, employers, insurers, contractual grievance or dispute-resolution processes, provincial regulatory processes or other regulatory or dispute-resolution systems.

Complaints Appropriate for the CPCA Code and Standards

A complaint is generally appropriate for the CPCA process when it concerns a CPCA member and alleges conduct that may breach professional obligations, ethical standards, or practice expectations regarding their work with past, present, or future clients. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Boundary violations, acting without consent, sexual misconduct, exploitation, failure to report or other serious ethical breaches.
- Breaches of confidentiality or privacy obligations.
- Incompetence, negligence, or practice outside the member's scope of competence or outside their scope of practice.
- Falsification of records, misleading statements, or dishonesty connected to professional practice regarding their relationship with clients or the public.
- Failure to maintain required professional obligations such as good standing requirements, if the issue relates to member conduct rather than an administrative error.
- Conduct that may create risk to clients, the public, or the integrity of the profession.

The CPCA bylaws also indicate that complaints may lead to outcomes including review, discipline, termination, or other action where warranted. In other words, the process is meant to examine whether a member's conduct or practice with clients has fallen below CPCA expectations.

Matters Outside the Jurisdiction of CPCA Code and Standards

Some concerns are **not** best handled through the CPCA complaints and discipline process, even if they are serious or upsetting. These usually belong in a different forum because they do **not** primarily concern member conduct under CPCA rules. Examples include, **but are not limited to:**

- Complaints about individuals who are not CPCA members.

- Client requests for money, refunds, fee disputes, billing disagreements, or insurance compensation.
- Complaints about court outcomes, legal disputes, or custody/access matters. These are legal matters handled by the courts.
- Complaints pertaining to employers/employees, members in breach of an employment contract, not related to ethical practice. These matters are generally handled either by Human Resources (HR) or small claims court.
- Complaints pertaining to a member's relationship with an agency, school, or business, not related to professional work or capacity with clients.
- General dissatisfaction with treatment results, where there is no clear ethical or professional breach.
- Complaints regarding disagreement with a court ordered counselling service or how court orders are enacted by the member. These matters are to be addressed with the court process. The CPCA does not police any court process.

CPCA's bylaw framework is focused on the conduct of its members and the member's requirements to meet all CPCA codes and standards for the protection of clients and the public.

Other Avenues

Concerns falling outside CPCA's disciplinary mandate should be directed elsewhere, such as:

- Police or child protection authorities
- A court or lawyer
- A workplace HR process or employer complaint process
- A privacy commissioner or provincial regulatory body
- An insurer, for claims involving damages or reimbursement.
- Mediation or direct communication, when the issue is primarily a service disagreement rather than a professional-standards concern.

When a concern overlaps with more than one forum, the safest approach is usually to use the forum with the clearest jurisdiction first, especially where safety, criminal conduct, or mandatory reporting may be involved.

Approved by CPCA Board: June 1, 2026