

November 3, 2008

CASE SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

As well as summarizing the office's activities, the annual report contains 50 case summaries. Selected summaries are highlighted below:

NOTE: In order to protect the confidentiality of the people who complain to us, all personal names used in the summaries have been changed.

BC Hydro Changes Security Deposit Practices (Page 22)

As a result of an investigation by the Ombudsman's office, BC Hydro changed what it tells new residential customers about providing security deposits. Now, all new residential customers are informed that they have the option of undergoing a credit check at BC Hydro's expense or providing a letter of reference from another utility, instead of providing a security deposit.

Case Summary Highlights by Region:

Lower Mainland (Includes Greater Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler and the Fraser Valley)

- After a long wait for an answer, an injured worker was able to have his preferred training course partially funded by WorkSafeBC. (Page 46)
- A senior who did not have the opportunity to tell her story to the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) because of an error made by the RTB was able to get a hearing, and her costs covered. (Page 17)
- A parent who was not informed when his child was injured at school received an apology from the principal, who was told to remind staff to follow established procedures. (Page 30)

Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast: (Includes the Gulf Islands)

- The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance paid a woman with a disability \$20,000 after failing to inform her of her options when she received an inheritance and closing her file. (Page 39)
- A delayed payment to her childcare provider was resolved for a student and mother of four young children. (Page 13)
- A student said she could afford to return to school after her eligibility for a provincial loan forgiveness program was resolved. (Page 29)

Northern B.C. (Includes Prince George, Kitimat, Terrace, the Queen Charlotte Islands and all points north)

- The Prince George Youth Custody Centre changed its food distribution practices and began providing an afternoon snack after the Ombudsman's office investigated complaints from young people living there. (Page 15)
- A woman who wondered why she had never received workers' compensation benefits after the death of her husband 47 years ago, got an answer. (Page 49)

- A northern man on income assistance had his winter boots paid for by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, after his request was initially turned down. (Page 37)

Interior (Includes all mainland areas south of Prince George, except for the Lower Mainland)

- A senior who had problems getting a subsidized bus pass received her pass, as well as an apology from the program supervisor. Changes were also made to the bus pass application form. (Page 23)
- A woman whose credit record was harmed by incorrect information about a debt was able to have the error corrected. (Page 19)
- A driver with a disability had his licence renewal fee refunded, after his licence was revoked three weeks after his application, because he was deemed medically unfit to drive. (Page 25)

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