



## **Purpose – For Information**

This report provides information and a status update on the Technical Standards and Safety Authority's (TSSA's) Ombudsman Office.

## **Background**

TSSA's Ombudsman Office serves both internal staff and external parties and is modelled on the International Ombudsman Association's (IOA's) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Each element of the Ombudsman Office's purpose, structure and operation follows the IOA's defining characteristics of independence, neutrality, informality, and confidentiality. TSSA's Ombudsman is an organizational ombudsman rather than a classical one, and as such, acts as a facilitator for early resolution and specifically has no decision-making authority within the organization. It is a safe place to seek guidance on all types of issues, including reporting misconduct and "whistle blowing", with protection from retaliation. TSSA established a charter for the Ombudsman Office, which is posted on the Ombudsman page on TSSA's web site. There are multiple means of contacting the Ombudsman - a confidential phone line where caller identification has been removed; mail; and e-mail.

## **Status**

From May 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016, the Ombudsman Office received 221 external contacts and 15 internal contacts. There were no open cases at year-end.

The internal contacts were normally facilitated by simply listening and letting them come to their own resolution.

The external contacts have been from the public (approximately 40%), the regulated community (approximately 60%) and a few from government bodies. Typically, most of the contacts are resolved by explaining TSSA regulatory requirements and in some cases providing potential remedies that are available for resolution. This fiscal year, all regulated sectors have contacted the Ombudsman's office. The majority of the contacts, 73%, are in regards to the Fuels Safety program.

Some of the highlights over the past year included:

- Resolution of a sensitive matter with an Ontario school board. This led to a partnership with the Operations, Maintenance and Construction (OMC) committee that exists within the Ontario Association of School Board Officials. The partnership includes forming a joint task force to foster an on-going relationship between OMC and TSSA based on education and communication and to initially develop a plan to address the risk that fuels equipment poses at academic institutions. Additionally, TSSA and one of the school boards are piloting a real-time monitoring program that enables action to be taken to mitigate hazards (specifically unacceptable levels of carbon monoxide).
- Alerting TSSA to an illegal propane activity (truck-to-truck transfer) that allowed TSSA to immediately take action and terminate the activity.
- Resolution of a long-term request from an energy provider, which allowed that organization to enable their staff to gain higher certification status and recognized their plant with an increased rating.

Additionally, as the TSSA's Ombudsman is certified as a practitioner, the certification body requires continuing education credits. During the past fiscal year, TSSA's Ombudsman gained 58.5 hours of recognized credits.

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