



Ombudsman Annual Report May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018

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. The Ombudsman 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; mail; and e-mail.

Status

From May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018, the Ombudsman Office received 134 external contacts and 17 internal contacts. There were no open Ombudsman 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 three from government bodies. Typically, most of the contacts are resolved by explaining TSSA regulatory requirements and in some cases, providing potential remedies. To date, all regulated sectors have contacted the Ombudsman's office. Most of the contacts, 53%, are about the Fuels Safety program.

Introduction of 3rd Party Whistle Blowing Service

TSSA launched its independent 3rd party Whistle Blowing Service in August 2017. It includes a confidential 24/7/365 telephone hotline and internet portal that allows TSSA employees, regulated parties and members of the public to raise issues regarding alleged wrongdoings by TSSA personnel or to complain about TSSA activities/processes. There were nine reported cases. All cases were assigned: eight have been investigated, resolved and closed and one remains assigned and open. Although the Whistle Blowing service was primarily designed to confidentially report alleged TSSA wrong doings, it has had the added benefit of providing an independent external service so that persons can confidentially and securely report alleged wrong doings by parties regulated by TSSA. Six of the nine reported cases pertained to regulated parties and the remaining three were about TSSA employees. Highlights included allegations that persons were working illegally (without a TSSA authorization), a plant had unsafe equipment and that an authorization holder had falsified records. Of the three cases involving TSSA employees, two resulted in corrective action and the remaining one could not be substantiated.

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