A Citizen's Guide to Filing a Complaint Against a Licensed Occupational Professional

The mission of the Bureau of Professional Licensing (BPL) is to protect, preserve, and improve the health, safety, and welfare of Michigan's citizens through the licensing and regulation of occupational and health professionals. The Bureau strives to make the regulatory system simple, fair, and efficient.

BPL relies on complaints from the public to begin investigations into licensed occupational professionals who are potentially violating the Occupational Code. We encourage all concerned citizens and licensed occupational professionals to file a complaint with BPL if they are aware of behavior that may potentially violate the Occupational Code. Below are instructions on how to file a complaint and the steps that BPL takes to protect consumers after a complaint is received.

How to File a Complaint

To file a complaint against an occupational professional, click on the link below and select the appropriate occupational profession. You will be taken to the appropriate online link or form to file your complaint: https://www.michigan.gov/en/lara/bureau-list/bpl/complaint

NOTE: real estate complaints must be filed with the Department within 18 months after the date of the alleged violation or, if the alleged violation occurs in connection with a real estate transaction, the date the transaction is completed. Include appropriate documentation confirming the date of the alleged violation and/or the date the transaction was completed, as applicable.

Information required to file a complaint includes:

- Your name and contact Information.
- Name and profession of the licensee or registrant.
- Detailed description of the alleged problem or incident, including dates and locations. Names, addresses, or contact information of anyone who can provide supporting information.
- Anonymous complaints are discouraged and may result in your complaint being closed, as the investigator would be unable to ask for information, records, etc.

What happens after a complaint is filed against a licensed occupational professional?

The complaint is reviewed to determine if a possible violation of the Occupational Code has occurred.

Based on this review, BPL will do one of the following:

- Investigate the complaint.
- Close the complaint with no further action due to the complaint not being associated with a possible violation of the Occupational Code.
- Close and refer the matter to another state agency or entity if the complaint is not within the jurisdiction of BPL/LARA.

NOTE: LARA may work with law enforcement, the Attorney General's Office, and other agencies depending on the nature of the complaint.

What happens during a complaint investigation?

During an investigation based on a complaint, BPL investigators will interview relevant parties and collect evidence related to the complaint. BPL's investigations are independent of any other investigation of a licensee, such as, by their employer, law enforcement, etc.

What happens after a complaint investigation is completed?

If it is determined from the investigation that a violation of the Occupational Code cannot be substantiated, BPL will close the complaint file and notify the complainant.

If it is determined from the investigation that a violation of the Occupational Code has occurred, the department or the department of attorney general shall prepare the appropriate action against the respondent which may be any of the following:

(a) A formal complaint.

(b) A cease and desist order.

(c) A notice of summary suspension.

(d) A citation.

What options does the licensee have after a formal complaint is issued?

Once a formal complaint is issued to a licensee, the licensee may do any of the following:

- Meet with the department to negotiate a settlement of the matter.
- Demonstrate compliance prior to holding a contested case hearing.
- Proceed to a contested case hearing.
- Not respond, at which point the department shall proceed to a contested case hearing.

Who determines the final action(s) against the license of an occupational professional?

- At any time during its investigation or after the issuance of a formal complaint, the department may bring together the complainant and the respondent for an informal conference. At the informal conference, the department shall attempt to resolve issues raised in the complaint and may attempt to aid the parties in reaching a formal settlement or stipulation.

  An informal conference may be attended by a member of the board, at the discretion of that board, or by a member of a committee and may result in a settlement, consent order, waiver, default, or other method of settlement agreed upon by the parties and the department. A settlement may include the revocation, suspension, or limitation of a license or registration; censure; probation; restitution; or a penalty provided for in article 6. A board may reject a settlement and require a contested case hearing.

- The administrative law examiner presiding over a contested case hearing will submit a determination of findings of fact and conclusions of law to the department and the department of the attorney general and the appropriate board in a hearing report.

  The board receiving the hearing report shall meet and make a determination of the penalties to be assessed. The board's determination shall be made on the basis of the administrative law examiner's report. If a board does not determine the appropriate penalty or penalties to be assessed within the time limits prescribed, the director may determine the appropriate penalty and issue a final order for occupations regulated under articles 8 to 25. Penalties may be assessed pursuant to Article 6 including the revocation, suspension, denial or limitation of a license or registration; censure; probation; restitution; administrative fine.

- The director may order a person to cease and desist from a violation of this act or a rule promulgated, or an order issued under this act. Upon a violation of a cease and desist order issued under this act, the department of the attorney general may apply in the circuit court of this state to restrain and enjoin, temporarily or permanently, or both, a person from further violating a cease and desist order.

- A person whose license or certificate of registration has been summarily suspended under this section may petition the department to dissolve the order. Upon receiving a petition, the department immediately shall schedule a hearing to decide whether to grant or deny the requested relief.

  An administrative law examiner shall grant the requested relief dissolving the summary suspension order, unless sufficient evidence is presented that an imminent threat to the public health, safety, and welfare exists which requires emergency action and continuation of the director's summary suspension order.

- An employee of the department may issue a citation to a person licensed or registered under this act or required to be licensed or registered under this act.

Is the decision of the department final?

A licensee that wishes to appeal the decision of the department should seek guidance from their legal counsel.

Additional Resources:

Contact the BPL Complaint Intake Section at 517-241-0205 or BPL-Complaints@michigan.gov

Verify an occupational professional's license

Michigan Occupational Code (Act 299 of 1980)

Administrative Rules

Glossary of Terms:

Formal Complaint – A document that states the charges of each alleged violation and is prepared by the department or the department of attorney general after a complaint is received by the department. Available publicly using the online licensee search.

Summary Suspension – An order summarily suspending a license or a certificate of registration issued pursuant to articles 8 to 25 based on an affidavit by a person familiar with the facts set forth in the affidavit, or, if appropriate, based upon an affidavit on information and belief, that an imminent threat to the public health, safety, and welfare exists. Available publicly using the online licensee search.