

Options for Creating a Record of Complaint

by Tom Sebok

Visitors to the Ombuds Office sometimes say, “I just want to get something ‘on record’ about X.” However, the Ombuds Office does not keep records. Therefore, if the goal is to establish a record, another option is needed. The Ombuds Office provides a confidential, impartial, and informal approach to problem resolution. It functions independently of administrative channels or formal complaint procedures where keeping records are normal practice.

The following guidelines provide a number of options to assist individuals in creating a record of a complaint or problem:

1. Write a careful account, date it, have it notarized, seal it, and send it to:
 - a) your attorney,
 - b) yourself or to a friend via certified mail (without opening it), or
 - c) yourself or to someone else via e-mail.
2. Write a letter to yourself indicating that you spoke with someone from the Ombuds Office about the complaint on a particular day.
3. Keep a log in a dated, bound logbook.
4. Talk with or send a tape or certified letter to a friend, family member, etc. describing the problem.
5. Talk with a medical counselor, colleague, or reliable friend who will keep a dated note about the conversation.
6. Tell a friend, acquaintance, or colleague who would be willing to testify later, that you told her/him about the problem.
7. Give a dated, sealed letter to a trusted friend, colleague, or administrator with the understanding that the letter is to keep, but not open or read – unless/until you say otherwise.