



*The supervisory structure of real estate brokerage helps ensure and promote competence and integrity within the profession. For consumers, it is reassuring to be able to rely on an independent body whose mission is to ensure their continued confidence.*

## Do you have a problem?

Are you dealing with a broker or salesperson and are unhappy with the service you are receiving?

Because the complaint process can take some time, the first thing to do is to discuss the problem with your salesperson. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the discussions, contact the broker or manager of the brokerage where the salesperson works.

If this does not yield results or if you feel that your transaction is not being handled properly, contact the Commission's Compliance Officer, who can give you the information you need to clarify the situation and find out about your rights and recourses.



## To request an investigation

If you feel that your rights were infringed, you can file a complaint with the Commission's Compliance Officer. The request must be made in writing giving details of the concerns as well as providing copies of any supporting documentation. As well, it is helpful if the submission includes a list of other parties that have knowledge of the facts surrounding the complaint and their contact information.

## Contact the Commission

Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission  
7 Scarfe Court, Suite 200, Dartmouth, NS, B3B 1W4  
Phone: (902) 468-3511 | 1-800-390-1015  
Fax: (902) 468-2533 | 1-800-390-1016  
E-mail: [info@nsrec.ns.ca](mailto:info@nsrec.ns.ca)  
Web site: [www.nsrec.ns.ca](http://www.nsrec.ns.ca)



nova scotia real estate  
**COMMISSION**

## Ensuring Consumer Confidence in the Real Estate Industry

The Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission is the regulatory body for the Nova Scotia real estate industry. Its mission is to ensure consumer confidence in the real estate industry by supervising the professional activities of all real estate brokers and salespeople (Industry Members) practicing in Nova Scotia, in accordance with the *Nova Scotia Real Estate Trading Act*.



# Our mission: ensuring consumer confidence

## Consumer protection mechanisms

There are a number of mechanisms in place to uphold the integrity of the real estate profession and industry.

### Certification

Candidates to the profession must first complete the Commission's education requirements and pass the entrance examination. This policy ensures that real estate professionals (Industry Members) have the knowledge and competence required to advise the public in real estate matters.

All Industry Members in Nova Scotia must hold a license issued by the Commission. A consumer who is involved in a real estate transaction through a non-licensed person is not protected under the Real Estate Trading Act, because the protection mechanisms only apply when the client deals with a professional recognized under the

law. Therefore, it is important to make sure your broker or salesperson is licensed with the Commission.



## Continuing professional education

All Industry Members are required to complete continuing professional education annually. Courses are based on subjects that provide Industry Members with a higher level of skills and knowledge that will aid them in protecting the public.

### Standards of conduct and business practices

The Commission assists the public and real estate professionals with information on brokerage issues and industry standards. Its competent and dedicated staff answers thousands of calls each year.

The Commission has the authority to write laws, contained within the Commission By-Law, which governs Industry Members when trading in real estate. The By-Law establishes standards of conduct and business practices that must be followed by every Industry Member. The By-Law ensures real estate brokers are accountable for the business activities of their brokerage and provides protection for the public. For example, the By-Law requires brokers to keep proper records of each trade in real estate and the files are audited yearly by the Commission Compliance staff.

### Complaints and investigations

The Commission's Compliance Officer carries out complaint investigations. The Compliance Officer investigates conduct that appears to:

- be in breach of the RETA or By-Law
- be contrary to the standards of practice expected of an Industry Member
- demonstrate incompetence, recklessness or intent
- put consumers or other industry members at risk
- undermine public confidence in the industry, harm the integrity of the industry or bring the industry into disrepute

## Complaint Review Committee and Discipline Committee



There are two processes a complaint may go through if the Registrar feels there are grounds for charges. The Registrar may offer the Industry Member a Settlement Agreement, which outlines the alleged violations and corresponding penalty. If the Industry Member accepts the Settlement Agreement, the case must go to the Commission's Complaint Review Committee. If a Settlement Agreement is refused, the case is put before the Discipline Committee for a formal hearing. Penalties can range from reprimands, fines, course requirements, license conditions, or license suspension/ cancellation.

### Mandatory forms and brochures

Industry Members in Nova Scotia must use standardized forms approved by the Commission for all real estate transactions. These forms make sure that everyone is literally on the same page, reducing errors, omissions and inconsistencies. In addition to the forms for real estate transactions, your Industry Member will review a brochure with you called "Working with a REALTOR®" or Working with a Real Estate Industry Member," which explains the different types of agency relationships. After your Industry Member has explained the brochure and you understand the type of relationship in which you are involved, your Industry Member will have you sign the acknowledgement section of the brochure to retain in the brokerage's transaction file.

### The Recovery Fund

The Commission maintains a fund to protect the consumer against fraud or breach of trust caused by an Industry Member. Payments from the Recovery Fund must be ordered by the Discipline Committee or as a result of findings of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court.