

NEWS RELEASE

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MANITOBA OMBUDSMAN RELEASES UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS, A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MUNICIPAL DECISION MAKERS

The Manitoba Ombudsman has released a practical, 70-page guide to assist municipal councillors and administrators achieve fairness in the increasingly complex work they do.

The Ombudsman’s Office investigates complaints from members of the public who believe they have not been treated fairly by government, including municipal government.

“Every time a municipality makes a decision, some person or group of people is affected,” said Ombudsman Irene Hamilton. “I am pleased that my office can assist municipal decision makers understand which of their actions and decisions have fairness requirements attached, what those requirements are, and how they can best meet them while ensuring that municipal business proceeds in the normal course.”

Understanding Fairness is intended as a reference and working tool for municipal decision makers. It recognizes that fairness relates not only to a decision made or action taken. Fairness also concerns how decisions are made and how individuals are treated during the decision making process, leading to how they feel about the process and outcome. The guide includes as aids:

- standard definitions of some commonly used fairness terms;
- a guide to meeting the requirements of fairness in municipal decision making;
- helpful hints for conducting public hearings and meetings;
- tips for analyzing decision-making processes;
- fairness “checklists” for councillors and municipalities;
- case examples of actions and decisions that are considered unfair; and
- a decision-making checklist.

Understanding Fairness was produced by the Ombudsman’s Office in cooperation with Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators’ Association.

Manitoba Ombudsman has provided copies of *Understanding Fairness* to every municipal office in Manitoba. The guide can also be viewed online on the following websites:

- Manitoba Ombudsman - www.ombudsman.mb.ca
- Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs - www.gov.mb.ca/ia/
- Association of Manitoba Municipalities - www.amm.mb.ca
- Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association - www.mmaa.mb.ca

For questions about *Understanding Fairness*, contact Manitoba Ombudsman at (204) 982-9130 (in Winnipeg), or 1-800-665-0531 (toll free in Manitoba).

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