

BACKGROUND: INSPECTIONS AND COMPLAINT-HANDLING

OVERVIEW

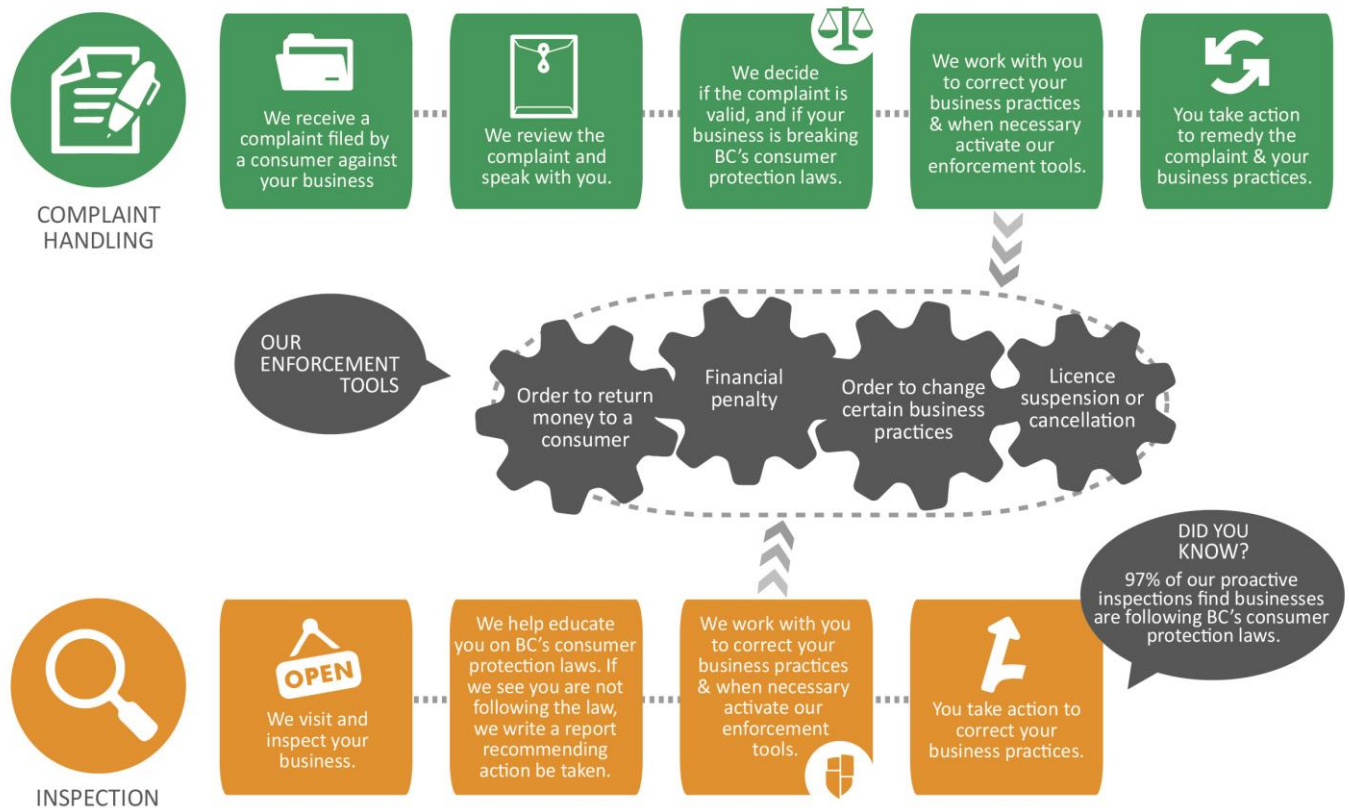
Consumer Protection BC is a provincial regulator. While we have an administrative agreement with government to enforce BC’s consumer protection laws, we operate at arm’s length from government. We license and inspect seven different sectors, regulate specific consumer transactions, respond to consumer inquiries, investigate alleged violations of BC’s consumer protection laws and inform consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities under the law.

BC’S CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS

In BC, consumer rights are protected under a number of different laws – some are captured under the acts and regulations we administer, and some are overseen by other organizations. The laws we are responsible for enforcing include the [Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act](#), the [Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Act](#), the [Motion Picture Act](#) and a number of related [regulations](#). These laws give us the authority to perform inspections of our regulated businesses and investigate allegations of wrong-doing.

INSPECTIONS AND COMPLAINT-HANDLING

This is how we help ensure our regulated businesses operate within the law:



Inspections

Consumer Protection BC has a team of compliance inspectors whose primary job is to ensure businesses comply with the laws we oversee. Inspections can be:

- Routine/random: inspections that make sure a business is complying with the law.
- Follow-up: inspections that are in response to issues found during earlier inspections.
- Complaint-based: inspections that review, discuss or inspect a specific issue or allegation.

Inspection guides are publicly available on our website for all of our regulated sectors. Depending on what the inspection uncovered, the inspector may choose to schedule a follow-up inspection or create a complaint file (which escalates the issue to the enforcement team for potential investigation).

Complaint-handling

The main job of our enforcement inspectors is to review and investigate complaints. It's important to remember Consumer Protection BC is an administrative tribunal and all of our investigations follow due process, which can take time. Our approach is to help businesses voluntarily comply with the law – our goal is not to punish a business, but rather to correct marketplace behaviour.

Our decision makers have the authority and expertise to choose the tool most appropriate for the situation and have discretion when it comes to their decisions. Some of our enforcement tools include warning letters, compliance orders (an order that requires the business to stop certain behaviour and/or to take a specific action), administrative monetary penalties (a fine that can be up to \$5,000 for an individual or \$50,000 for a corporation), licence suspensions or cancellations, and undertakings (written agreements).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To maintain the integrity of our investigative processes, we do not share detailed information about open files. All recent enforcement actions and decisions can be found online, on Consumer Protection BC's website, www.consumerprotectionbc.ca, and under the [Recent Enforcement Actions page](#).

Consumer Protection BC's corporate website, www.consumerprotectionbc.ca, is designed to help consumers and regulated businesses understand their rights and obligations. Statistics and a yearly overview of our work can be found online in our [Annual Reports](#).