

Writing to an elected representative:

If you feel you have been treated unfairly under the law or if your concern requires government action, you can write to your riding's MP or MHA. These elected officials change the law and to represent your interests along with those of other citizens in your riding. In deciding which elected representative can best help you, it is important to know the level of government your representative works with and whether your issue is within that government's responsibility.

Your elected representative cannot influence the courts or any tribunals administering the law. For example, if you are charged with a criminal offence or another citizen is suing you, your elected representative can do little to help.

Writing to your MP:

MP is the abbreviation for Member of Parliament. Parliament is the federal government of Canada which meets in Ottawa at the House of Commons.

The federal government makes laws concerning matters such as:

- Immigration
- Canada pension
- Employment Insurance Benefits
- Old Age Security

Writing to your MHA

MHA is the abbreviation for Member of House of Assembly. The Provincial Parliament is the government for Newfoundland and Labrador; each MHA represents a constituency, or a group of voters in a specific area of the province or territory (yours is Labrador West)

The provincial government makes laws concerning matters such as:

- Family Benefits

- Workers' Compensation
- Health
- Housing
- Schools

MHAs have both a local constituent office and an office in the provincial or territorial legislature. If you are writing to your MHA about a personal problem, write to the local office. If you are writing about a law, or something to do with the government, write to the provincial or territorial Legislature.

What you should say in your letter

When you are writing the Prime Minister, begin with the words "The Right Honourable" followed by his or her name". When writing to an MP, begin with the words "The Honourable" followed by his or her name and then MP; and when writing to an MHA, begin with the words "Mr., Mrs. or Miss" followed by his or her name and MHA, whichever is applicable. When writing to an MHA who also happens to be a Cabinet Minister, then you should begin with "The Honourable".

You should include the following information:

- Who you are,
- What you are writing about,
- How you feel,
- What you want done,
- A date by which you want to hear about what they are going to do, and
- Your name and address.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to send copies of your letter to the opposition party and other Ministers. To find out if your problem or concern is federal or provincial, call your local office of the Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Bloc Quebecois, or Green party. For more information on government in Canada, visit canada.ca.