

How to File an Ethics Complaint

The Ethics Commission (EC) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) has developed the [Enforcement Procedures for the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics and Ethics Standards](#) [Enforcement Procedures] to address alleged violations of the [Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics and Ethics Standards \(2010\)](#) [Code and Ethics Standards]. The EC receives, deliberates, and acts upon such complaints when they are filed against AOTA members, or individuals who were AOTA members at the time of the alleged incident.

Form Submission

The [Ethics Complaint Form](#) must be submitted by mail and completely filled out and include the following:

- Name, address and contact information of both the complainant (the individual filing the complaint) and respondent (the individual against whom the complaint is being filed)
- The Principles of the [Code and Ethics Standards](#) which were allegedly violated
- Signature of the individual filing the complaint
- Identification of any additional agencies or organizations with which a complaint has been filed

The complaint form and supporting documentation, including any attachments, must be mailed to the address on the complaint form, and clearly marked **CONFIDENTIAL, Attn: Ethics Program**. Please note that the **EC does not accept anonymous complaints or those submitted by e-mail, telephone, or facsimile.**

Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation which includes information, evidence, and facts upon which the complaint is based, must be attached to the complaint form. You must provide all relevant information to support the allegations of a violation that you wish the EC to consider. Any confidential information such as client, patient, or employment records that are submitted must have identifying information (i.e., names, social security numbers and so forth.) redacted. Numbers or letters may be used to substitute for names when referring to specific documents or records.

Complaint information and documentation may include but is not limited to:

- Your relationship with the respondent or circumstances of your acquaintance
- Date(s) of the incident(s)
- How and when you observed or became aware of the alleged violation
- A description of the respondent's actions and behavior which you believe were in violation of the [Code and Ethics Standards](#) and the specific principles allegedly violated (i.e. Principle 2, Section A, B, and D)
- Descriptions or copies of communication with others that are relevant to this incident
- Date and type of any actions taken to address the violation including reports to other agencies, and written or verbal communication to the respondent or others
- Signed and dated witness statements if applicable

A copy of the complaint form and supporting documentation will be provided to the respondent (individual against whom the complaint is filed) and to EC members. All information related to a potential ethics complaint is confidential and available only to the respondent, EC members and the AOTA ethics staff.

EC Process and Timelines

The [Enforcement Procedures](#) document outlines the process of handling a complaint, a process designed to ensure fundamental fairness, objectivity, and confidentiality to all parties before a final decision is reached. .

The EC generally holds monthly conference call meetings to review and deliberate on complaint submissions. The initial process typically occurs within 30-60 days, and may not exceed 90 days from the date the complaint is received. All communication from the EC will be in writing and sent via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested.

The timeline for investigating and rendering a decision on a complaint varies from several months to about a year, depending on the timeliness of responses to correspondence and whether or not the respondent requests an appeal. No information will be provided to the Complainant until a final decision (including appeals) has been rendered.

For additional questions, contact the Ethics Program at ethics@aota.org or 1-800-877-1383, ext. 2042.