



Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario

Policy on Representation before the HRTO

A party or witness before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) may be self-represented or represented by a lawyer or paralegal licensed by the Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC).

A party or witness may be represented by an unlicensed person if that person falls within a category the LSUC has exempted from its licensing requirements. The current exemptions permit an unpaid friend or family member, an employee or volunteer from a trade union, and students, volunteers and employees of Legal Aid clinics, among others, to act as a representative. The LSUC's website contains a complete list of the [approved exemptions](#).

A person who is not licensed, whose license is suspended or who is not in an exempted category will not be permitted to act as a representative in an HRTO proceeding.

A licensed representative must provide her/his LSUC license number to the HRTO. The HRTO may ask an unlicensed representative to identify the LSUC category to which he or she belongs.

The HRTO may exclude a representative from a hearing where necessary to prevent an abuse of its processes or, in the case of unlicensed representatives, where the Tribunal finds the representative is not competent to properly represent or to advise the party or witness, or does not understand and comply at the hearing with the duties and responsibilities of an advocate or adviser.

Representatives must treat each other and the Tribunal with courtesy and respect. Both licensed and unlicensed representatives are expected to know and follow the HRTO's Rules and any directions or orders made during the proceeding. Acting on the client's behalf and instructions, a representative is responsible for all communications with the HRTO and the other parties and for preparing and presenting the client's case to the HRTO.

The HRTO will do its best to accommodate a representative's schedule when setting hearing and mediation dates. Representatives retained after hearing or mediation dates are set must be available on those dates. Adjournments to accommodate a new representative's schedule or preparation needs will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.