

# Consumer Affairs & Public Information

Vermont Department of Public Service

# Consumer Affairs & Public Information (CAPI)

The Consumer Affairs & Public Information (CAPI) Division at the Department of Public Service advocates for policies that protect consumer interests, educates consumers about utility issues, and helps people and businesses reach an informal resolution of their disputes with regulated and non-regulated utilities.

# Contact Us

- For the staff person on call at Consumer Affairs dial toll free, 800-622-4496 or 802-828-2332
- [Consumer Contact Email Address:](mailto:psd.consumer@vermont.gov)  
[psd.consumer@vermont.gov](mailto:psd.consumer@vermont.gov)
- [Online Consumer Complaint Form](https://capi.epsd.vermont.gov/) at  
<https://capi.epsd.vermont.gov/>

# Informal Consumer Complaint Resolution

- CAPI attempts to informally resolve disputes between consumers and utilities.
- Specialists will research consumer complaints about utilities or companies that are subject to utility regulation by the Department and negotiate with utility staff and consumers to informally resolve complaints.
- If rule violations are found, utilities will be advised and provided training or support to make corrections as needed. When necessary, concerns are escalated.

# CPG Complaint Investigation

- CAPI investigates complaints about the potential failure of a CPG holder to comply with the terms and conditions of a Certificate of Public Good (CPG).
- CAPI serves as the single location within State government to receive, track, respond to and report on all complaints of a potential CPG violation.
- Complaints are researched, investigated and informal resolution is attempted prior to utilizing other methods such as an administrative citation or by escalating the complaint to the PUC.

# Make Referrals to and Work with the Attorney General's Consumer Assistance Program

- The AGO's CAP handles complaints about satellite TV (i.e., Dish and DirectTV) but refers complaints to CAPI about any bundled packages that include the provision of internet service.
- CAPI flags practices that might be UDAP violations (unfair or deceptive acts or practices in violation of the Consumer Protection Act) for referral back to the AGO's CAP for review or investigation. For instance, false advertising claims or situations where a business is closing are referred to the AGO.
- CAPI handles wireless complaints as well as internet service provider complaints (even though they aren't regulated by the Department) due to its internal resources and as outlined in our working agreement with the AGO.

# Ongoing Projects/Special Topics

- Lifeline
- Electric Assistance Program (GMP)
- Low Income Assistance Program (VGS)
- Support and coordination for the Department's continuous improvement projects

# CAPI Consumer Contacts by Type

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Contacts</b>	6107	5866	7303	4022	3593	3,861
<b>Referrals*</b>	2325	2809	2849	1691	1420	1,775
<b>Complaints</b>	3578	2514	3989	1861	1775	1,783
<b>Grievances</b>	3163	1893	1582	1035	1073	1,175
<b>Escalations</b>	415	341	827	172	128	97
<b>Objections</b>	0**	280	1580	654	574	511
<b>Questions</b>	191	587	352	393	373	335
<b>Compliments</b>	16	32	23	18	11	9

\*Referrals to utilities or the Attorney General's Office

\*\*Objection classification use began in late 2013

# Complaints investigated by CAPI

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Broadband</b>	397	260	276	162	172	193
<b>Cable</b>	596	329	242	262	255	237
<b>Electric</b>	1041	687	427	306	321	293
<b>Natural Gas</b>	97	74	26	26	28	27
<b>Telephone</b>	1192	739	1389	359	300	363
<b>Water</b>	38	22	4	3	8	0
<b>Wireless</b>	64	37	30	78	87	115
<b>Other</b>	152	86	39	11	23	42

# Questions?

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