

CAT User Guide: Confidentiality

This guide provides an overview of the confidentiality requirements that apply to everyone who participates in a CAT case. It is intended to help Users understand what information must be kept private and confidential and what can be shared, both during a CAT case and after it concludes.

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Confidentiality Requirements | 1 |
| What does “Confidential” Mean? | 2 |
| Why are Stage 1 – Negotiation and Stage 2 - Mediation confidential?..... | 2 |
| Is the Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision Hearing Confidential? | 3 |
| Overview of Confidential Information..... | 3 |
| General Information (Applies to all stages of the CAT Process) | 3 |
| Stage 1 – Negotiation..... | 4 |
| Stage 2 – Mediation | 4 |
| Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision | 5 |
| CAT Decisions and Orders..... | 5 |
| Protecting Personal Information | 6 |
| Requesting a Confidentiality Order | 6 |
| Have Questions?..... | 7 |

Confidentiality Requirements

Everyone who participates in a Condominium Authority Tribunal (CAT) case is required to comply with the confidentiality requirements set out under the [CAT’s Rules of Practice](#).

In particular, Rule 5.1 of the [CAT’s Rules of Practice](#) specifies that all messages, settlement offers, and documents that are shared in Stage 1 - Negotiation or Stage 2 - Mediation of a CAT case are private and confidential.

That means that messages, settlement offers, or documents that were provided in these stages cannot be made public or used in Stage 3 - Tribunal Decision, unless the Users agree and the CAT allows it.

This rule applies to all Users involved with a CAT application, including:

- The Applicant(s);

- The Respondent(s);
- The Intervenor(s); and
- All Representatives.

What does “Confidential” Mean?

All messages, settlement offers, and documents that are shared in Stage 1 - Negotiation or Stage 2 - Mediation of a CAT case are private and confidential. That means that Users **cannot**:

- Describe them in detail to others outside of the CAT-ODR system;
- Openly discuss them at a meeting of owners;
- Publicly post or distribute them (on paper or online); or,
- Otherwise disclose them to individuals who are not part of the related CAT case.

Likewise, if your CAT case moves forward to Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision, Users **cannot**:

- Call the Mediator assigned to the case in Stage 2 - Mediation as a witness in Stage 3;
- Upload documents in Stage 3 that were uploaded by another User in Stage 1 or 2, (unless the other Users agree and the CAT allows it); or,
- Repost any messages or settlement offers that were used in Stages 1 and 2 (unless the other Users agree and the CAT allows it).

Important Notes:

- Users can disclose all case-related information and materials with their representative (if they have one). If they do, that representative is also bound by the CAT’s confidentiality requirements and cannot disclose that information or material;
- The CAT’s confidentiality requirements do not expire after the case closes. Users must maintain confidentiality during a case and after it has concluded.

Why are Stage 1 – Negotiation and Stage 2 - Mediation confidential?

The purpose of Stage 1 – Negotiation and Stage 2 - Mediation is for the Users to explore opportunities to resolve the issues in dispute collaboratively. That often involves an open discussion of the issues in dispute and may also include the exchange of documents or other materials.

By making these stages confidential, Users are encouraged to work towards a resolution without worrying that their messages, documents and settlement offers will be used against them during Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision.

If a case moves to Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision, the role of the CAT Member is to give each party an opportunity to make their case and then to make a final and binding decision based on the facts and law. That decision must only be based on what happened during the Stage 3 hearing, and cannot consider what the parties said or did in Stages 1 and 2.

By making Stage 1 and 2 confidential, the CAT can better ensure the fairness of the Stage 3 hearing process.

Is the Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision Hearing Confidential?

No, the Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision hearing is not confidential.

Any messages, documents or other material posted to the CAT-ODR system in Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision are adjudicative records and will form part of the record of the proceeding. That means that they may be provided to the public on demand in accordance with the [CAO's Access and Privacy Policy](#).

That does not mean, however, that Users can share messages, documents or other materials with others while a hearing is ongoing. If you would like to share material from an active case with others, you should ask the CAT Member assigned to your case before you do so.

At the conclusion of a case in Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision, the assigned CAT Member will issue a Decision, which will be [posted on the CAT website](#). That Decision will include information about the evidence and arguments made by the Users during the hearing.

Overview of Confidential Information

The following tables outline which portions of a CAT case are confidential.

General Information (Applies to all stages of the CAT Process)

| Category | Information | Confidential (Yes/No) |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Application | Existence of a CAT application / case | No |
| Application | If an application was accepted or dismissed by the CAT | No |
| Application | Current status of a CAT case (e.g., currently in Stage 1 – Negotiation) | No |
| Application | General description of what the application / case is about | No |
| Correspondence with CAT Staff | Questions and other correspondence with CAT staff (e.g., questions from Users about the process) | Yes |
| Party Information | Party names | No |

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----|
| Party Information | Party contact information (e.g., mailing address) | Yes |
| Party Information | Representative names | No |
| Party Information | Representative contact information (e.g., their email address) | Yes |
| Problem Description | Overview of the issues in dispute | No |
| Member | Name of the CAT Mediator or Member assigned to a case | No |
| Motions | Content of a motion filed with the CAT | No |
| Motions | Content of a submission responding to a motion | No |
| Motions | The CAT's response to a motion (e.g., issuing an order to adjourn the case) | No |
| Closing Reasons | The reason why a case closed (e.g., settlement agreement) | No |
| Documents | Settlement Agreements | Yes |
| Documents | Consent Orders | No |
| Documents | CAT Orders / Decisions | No |

Stage 1 – Negotiation

| Category | Information | Confidential (Yes/No) |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Messages | All messages exchanged in Stage 1 | Yes |
| Documents | Documents that contain settlement related messages or settlement offers uploaded in Stage 1 | Yes |
| Settlement Offers | The contents / terms of any settlement offers made during Stage 1 | Yes |

Stage 2 – Mediation

| Category | Information | Confidential (Yes/No) |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Messages | All messages exchanged in Stage 2 | Yes |
| Messages | Any private discussions with the Mediator | Yes |
| Messages | The content of any discussion that occurred outside of the CAT-ODR system (E.g., a conference call with the Mediator and other Users) | Yes |
| Documents | Documents that contain settlement related messages or settlement offers uploaded in Stage 2 | Yes |
| Documents | Stage 2 Summary and Order – Issued by CAT Mediator | No |
| Settlement Offers | The contents / terms of any proposals made by the CAT Mediator or the other parties to resolve the dispute | Yes |

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|-----------------|---|----|
| Requests | Any requests (i.e., motions) filed by any of the parties and all related material | No |
|-----------------|---|----|

Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision

| Category | Information | Confidential (Yes/No) |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Schedule | Stage 3 hearing schedule created by the Member | No |
| Written Hearing | Messages posted to the Written Hearing tab | No |
| Documents | Documents uploaded during Stage 3 | No |
| Witnesses | Witness names | No |
| Witnesses | Witness contact information (e.g., email address) | Yes |
| Witnesses | Witness testimony (both live and written) | No |
| Requests | Any requests (i.e., motions) filed by any of the parties and all related material | No |

CAT Decisions and Orders

The CAT’s Decisions and Orders are published on the [CAT’s website](#). That includes:

- **Decisions**

Decisions are legally enforceable orders issued by the CAT after conducting an online hearing in Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision.

- **Consent Orders**

Consent orders are legally enforceable orders issued by the CAT after the Users agree to settle the dispute in a way that the CAT can order. The CAT can issue consent orders in either Stage 2 – Mediation or Stage 3 – Tribunal Decision.

- **Other Orders**

In addition to Decisions and Consent Orders, the CAT also publishes:

- All orders dismissing cases (e.g., for lack of jurisdiction or other reasons).
- Motion and Procedural orders which the CAT finds to have addressed substantial issues, or if publication of the order is in the public interest.

The CAT does not publish Settlement Agreements.

Protecting Personal Information

As noted above, the CAT publishes decisions, consent orders, and other orders on our website. We do so in accordance with the open courts principle set out in [section 2 \(b\) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#).

Likewise, the CAT generally will not:

- Anonymize the names of any Users, Representatives or Witnesses that appear before it; or,
- Restrict public access to a CAT decision or order.

The CAT can, however, take steps, give directions or issue orders to protect the confidentiality of personal information, and/or restrict public access to a decision or order upon request, in accordance with Rule 19 of the [CAT's Rules of Practice](#). The CAT can do so on its own initiative or on request.

That means that anyone can request that the CAT take steps, give directions, or issue orders to protect the confidentiality of personal information by restricting access to the adjudicative records in the case, or by anonymizing the names or other information of individuals, either in the adjudicative records or any decisions or orders.

Requesting a Confidentiality Order

If you are currently involved in a case in Stage 3 -Tribunal Decision and you have concerns about public access to the adjudicative records in the case, you should raise your concerns with the CAT Member assigned to your case.

You can also make a request for the CAT to anonymize or limit public access to adjudicative records, decisions or orders by sending an email to: CATinfo@condoauthorityontario.ca.

When making a request, you should include:

1. The CAT case number;
2. Your relationship to the case (e.g., you were the Applicant);
3. What information or portions of the decision / order you wish to anonymize or restrict public access to (e.g., request to anonymize the identity of a witness); and
4. The reasons why this information should be made confidential.

Have Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact us directly:

- Phone – Local: 416-901-9356
- Phone – Toll-Free: 844-880-5341
- Email: CATinfo@condoauthorityontario.ca