EFFECTIVE WRITING GUIDELINES

A major aspect of procedural fairness is the right to a decision and the reasons for that decision. It could be grounds for an appeal if a decision does not include reasons.

This tip sheet gives you an overview for writing effective decisions and the information to help you recognize a good decision letter.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS REQUIRES REASONS

The decision should include a clear explanation as to why you made the decision. Show your work:

- Show the link between the decision and the reasons for the decision
- Explain the “what” and the “why” and don’t be afraid to use “because”
- The more complex the case, the more details required in your reasons

COMMON MISTAKES

- What we think is clear, may not be clear for our intended audience
- Summarizing the evidence instead of making an analysis
- Re-stating the policy or regulation followed by a conclusion

*Information has been adapted from: The Certification in Adjudication for Administrative Agencies, Boards & Tribunals (Osgoode Professional Development and SOAR August 2019), Clarity in Decision Writing (COBA November 2010), Decision Writing: Making Your Decision Appeal Proof (SOAR), A Manual for Ontario Adjudicators (Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators)