

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

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Purpose

This procedure defines the method for documenting and addressing issues raised when a person or organisation, whether a client or not, reports that ICG Compliance has not met their expectations or they dispute a decision made by ICG. It is the intent of this procedure to return a level of satisfaction and confidence to the person or organisation regarding ICG services.

Scope

This procedure is applicable whenever any person or organisation expresses verbally or otherwise that they perceive or experienced a difficulty or discomfort with any of their interactions with ICG.

ICG retains all responsibility and authority for decisions at all levels undertaken within this Procedure.

Definitions

ICG	= ICG Compliance Pty Ltd
OFI	= Opportunity for Improvement
Appeal	= An objection to a decision made by ICG including granting, suspending or the withdrawing of Approval.
Complaint	= Any expression of concern about ICG, its services or Team members, that does not constitute an appeal. This may also include companies that are owned or partly owned by ICG Compliance.

Procedure

It is the responsibility of any and all members of ICG to urgently action an initial response to a Complaint or Appeal lodged with ICG.

The ICG Team Member who receives a verbal complaint or appeal shall discuss it openly with the person to determine the nature and extent of the concern. The Team Member shall then write the details of the complaint or appeal down and enter the details objectively into an OFI **Register** avoiding any use of personal names and any emotive wording, but clearly identifying the person or organisation which expressed the concern. If the concern was received in written form, a copy shall be attached to the OFI.

The OFI will be registered by the Office Manager and forwarded to the appropriate Technical Manager, who must decide whether it constitutes an appeal or a complaint. This determination will be recorded in the OFI Register by the Office Manager.

All activities undertaken during the processing of complaints and appeals shall be treated as confidential by all those involved including all ICG Staff who take place in any investigation.

Any person or party that makes a representation, complaint or appeal shall be treated with respect and shall not be discriminated against.

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Appeals

Once determined that it is an appeal, the Appellant will be notified in writing by the Office Manager that the Appeal has been formally lodged and that it is now under review by the Advisory Panel. This will be done for each and every appeal. At each stage of the appeal, the Appellant shall be notified of the status the appeal.

Appeals will be handed on to the Advisory Panel as an urgent matter, who shall as soon as practicable, appoint an independent and impartial Appeal's Review Panel, to investigate the matter and produce a report. This Panel's activities shall include providing the Appellant with the opportunity to formally present its case. These initial activities shall not take more than 20 working days.

If the appeal is upheld at this stage, the Technical Manager shall be informed by the Advisory Board Panel and is responsible to immediately rectify the consequences of the initial decision. As at all stages, a formal written reply will now be sent to the Appellant, including a description of the action taken and the consequences of the outcome. The Technical Manager shall also make a follow-up call to the Appellant a few days later to confirm that the Appellant is satisfied with the resolution of the appeal.

A copy of all correspondence will be attached to the OFI and shall be processed in the usual manner.

If the appeal is not upheld after investigation, the Technical Manager shall prepare a written response to the Appellant. The response must include a clear account of the reasons for supporting the original decision, and pointing out the Appellant's option to take the matter further by appointing a mutually agreed investigator who is independent of both parties. The Technical Manager shall also make a follow-up call to the Appellant a few days later to discuss the outcome and determine if more action will be undertaken by the Appellant.

A copy of the response letter shall be attached to the OFI for review.

If the Appellant decides to continue with the independent investigator option, the investigator's decision shall be final and the costs shall be shared by ICG and the Appellant. The decision shall be acted upon as above except that there will be no option to take the matter further.

Accreditation bodies may be involved should an appeal be unresolved.

All documents created as a result of the Appeal shall be maintained as a record of the process.

Complaints

Once determined that it is a complaint, the Complainant will be notified in writing by the Office Manager that the Complaint has been formally lodged and that it is now under review.

Complaints shall be processed in the same manner as any OFI with the exception that the Technical Manager is responsible to ensure that progress reports and the outcomes are fed back to the Complainant.

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All correspondence to the Complainant will be in the form of a letter, followed a few days later by a phone call to confirm that they consider the matter satisfactorily resolved. The Complainant's concern and the response letter shall be attached to the OFI. These initial activities shall not take more than 20 working days.

All unresolved complaints ~~and appeals~~ are reviewed by the Advisory Panel, who may appoint an independent and impartial review panel to investigate any complaint that they feel has not been dealt with properly. Should this situation arise then the complainant will be notified that further action has begun on their concern. The decision of such a panel shall be implemented by ICG and any and all outcomes of the panel will be notified by the Technical Manager in a letter to the complainant and a follow-up phone call a few days later.

Accreditation bodies may be involved should a complaint be unresolved.

When corrective action has been undertaken as a result of the investigation of a complaint it shall be reviewed to determine if it has been effective. When the action taken is by ICG, it will be assessed by a member of staff independent of the complaint and those investigating it. If the action is taken by a client then it will be determined by the investigator to assess the action either by a Special Visit or during an upcoming planned surveillance or re-certification audit.

At the conclusion of the process of addressing the complaint, ICG, the complainant and if there is a client involved, the client's representative, should the subject of the complaint and its resolution be made public and to what extent. These discussions should also address who will be responsible to undertake the actions decided.

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