



COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. SCOPE

This procedure describes how complaints related to the activities of the Foundation FSSC (hereafter called FSSC), its affiliated organizations, and the operation of the FSSC certification Schemes will be managed. For complaints to be dealt with promptly, it is important that the complainant completes the Foundation FSSC Complaint Form (available on the FSSC Website) with a suitable amount of detail and provide supporting information as applicable.

2. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Doc ID	Document Title
CO-CO-00-F1	Complaint Form

3. COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

3.1 ACCREDITATION BODY

3.1.1 Complaints against the application of the FSSC Scheme requirements by an accreditation body are to be addressed directly to the Foundation FSSC

3.1.2 The accreditation body will be contacted, and the complaint will be shared with them to discuss actions that need to be taken for its resolution

3.1.3 The complainant will be notified of the resolution of the complaint once the agreements have been reached with the accreditation body

3.2 CERTIFICATION BODY

3.2.1 Complaints about the service, activities, or functions of a certification body (hereafter CB) holding a valid license with FSSC shall be submitted in the first instance to the CB to be addressed within their internal quality management system. The complaints procedure of the CB must be followed.

3.2.2 Complaints about the performance of the CB that might put the integrity of the FSSC certification process at risk can be submitted directly to Foundation FSSC and the accreditation body (AB) that accredits the CB.

3.2.3 FSSC cannot formally deal with complaints described in 3.2.1 since these are to be managed by the complaints system of the CB, however as part of the Foundation FSSC Integrity Program (IP), the effectiveness of the CB complaints management system is evaluated during the IP (Office) Assessments.

3.2.4 In cases where the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of their complaint by the CB, they may inform FSSC and the AB. Alternative actions may be discussed with FSSC, but additional actions to be taken, other than those specified in 3.2.3, cannot be determined until all relevant case details have been made known to the FSSC.

3.3 CERTIFIED ORGANIZATION

3.3.1 Complaints about an FSSC-certified organization [for example, a failure to follow the requirements of the certification scheme] are, in the first instance, to be addressed with the relevant CB. The complaints procedure of the CB must be followed.

3.3.2 Complaints about the performance of the Certified Organization that might put the integrity of the FSSC certification process at risk can be submitted directly to Foundation FSSC and the accreditation body (AB) that accredits the CB.

3.3.3 FSSC cannot formally deal with complaints described in 3.3.1 since these are to be managed by the complaints system of the CB, however as part of the Foundation FSSC Integrity Program (IP), the effectiveness of the CB complaints management system is evaluated during the IP (Office) Assessments.

3.3.4 In cases where the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of their complaint by the CB, they may inform FSSC. Alternative actions may be discussed with FSSC, but additional actions to be taken, other than those specified in 3.3.2, cannot be determined until all relevant case details have been made known to FSSC.

3.4 FOUNDATION AND/OR SCHEME

3.4.1 Complaints about the Foundation FSSC itself or any aspect of the operation of FSSC certification Schemes are to be addressed directly to FSSC.

3.4.2 The Foundation FSSC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and initiate an appropriate investigation. Acknowledgment does not imply that the nature, completeness, or correctness of the complaint is verified or justified.

4. CONDITIONS

4.1.1 Complaints may only be filed by persons or organizations that are directly affected by the activities of the Scheme or its licensed CBs.

4.1.2 Complainants are expected to attempt to find a resolution to their complaint with the defendant prior to filing a formal complaint with the Foundation FSSC.

4.1.3 Complaints filed with the Foundation FSSC must:

4.1.3.1 Be accompanied by the completed complaints form available on the FSSC Website, providing all relevant details (in chronological order);

4.1.3.2 Include any supporting evidence or documents, such as statements and explanations related to the issue. The complainant is responsible for complying with the Data Protection and Privacy Laws when submitting any information.

4.1.3.3 The information submitted by the complainant will be shared fully and/or partially with the Certification Body and Accreditation Body.

4.1.3.4 Not be repeated if there was a disagreement with the previous resolution given by the Foundation FSSC.

- 4.1.3.5 The person or organization making the complaint cannot derive any rights from the fact that the Foundation FSSC has taken the complaint into account.
- 4.1.3.6 The Foundation FSSC accepts no liability for the nature, completeness, or correctness of registered complaints, nor for any breach in data protection (GDPR) regulations of the information submitted by the complainant. Any risk of damage resulting from claims remains completely with the complainant.

5. PROCESS

5.1.1 Complaints shall be submitted to the email address: IP@fssc.com.

5.1.2 The Foundation FSSC will assess the complaint and request additional information from the complainant when necessary.

5.1.3 For complaints against the Foundation FSSC/Scheme, if necessary, The Foundation FSSC can request a detailed reply to the filed complaint. The Foundation FSSC will take advice from the retained technical experts and/or the Board of Stakeholders, as necessary, to determine the facts of the case and appropriate response or resolution. This investigation will be completed within 30 days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be notified of progress and an estimated timescale. Proposed resolutions will be ratified by a representative of the Management Board of the Foundation FSSC prior to onward communication. Should both parties reach a resolution together, this will be deemed binding and will be confirmed by the Secretariat to both parties.

5.1.4 For complaints against Accreditation Bodies, Certification Bodies, and/or Certified Organizations, the Integrity Program area will conduct the necessary investigation and follow-up actions with the involved parties. The complainant will be informed in due time of the outcome, resolution, and further follow-up of the complaint.

5.1.5 Records of complaints, investigations, and proposed resolutions will be maintained by the Foundation FSSC.

5.1.6 A summary of complaints registered and outcomes or resolutions will be reviewed by the Management Board of the Foundation FSSC minimum of once per year.

5.1.7 Complaint outcomes or resolutions may be appealed in accordance with the Appeal Policy of the Foundation FSSC.

REVISION HISTORY TABLE

Rev.	Date	Nature of Changes	Approved By
1.0	April 2013	First issuance of the procedure	Management Board
2.0	July 2017	PDCA of the processes	Management Board
3.0	May 2018	PDCA of the processes based on internal audit	Management Board
4.0	October 2022	Redefinition of complaints that are handled by the Foundation and alignment to cover FSSC 22000 and 24000	Management Board