



COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. SCOPE

This procedure describes how complaints related to the activities of 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 FSSC Complaint Form (available on the FSSC Website) with a suitable amount of detail and provides 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 FSSC.
- 3.1.2 The accreditation body will be contacted, and the complaint shared with them to discuss actions that need to be taken for its resolution.
- 3.1.3 The complainant will be notified of the outcome 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 FSSC license 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 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 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 FSSC.

3.3 CERTIFIED ORGANIZATION

- 3.3.1 Complaints about a 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 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 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 than those specified in 3.3.2, cannot be determined until all relevant case details have been made known to FSSC.

3.4 FSSC AND/OR SCHEME

- 3.4.1 Complaints about FSSC itself or any aspect of the operation of FSSC certification Schemes are to be addressed directly to FSSC.
- 3.4.2 FSSC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and initiate an appropriate investigation. Acknowledgement does not imply that the nature, completeness, or correctness of the complaint is verified or justified.

4. CONDITIONS

- 4.1 Complaints may only be filed by people or organizations that are directly affected by the activities of the Scheme or its licensed CBs.
- 4.2 Complainants are expected to attempt to find a resolution to their complaint with the defendant prior to filing a formal complaint with FSSC.
- 4.3 Complaints filed with FSSC:
 - 4.3.1 Must be accompanied by the completed complaints form available on the FSSC website, providing all relevant details (in chronological order).
 - 4.3.2 Must include any supporting evidence or documents, such as statements and explanations related to the issue. The complainant is responsible for complying with all applicable Data Protection and Privacy Laws when submitting any information.
 - 4.3.3 Will be shared in full or in part with the Certification Body and Accreditation Body.
 - 4.3.4 May not be resubmitted if there was a disagreement with the previous resolution given by FSSC.

- 4.4 The person or organization making the complaint cannot derive any rights from the fact that FSSC has taken the complaint into account.
- 4.5 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 Complaints shall be submitted to the email address: IP@fssc.com.
- 5.2 FSSC will assess the complaint and request additional information from the complainant when necessary.
- 5.3 For complaints against FSSC/Scheme, if necessary, FSSC can request a detailed reply on the filed complaint. 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 an 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 estimated timescale. Proposed resolutions will be ratified by a representative of the Management Board of 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Records of complaints, investigations and proposed resolutions will be maintained by FSSC.
- 5.6 A summary of complaints registered, and outcomes or resolutions will be reviewed by the Management Board of FSSC minimum once per year.

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
5.0	June 2023	PDCA of the process and removal of 5.1.7 - Appeal	Management Board