

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

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Second edition
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Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations

*Management de la qualité — Satisfaction des clients — Lignes
directrices pour le traitement des réclamations dans les organismes*



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Supporting technologies*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 10002:2004), of which it constitutes a minor revision. It also incorporates the Technical Corrigendum ISO 10002:2004/Cor.1:2009.

Introduction

0.1 General

This International Standard provides guidance for the design and implementation of an effective and efficient complaints-handling process for all types of commercial or non-commercial activities, including those related to electronic commerce. It is intended to benefit an organization and its customers, complainants, and other interested parties.

The information obtained through the complaints-handling process can lead to improvements in products and processes and, where the complaints are properly handled, can improve the reputation of the organization, regardless of size, location, and sector. In a global marketplace, the value of an International Standard becomes more evident since it provides confidence in the consistent treatment of complaints.

An effective and efficient complaints-handling process reflects the needs of both the organizations supplying products and those who are the recipients of those products.

NOTE In ISO 9000:2005, “product” is defined as the “result of a process” which encompasses four generic product categories: services, software, hardware and processed materials. Throughout the text of this International Standard, wherever the term “product” is used, it can also mean “service”.

The handling of complaints through a process as described in this International Standard can enhance customer satisfaction. Encouraging customer feedback, including complaints if customers are not satisfied, can offer opportunities to maintain or enhance customer loyalty and approval, and improve domestic and international competitiveness.

Implementation of the process described in this International Standard can

- provide a complainant with access to an open and responsive complaints-handling process,
- enhance the ability of the organization to resolve complaints in a consistent, systematic, and responsive manner, to the satisfaction of the complainant and the organization,
- enhance the ability of an organization to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints, and improve the organization’s operations,
- help an organization create a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints, and encourage personnel to improve their skills in working with customers, and
- provide a basis for continual review and analysis of the complaints-handling process, the resolution of complaints, and process improvements made.

Organizations can use the complaints-handling process in conjunction with customer satisfaction codes of conduct and external dispute resolution processes.

0.2 Relationship with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004

This International Standard is compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004, and supports the objectives of these two International Standards through the effective and efficient application of a complaints-handling process. It can also be used independently of them.

ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used for internal application by organizations, or for certification, or for contractual purposes. The process for complaints handling described in this International Standard can be used as an element of a quality management system.

ISO 9004 provides guidance on managing for the sustained success of an organization. The use of this International Standard (ISO 10002) can enhance performance in the area of complaints handling and increase the satisfaction of customers and other interested parties to facilitate the achievement of

sustained success. It can also facilitate the continual improvement of the quality of products based on feedback from customers and other interested parties.

0.3 Relationship with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004

This International Standard is compatible with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004. These four International Standards can be used either independently or in conjunction with each other. When used together, ISO 10001, ISO 10003, ISO 10004 and this International Standard can be part of a broader and integrated framework for enhanced customer satisfaction through codes of conduct, complaints handling, dispute resolution and monitoring and measurement of customer satisfaction.

ISO 10001 contains guidance on codes of conduct for organizations related to customer satisfaction. Such codes of conduct can decrease the probability of problems arising and can eliminate causes of complaints and disputes which can decrease customer satisfaction.

ISO 10003 contains guidance on the resolution of disputes regarding product-related complaints that could not be satisfactorily resolved internally. ISO 10003 can help to minimize customer dissatisfaction stemming from unresolved complaints.

ISO 10004 contains guidance on establishing effective processes for monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction. Its focus is on customers external to the organization.

Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations

1 Scope

This International Standard provides guidance on the process of complaints handling related to products within an organization, including planning, design, operation, maintenance, and improvement. The complaints-handling process described is suitable for use as one of the processes of an overall quality management system.

This International Standard is not applicable to disputes referred for resolution outside the organization or for employment-related disputes.

It is also intended for use by organizations of all sizes and in all sectors. [Annex A](#) provides guidance specifically for small businesses.

This International Standard addresses the following aspects of complaints handling:

- a) enhancing customer satisfaction by creating a customer-focused environment that is open to feedback (including complaints), resolving any complaints received, and enhancing the organization's ability to improve its product and customer service;
- b) top management involvement and commitment through adequate acquisition and deployment of resources, including personnel training;
- c) recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants;
- d) providing complainants with an open, effective, and easy-to-use complaints process;
- e) analysing and evaluating complaints in order to improve the product and customer service quality;
- f) auditing of the complaints-handling process;
- g) reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000:2005, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000 and the following apply.

3.1

complainant

person, organization, or its representative, making a complaint

3.2

complaint

expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

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3.3

customer

organization or person that receives a product

EXAMPLE Consumer, client, end-user, retailer, beneficiary, and purchaser.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2005, 3.3.5, modified — Note has been deleted.]

3.4

customer satisfaction

customer's perception of the degree to which the customer's requirements have been fulfilled

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2005, 3.1.4, modified — Notes have been deleted.]

3.5

customer service

interaction of the organization with the customer throughout the life cycle of a product

3.6

feedback

opinions, comments, and expressions of interest in the products or the complaints-handling process

3.7

interested party

person or group having an interest in the performance or success of an organization

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2005, 3.3.7, modified — Example and note have been deleted.]

3.8

objective

<complaints handling> something sought, or aimed for, related to complaints handling

3.9

policy

<complaints handling> overall intentions and direction of the organization related to complaints handling, as formally expressed by top management

3.10

process

set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2005, 3.4.1, modified — Notes have been deleted.]

4 Guiding principles

4.1 General

Adherence to the guiding principles set out in [4.2](#) to [4.10](#) is recommended for effective handling of complaints.

4.2 Visibility

Information about how and where to complain should be well publicized to customers, personnel, and other interested parties.

4.3 Accessibility

A complaints-handling process should be easily accessible to all complainants. Information should be made available on the details of making and resolving complaints. The complaints-handling process and supporting information should be easy to understand and use. The information should be in clear

language. Information and assistance in making a complaint should be made available (see [Annex B](#)), in whatever languages or formats that the products were offered or provided in, including alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, or audiotape, so that no complainants are disadvantaged.

4.4 Responsiveness

Receipt of each complaint should be acknowledged to the complainant immediately. Complaints should be addressed promptly in accordance with their urgency. For example, significant health and safety issues should be processed immediately. The complainants should be treated courteously and be kept informed of the progress of their complaint through the complaints-handling process.

4.5 Objectivity

Each complaint should be addressed in an equitable, objective, and unbiased manner through the complaints-handling process (see [Annex C](#)).

4.6 Charges

Access to the complaints-handling process should be free of charge to the complainant.

4.7 Confidentiality

Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant should be available where needed, but only for the purposes of addressing the complaint within the organization and should be actively protected from disclosure, unless the customer or complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.

4.8 Customer-focused approach

The organization should adopt a customer-focused approach, should be open to feedback including complaints, and should show commitment to resolving complaints by its actions.

4.9 Accountability

The organization should ensure that accountability for and reporting on the actions and decisions of the organization with respect to complaints handling is clearly established.

4.10 Continual improvement

The continual improvement of the complaints-handling process and the quality of products should be a permanent objective of the organization.

5 Complaints-handling framework

5.1 Commitment

The organization should be actively committed to effective and efficient complaints handling. It is particularly important that this is shown by and promoted from, the organization's top management.

A strong commitment to responding to complaints should allow both personnel and customers to contribute to the improvement of the organization's products and processes.

This commitment should be reflected in the definition, adoption, and dissemination of policy and procedures for the resolution of complaints. Management commitment should be shown by the provision of adequate resources, including training.

5.2 Policy

Top management should establish an explicit customer-focused complaints-handling policy. The policy should be made available to, and known by all personnel. The policy should also be made available to customers and other interested parties. The policy should be supported by procedures and objectives for each function and personnel role included in the process.

When establishing the policy and objectives for the complaints-handling process, the following factors should be taken into account:

- any relevant statutory and regulatory requirements;
- financial, operational, and organizational requirements;
- the input of customers, personnel, and other interested parties.

The policies related to quality and complaints handling should be aligned.

5.3 Responsibility and authority

5.3.1 Top management should be responsible for the following:

- a) ensuring that the complaints-handling process and objectives are established within the organization;
- b) ensuring that the complaints-handling process is planned, designed, implemented, maintained, and continually improved in accordance with the complaints-handling policy of the organization;
- c) identifying and allocating the management resources needed for an effective and an efficient complaints-handling process;
- d) ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and the need for a customer focus throughout the organization;
- e) ensuring that information about the complaints-handling process is communicated to customers, complainants, and, where applicable, other parties directly concerned in an easily accessible manner (see [Annex C](#));
- f) appointing a complaints-handling management representative and clearly defining his or her responsibilities and authority in addition to the responsibilities and authority set out in [5.3.2](#);
- g) ensuring that there is a process for rapid and effective notification to top management of any significant complaints;
- h) periodically reviewing the complaints-handling process to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently maintained and continually improved.

5.3.2 The complaints-handling management representative should be responsible for the following:

- a) establishing a process of performance monitoring, evaluation, and reporting;
- b) reporting to top management on the complaints-handling process, with recommendations for improvement;
- c) maintaining the effective and efficient operation of the complaints-handling process, including the recruitment and training of appropriate personnel, technology requirements, documentation, setting and meeting target time limits and other requirements, and process reviews.

5.3.3 Other managers involved in the complaints-handling process should, as applicable within their area of responsibility, be responsible for the following:

- a) ensuring that the complaints-handling process is implemented;
- b) liaising with the complaints-handling management representative;
- c) ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and of the need for a customer focus;
- d) ensuring that information about the complaints-handling process is easily accessible;
- e) reporting on actions and decisions with respect to complaints handling;
- f) ensuring that monitoring of the complaints-handling process is undertaken and recorded;
- g) ensuring that action is taken to correct a problem, prevent it happening in the future, and that the event is recorded;
- h) ensuring that complaints-handling data are available for the top management review.

5.3.4 All personnel in contact with customers and complainants should

- be trained in complaints handling,
- comply with any complaints-handling reporting requirements determined by the organization,
- treat customers in a courteous manner and promptly respond to their complaints or direct them to the appropriate individual, and
- show good interpersonal and good communication skills.

5.3.5 All personnel should

- be aware of their roles, responsibilities, and authorities in respect of complaints,
- be aware of what procedures to follow and what information to give to complainants, and
- report complaints which have a significant impact on the organization.

6 Planning and design

6.1 General

The organization should plan and design an effective and efficient complaints-handling process in order to increase customer loyalty and satisfaction, and also to improve the quality of the products provided. This process should comprise a set of interrelated activities that function harmoniously and use various personnel, information, material, financial, and infrastructure resources to conform to the complaints-handling policy and achieve the objectives. The organization should take into account the best practices of other organizations with regard to complaints handling.

6.2 Objectives

Top management should ensure that the complaints-handling objectives are established for relevant functions and levels within the organization. These objectives should be measurable and consistent with the complaints-handling policy. These objectives should be set at regular intervals as detailed performance criteria.

6.3 Activities

Top management should ensure that the planning of the complaints-handling process is carried out in order to maintain and increase customer satisfaction. The complaints-handling process can be linked to and aligned with other processes of the quality management system of the organization.

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6.4 Resources

In order to ensure that the complaints-handling process operates effectively and efficiently, top management should assess the needs for resources and provide them. These include resources such as personnel, training, procedures, documentation, specialist support, materials and equipment, computer hardware and software, and finances.

The selection, support and training of personnel involved in the complaints-handling process are particularly important factors.

7 Operation of complaints-handling process

7.1 Communication

Information concerning the complaints-handling process, such as brochures, pamphlets, or electronic-based information, should be made readily available to customers, complainants, and other interested parties. Such information should be provided in clear language and, so far as is reasonable, in formats accessible to all, so that no complainants are disadvantaged. The following are examples of such information:

- where complaints can be made;
- how complaints can be made;
- information to be provided by the complainant (see [Annex B](#));
- the process for handling complaints;
- time periods associated with various stages in the process;
- the complainant's options for remedy, including external means (see [7.9](#));
- how the complainant can obtain feedback on the status of the complaint.

7.2 Receipt of complaints

Upon reporting of the initial complaint, the complaint should be recorded with supporting information and a unique identifier code. The record of the initial complaint should identify the remedy sought by the complainant and any other information necessary for the effective handling of the complaint including the following:

- a description of the complaint and relevant supporting data;
- the requested remedy;
- the products or related organization practices complained about;
- the due date for a response;
- data on people, department, branch, organization and market segment;
- immediate action taken (if any).

For further guidance, see [Annexes B](#) and [D](#).

7.3 Tracking of complaints

The complaint should be tracked from initial receipt through the entire process until the complainant is satisfied or the final decision is made. An up-to-date status should be made available to the complainant upon request and at regular intervals, at least at the time of pre-set deadlines.

7.4 Acknowledgement of complaints

Receipt of each complaint should be acknowledged to the complainant immediately (for example through post, phone, or e-mail).

7.5 Initial assessment of complaints

After receipt, each complaint should be initially assessed in terms of criteria such as severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action.

7.6 Investigation of complaints

Every reasonable effort should be made to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint. The level of investigation should be commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and severity of the complaint.

7.7 Response to complaints

Following an appropriate investigation, the organization should offer a response (see [Annex E](#)), for example, correct the problem and prevent it happening in the future. If the complaint cannot be immediately resolved, then it should be dealt with in a manner intended to lead to its effective resolution as soon as possible (see [Annex F](#)).

7.8 Communicating the decision

The decision or any action taken regarding the complaint, which is relevant to the complainant or to the personnel involved, should be communicated to them as soon as the decision or action is taken.

7.9 Closing complaints

If the complainant accepts the proposed decision or action, then the decision or action should be carried out and recorded.

If the complainant rejects the proposed decision or action, then the complaint should remain open. This should be recorded and the complainant should be informed of alternative forms of internal and external recourse available.

The organization should continue to monitor the progress of the complaint until all reasonable internal and external options of recourse are exhausted or the complainant is satisfied.

8 Maintenance and improvement

8.1 Collection of information

The organization should record the performance of its complaints-handling process. The organization should establish and implement procedures for recording complaints and responses and for using these records and managing them, while protecting any personal information and ensuring the confidentiality of complainants.

This should include the following:

- a) specifying steps for identifying, gathering, classifying, maintaining, storing, and disposing of records;
- b) recording its handling of a complaint and maintaining these records, taking utmost care to preserve such items as electronic files and magnetic recording media, since records in these media can be lost as a result of mishandling or obsolescence;

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- c) keeping records of the type of training and instruction that individuals involved in the complaints-handling process have received;
- d) specifying the organization's criteria for responding to requests for record presentation and record submissions made by a complainant or his or her agent; this can include time limits, what kind of information will be provided, to whom, or in what format;
- e) specifying how and when statistical non-personally identifiable complaints data are disclosed to the public.

8.2 Analysis and evaluation of complaints

All complaints should be classified and then analysed to identify systematic, recurring and single incident problems and trends, and to help eliminate the underlying causes of complaints.

8.3 Satisfaction with the complaints-handling process

There should be regular action taken to determine the levels of satisfaction of complainants with the complaints-handling process. This can take the form of random surveys of complainants and other techniques.

NOTE One method of improving satisfaction with the complaints-handling process is to simulate a contact with a complainant and the organization.

8.4 Monitoring of the complaints-handling process

Continual monitoring of the complaints-handling process, the resources required (including personnel), and the data to be collected should be undertaken.

The performance of the complaints-handling process should be measured against predetermined criteria (see [Annex G](#)).

8.5 Auditing of the complaints-handling process

The organization should regularly perform or provide for audits in order to evaluate the performance of the complaints-handling process. The audit should provide information on

- process conformity to complaints-handling procedures, and
- process suitability to achieve complaints-handling objectives.

The complaints-handling audit can be conducted as part of the quality management system audit, for example in accordance with ISO 19011. The audit results should be taken into account in the management review to identify problems and introduce improvements in the complaints-handling process. The audit should be carried out by competent individuals independent of the activity being audited. Further guidance on auditing is provided in [Annex H](#).

8.6 Management review of the complaints-handling process

8.6.1 Top management of the organization should review the complaints-handling process on a regular basis in order

- to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency,
- to identify and address instances of nonconformity with health, safety, environmental, customer, regulatory, and other legal requirements,
- to identify and correct product deficiencies,
- to identify and correct process deficiencies,

- to assess opportunities for improvement and the need for changes to the complaints-handling process and products offered, and
- to evaluate potential changes to the complaints-handling policy and objectives.

8.6.2 The input to management review should include information on

- internal factors such as changes in the policy, objectives, organizational structure, resources available, and products offered or provided,
- external factors such as changes in legislation, competitive practices, or technological innovations,
- the overall performance of the complaints-handling process, including customer satisfaction surveys, and the results of the continual monitoring of the process,
- the results of audits,
- the status of corrective and preventive actions,
- follow up actions from previous management reviews, and
- recommendations for improvement.

8.6.3 The output from the management review should include

- decisions and actions related to improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process,
- proposals on product improvement, and
- decisions and actions related to identified resource needs (e.g. training programmes).

Records from management review should be maintained and used to identify opportunities for improvement.

8.7 Continual improvement

The organization should continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process. As a result, the organization can continually improve the quality of its products. This can be achieved through corrective and preventive actions and innovative improvements. The organization should take action to eliminate the causes of existing and potential problems leading to complaints in order to prevent recurrence and occurrence, respectively. The organization should

- explore, identify, and apply best practices in complaints handling,
- foster a customer-focused approach within the organization,
- encourage innovation in complaints-handling development, and
- recognize exemplary complaints-handling behaviour.

Annex A (informative)

Guidance for small businesses

This International Standard is designed for organizations of all sizes. However it is recognized that many smaller businesses will have limited resources to dedicate to setting up and maintaining a complaints-handling process. This annex highlights key areas where they can focus their attention to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency from a simple process.

The steps below identify key areas, with suggestions for action in each.

- *Be open to complaints*: have a simple sign on show, or a paragraph on company invoices, saying (see [4.2](#)), for example:
 “Your satisfaction is important to us, please tell us if you are not satisfied — we’d like to put it right”.
- *Collect and record complaints* (see [Annexes B](#) and [D](#)).
- *Acknowledge your receipt* of the complaint to the complainant if it is not received in person (a phone call or e-mail is sufficient) (see [7.4](#)).
- *Assess the complaint for validity*, possible impact, and who is the best person to deal with it (see [7.5](#)).
- *Resolve as soon as practically possible*, or further investigate the complaint and then make a decision about what to do about it, and act promptly (see [7.7](#)).
- *Give information to the customer* about what you intend to do about the complaint, and evaluate the customer’s response. Is it likely that the action will satisfy the customer? If yes, then move rapidly to take the action the customer reasonably expects, bearing in mind the best practices within your industry (see [7.8](#)).
- *When all possible actions has been done* in your view to resolve the complaint, tell the customer and record the outcome. If the complaint is still not resolved to the customer’s satisfaction, explain your decision and offer any possible alternative actions (see [7.9](#)).
- *Review complaints regularly* — a brief periodical review and a more intensive annual review to establish if there are any trends, or obvious things you could change or put right to stop complaints occurring, improve customer service, or make customers more satisfied! (see [Annex B](#) and complaints tracking in item 7 of [Annex D](#)).

The above guidance is designed for easy implementation. It can be valuable to visit other similar businesses, perhaps not doing exactly the same, and see how they deal with customers’ complaints. Valuable tips and techniques to apply can, often, be found.

Annex B (informative)

Form for complainant

The following is a sample form containing the principal information which can aid a complainant to provide the key details required by the organization to handle the complaint adequately.

1 Details of complainant

Name/organization _____

Address _____

Postal code, Town _____

Country _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Details of person acting on behalf of complainant (if applicable)

Person to be contacted (if different from above)

2 Product description

Reference number of product/order (if known) _____

Description

3 Problem encountered

Date of occurrence _____

Description

4 Remedy requested

yes no

5 Date, Signature

Date ----- Signature -----

6 Enclosure

List of enclosed documents

Annex C (informative)

Objectivity

C.1 General

The principles for objectivity in the complaints-handling process include the following.

- a) **Openness:** well publicized, accessible, and understood by those involved in a complaint. The process should be clear and well publicized so that both personnel and complainants can follow them.
- b) **Impartiality:** avoiding any bias in dealing with the complainant, the person complained against, or the organization. The process should be designed to protect the person complained against from any biased treatment. Emphasis should be placed on solving the problem and not on assigning blame. If a complaint is made about personnel, the investigation should be carried out independently.
- c) **Confidentiality:** the process should be designed to protect the complainant's and customer's identity, as far as is reasonably possible. This aspect is very important to avoid deterring possible complaints from people who might be afraid that giving details could lead to inconvenience or discrimination.
- d) **Accessibility:** the organization should allow the complainant access to the complaints-handling process at any reasonable point or time. Information about the complaints process should be readily available in clear language and in formats accessible to all complainants. When a complaint affects different supply chain participants, a plan to coordinate a joint response should be made. The process should allow any information arising from the complaints to be known by any suppliers of the organization that are concerned by the complaint so that they are able to make improvements.
- e) **Completeness:** finding out the relevant facts, talking to people from both sides involved in the complaint to establish a common ground and verify explanations, whenever possible.
- f) **Equitability:** giving equal treatment to all people.
- g) **Sensitivity:** each case should be considered on its merits, paying due care to individual differences and needs.

C.2 Objectivity for personnel

Complaints-handling procedures should ensure that those complained against are treated objectively. This implies

- informing them immediately and completely on any complaint about their performance,
- giving them the opportunity to explain the circumstances and allowing them appropriate support, and
- keeping them informed of the progress in the investigation of the complaint and the result.

It is vital that those against whom a complaint has been made are given full details of the complaint before they are interviewed. However, confidentiality should be observed.

Personnel should be reassured that they are supported by the process. Personnel should be encouraged to learn from the complaints-handling experience and to develop a better understanding of the complainant perspectives.

C.3 Separating complaints-handling procedures from disciplinary procedures

Complaints-handling procedures should be separated from disciplinary procedures.

C.4 Confidentiality

In addition to ensuring complainant confidentiality, the complaints-handling process should ensure confidentiality in the case of complaints against personnel. The details of such complaints should be known only by those directly concerned.

However, it is important that confidentiality is not used as an excuse to avoid dealing with a complaint.

C.5 Objectivity monitoring

Organizations should monitor the responses to complaints to ensure complaints are handled objectively.

Measures could include

- a regular monitoring (e.g. monthly) of resolved complaint cases selected at random, and
- surveys of complainants, asking them if they were treated in an objective manner.

Annex D (informative)

Complaint follow-up form

The following is a sample form (for internal use only), containing the principal information which can aid the organization in following up on a complaint.

1 Details of complaint receipt

Date of complaint _____

Time of complaint _____

Name of recipient _____

Complaint medium phone e-mail internet personal
 postal mail others

Unique identifier code _____

2 Details of complainant

see form for complainant

reference number of complaint

relevant data on complaint

complaint referred by

4 Problem encountered

date of problem

recurrent problem yes no

Problem Category

- 1 Product not delivered
- 2 Service not provided/partially provided
- 3 Delay in delivering product
 Duration of delay: _____
- 4 Delay in providing service
 Duration of delay: _____
- 5 Defective product

- 6 Poor service
Details: _____

- 7 Product not in conformity with order
- 8 Products not ordered
- 9 Damage suffered
- 10 Refusal to honour the guarantee
- 11 Refusal to sell
- 12 Refusal to provide service
- 13 Commercial practices/sales methods
- 14 Incorrect information
- 15 Inadequate information
- 16 Payment arrangements
- 17 Price
- 18 Price increase
- 19 Supplementary charges
- 20 Unjustified costs/billing
- 21 Terms of contract
- 22 Coverage of contract
- 23 Assessment of damage
- 24 Refusal to pay compensation
- 25 Inadequate compensation
- 26 Modification of contract
- 27 Poor performance of contract
- 28 Cancellation/rescission of contract
- 29 Cancellation of service
- 30 Loan reimbursement
- 31 Interest demanded
- 32 Failure to honour commitments
- 33 Incorrect invoicing
- 34 Undue delay in dealing with a complaint

35 Other type of problem:

Additional information

5 Complaint assessment

Evaluate the scope and severity of the actual and potential effects of the complaint:

Severity: _____

Complexity: _____

Impact: _____

Need for immediate action yes no

Availability of immediate action yes no

Likelihood of compensation yes no

6 Complaint resolution

Remedy requested yes no

Action to be taken

- 36 Delivery of the product
- 37 Repair/rework of the product
- 38 Exchange of the product
- 39 Cancellation of sale
- 40 Enforcement of the guarantee
- 41 Honouring of commitments
- 42 Conclusion of a contract
- 43 Cancellation/rescission of contract
- 44 Cancellation of invoice

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- 45 Information
- 46 Correction of assessment of damage
- 47 Payment of an indemnification in the sum of: _____
- 48 Reimbursement of a down payment in the amount of: _____
- 49 Reimbursement of other payments effected in the amount of: _____
- 50 Price rebate in the amount of: _____
- 51 Payment facilities
- 52 Apology
- 53 Other Action:

7 Complaint tracking

Action taken	Date	Name	Remarks
Complaint acknowledged to complainant			
Complaint assessment			
Investigation of complaint			
Resolution of complaint			
Information to complainant			
Correction			
Correction verified			
Complaint closed			

Annex E (informative)

Responses

The organization's policy on the provision of responses can include

- refunds,
- replacement,
- repair/rework,
- substitutes,
- technical assistance,
- information,
- referral,
- financial assistance,
- other assistance,
- compensation,
- apology,
- goodwill gift or token, and
- indication of changes in products, process, policy, or procedure arising from complaints.

Issues to be considered can include

- addressing all aspects of the complaint,
- following-up where appropriate,
- whether it is appropriate to offer remedies to others who might have suffered in the same way as the complainant but did not make a formal complaint,
- level of authority for the various responses, and
- dissemination of the information to the relevant personnel.

Annex F
(informative)

Escalation flowchart

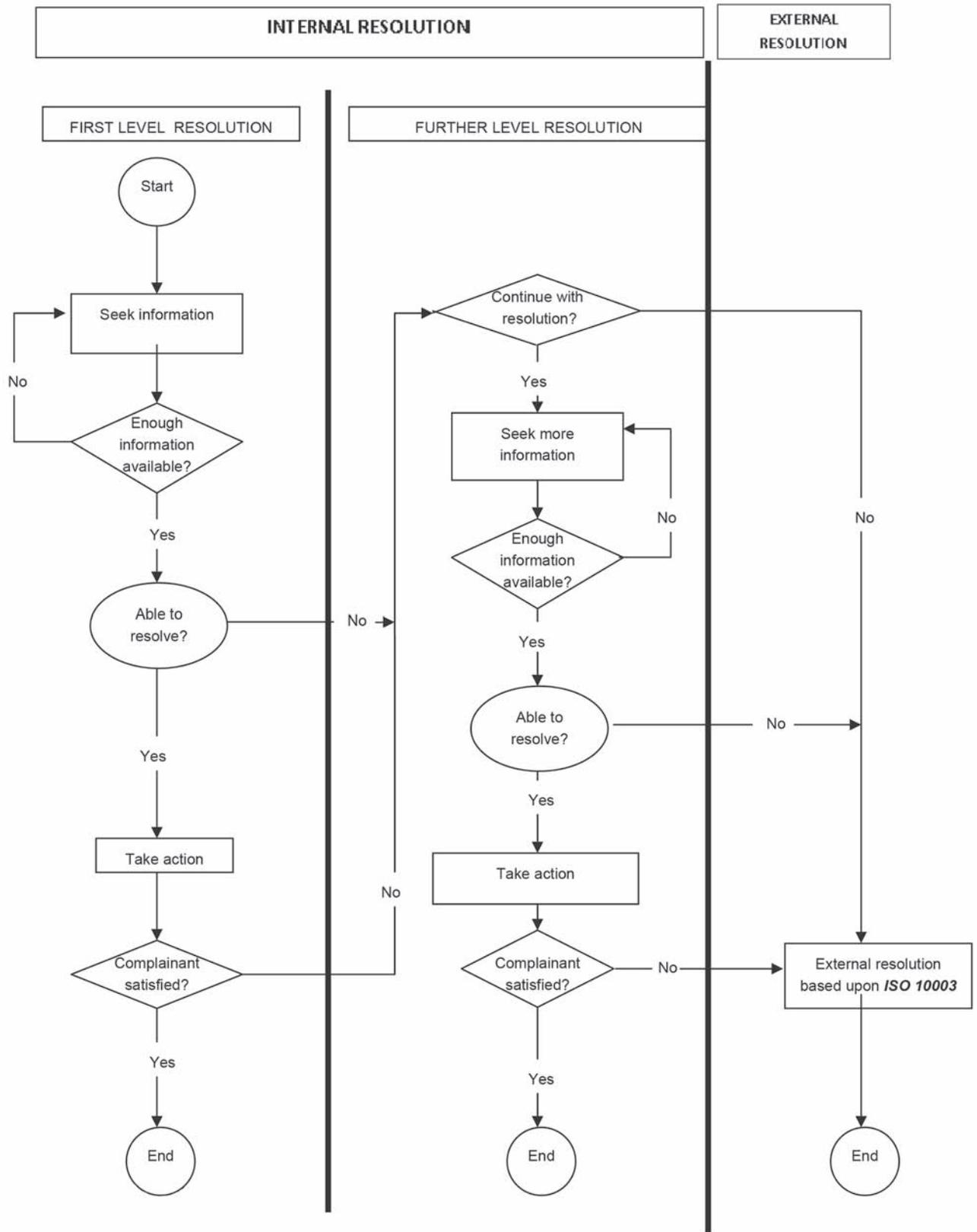


Figure F.1 — Escalation flowchart

Annex G (informative)

Continual monitoring

G.1 General

This annex is a generic guide for effective and efficient continual monitoring of the complaints-handling process. The approach adopted should be appropriate to the type and size of the organization.

G.2 Management responsibility

It is vital to ensure that those responsible for monitoring and reporting on the performance of the complaints-handling process and for taking corrective actions are competent for this role.

The following are some of the types of responsibilities that can be considered.

- a) Top management should
 - define the monitoring objectives,
 - define the monitoring responsibilities,
 - conduct reviews of the monitoring process, and
 - ensure that improvements are implemented.
- b) the complaints-handling management representative should
 - establish a process of performance monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, and
 - report to top management on the performance revealed during the complaints-handling process reviews, so that all necessary improvements can be made.
- c) other managers involved in the complaints in the organization should ensure that
 - adequate monitoring of the complaints-handling process is undertaken and recorded within their area of responsibility,
 - corrective action is taken and recorded within their area of responsibility, and
 - adequate complaints-handling data are available for the top management review of the monitoring process within their area of responsibility.

G.3 Performance measurement and monitoring

G.3.1 General

The organization should assess and monitor the performance of the complaints-handling process using a set of predetermined criteria.

Organizational processes and products differ widely, as do the performance-monitoring criteria appropriate to them. Organizations should develop performance-monitoring criteria relevant to their particular circumstances. Examples are given in [G.3.2](#).

G.3.2 Performance-monitoring criteria

Examples of criteria that can be considered and included when monitoring the performance of the complaints-handling process include the following:

- whether a complaints-handling policy and objectives has been established, maintained, and made appropriately available;
- personnel perception of the top management commitment to complaints handling;
- whether responsibilities for complaints handling have been appropriately assigned;
- whether personnel in contact with customers are authorized to resolve complaints on the spot;
- whether discretionary limits concerning responses have been set for personnel in contact with customers;
- whether personnel specialized in complaints handling have been appointed;
- the proportion of personnel trained in complaints handling who are in contact with customers;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of complaints-handling training;
- the number of suggestions from personnel to improve complaints handling;
- attitude of personnel to complaints handling;
- frequency of complaints-handling audits or management reviews;
- time taken to implement recommendations from complaints-handling audits or management reviews;
- time taken to respond to complainants;
- degree of complainant satisfaction;
- effectiveness and efficiency of the required corrective and preventive action processes, when appropriate.

G.3.3 Monitoring data

The monitoring of data are important since it provides a direct indicator of complaints-handling performance. Monitoring data can include the number or proportions of

- complaints received,
- complaints resolved at the point at which they are made,
- complaints incorrectly prioritized,
- complaints acknowledged after agreed time,
- complaints resolved after agreed time,
- complaints referred to external methods of resolution (see [7.9](#)),
- repeat complaints or recurrent problems that have not been complained about, and
- improvements in procedures due to complaints.

Careful attention should be exercised in data interpretation because

- objective data such as response times can show how well the process is working but might not provide information about complainant satisfaction, and

- an increase in the number of complaints after the introduction of a new complaints-handling process can reflect an effective process rather than a poor product.

Annex H (informative)

Audit

The organization should continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its complaints-handling process. For this reason, process performance and outcomes should be regularly monitored to identify and remove causes of existing and potential problems, as well as to uncover any opportunities for improvement. The main objective of a complaints-handling audit is to facilitate improvement by providing information on the performance of the complaints-handling process against stated criteria. Such criteria can include various policies, procedures, and standards related to complaints handling.

When examining the performance of the complaints-handling process, the audit evaluates the extent to which the process conforms to the stated criteria, as well as the suitability of the process to achieve objectives.

For example, an audit can be implemented to assess

- the conformity of complaints-handling procedures with the organization's policy and objectives,
- the extent to which complaints-handling procedures are being followed,
- the ability of the existing complaints-handling process to achieve objectives,
- strengths and weaknesses of the complaints-handling process, and
- opportunities for improvement in the complaints-handling process and its outcomes.

The complaints-handling audit can be planned and conducted as part of the quality management system audit. For more information on management system auditing, organizations should consult ISO 19011.

Bibliography

- [1] ISO 9001, *Quality management systems — Requirements*
- [2] ISO 9004, *Managing for the sustained success of an organization — A quality management approach*
- [3] ISO 10001, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations*
- [4] ISO 10003, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations*
- [5] ISO 10004, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations*
- [6] ISO 19011, *Guidelines for auditing management systems*
- [7] ISO/IEC Guide 71, *Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities*

