

Quality Management - Customer satisfaction- Guidelines for complaints handling (ISO 10002)

Logic Utilities

District Cooling Services LLC



In accordance with the REGULATORY AND SUPERVISORY BUREAU FOR THE ELECTRICITY AND WATER SECTOR and the REGULATIONS FOR DISTRICT COOLING PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RESOLUTION (6) OF 2021

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Introduction

0.1 General

This document provides guidance for our organization to plan, design, develop, operate, maintain, and improve 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 our organization and its customers, complainants, and other relevant interested parties.

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

Logic Utilities aims to provide an effective and efficient complaints-handling process which reflects the needs and expectations of both the organizations supplying products and services and those who are the recipients of those products and services.

The handling of complaints through a process as described in this document 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 document 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 the organization to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints, and improve the organization's operations;
- help the organization create a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints, and encourage personnel to improve their skills in working with customers;

- provide a basis for continual review and analysis of the complaints-handling process, the resolution of complaints, and process improvements made.

Our organization can use the complaints-handling process in conjunction with customer service code of conduct (see Annex I) and external dispute resolution processes.

The satisfaction of persons or organizations that could or do receive a product or a service from our organization is the focus of this document.

0.2 Relationship with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004.

This document is compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 and supports the objectives of these two standards through the effective and efficient application of a complaints-handling process. This document can also be used independently of ISO 9001 and ISO 9004.

ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system. The process for complaints handling described in this document (ISO 10002) can be used as an element of a quality management system.

ISO 9004 provides guidance to achieve sustained success of an organization. The use of this document (ISO 10002) can enhance performance in the area of complaints handling and increase the satisfaction of customers and other relevant interested parties to facilitate the achievement of sustained success. It can also facilitate the continual improvement of the quality of products, services and processes based on feedback from customers and other relevant interested parties.

NOTE Apart from customers and complainants, other relevant interested parties can include suppliers, industry associations and their members, consumer organizations, relevant government agencies, personnel, owners and others who are affected by the complaints-handling process.

0.3 Relationship with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004

This document is compatible with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004. These four documents can be used either independently or in conjunction with each other. When used together, this document, ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004 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 (see Annex A).

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- and service-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. Guidelines given in ISO 10004 can support the establishment and implementation of a complaints-handling process. For example, the processes described in ISO 10004 can assist the organization in monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction with the complaints-handling process (see 8.3). Likewise, information from a complaints-handling process can be used in monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction. For example, the frequency and type of complaints can be an indirect indicator of customer satisfaction (see ISO 10004:2018, 7.3.2).

1 Scope

Complaints happen every day. When a customer complains, it is usually for a good reason or genuine concern. They usually have made a purchase that did not meet their expectation—a product, service, or maybe a combination of the two. In the customer service industry, we cannot avoid complaints. We must take care of the customer by listening to the complaint, and resolving it, to ensure a happy customer.

Fewer than half of unhappy customers will bring a complaint to your attention. Those who never say anything will tell an average of 11 other people about their bad experience. It is important that we recognize complaints as opportunities, so we can sway these averages, one resolved complaint at a time.

Customers want to know someone is listening and they are understood, and they are hoping you are willing to take care of the problem to their satisfaction. No matter what the situation is, when a customer brings a complaint to your attention—even if they do it in a less-than-desirable way—be thankful. As the old saying goes, “We can’t fix it,

if we don't know it's broken." Moreover, we must realize that improper handling of a customer complaint can be costly to the business.

This document gives guidelines for the process of complaints handling related to products and services within our organization, including planning, design, development, operation, maintenance and improvement. The complaints-handling process described is suitable for use as one of the processes of an overall quality management system.

NOTE Throughout this document, the terms "product" and "service" refer to the outputs of our organization that are intended for, or required by, a customer.

This document 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 products and services, including 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 quality of products and services, including customer service;
- f) auditing of the complaints-handling process;
- g) reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process.

This document does not apply to disputes referred for resolution outside the organization or for employment-related disputes.

Here are **five strategies** that will help one handle a customer complaint in a smooth and professional manner:

1. **Stay calm.** When a customer presents you with a complaint, keep in mind that the issue is not personal; he or she is not attacking you directly but rather the situation at hand. “Winning” the confrontation accomplishes nothing. A person who remains in control of his or her emotions deals from a position of strength. While it is perfectly natural to get defensive when attacked, choose to be the “professional” and keep your cool.
2. **Listen well.** Let the irate customer blow off steam. Respond with phrases such as, “Hmm,” “I see,” and “Tell me more.” Do not interrupt. As the customer vents and sees you are not reacting, he or she will begin to calm down. The customer needs to get into a calm frame of mind before he or she can hear your solution—or anything you say, for that matter.
3. **Acknowledge the problem.** Let the customer know you hear what he or she is saying. If you or your company made a mistake, admit it. If you did not make a mistake and it is a misunderstanding, simply explain it to the customer: “I can see how that would be incredibly frustrating for you.” You are not necessarily agreeing with what the customer is saying but respecting how he or she perceives and feels about the situation. An excellent phrase for opening up this particular conversation would be, “So, if I understand you correctly...” After the customer responds, follow up with, “So, if I understand you correctly, we were to resolve the problem by noon today. I can see how that must be frustrating for you.” Then be quiet. Usually, the customer will respond with “That’s right” or “Exactly.” By repeating to the customer what you think you heard, you lower his or her defenses, and win the right to be heard.
4. **Get the facts.** After listening, take the initiative in the conversation. Now that the customer has calmed down and feels you have heard his or her side, begin asking questions. Be careful not to speak scripted replies but use this as an opportunity to start a genuine conversation, building a trusting relationship with your customer. To help you understand the situation, get as many details as possible.
5. **Offer a solution.** This happens only after you have sufficient details. One thing to keep in mind: Know what you can and cannot do within your company’s guidelines. Making a promise you cannot commit to will only set you back. Remember, when offering a solution, be courteous and respectful. Let the customer know you are willing to take ownership of the issue, even if it was out

of your control. Take charge of the situation and let the customer know what you are going to do to solve the problem.

A quick follow-up phone call a few days later to make sure everything is OK is icing on the cake. Even a small gesture of apology can turn this interaction from disaster to legendary. The cost could be minimal—maybe a simple upgrade on the customer’s next purchase or a small gift certificate. A simple gesture like this could result in a future referral or a positive word-of-mouth marketing recommendation.

When you resolve customer complaints successfully, you will better understand their needs, retain them as loyal customers, and enhance your business.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000:2015, 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.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

— IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org>

3.1 Complainant

person, organization (3.8) or their representative making a complaint (3.2)

[SOURCE: ISO 10001:2018, 3 .2]

3.2 Complaint

<customer satisfaction> expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization (3.8), related to its product or service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

Note 1 to entry: Complaints can be made in relation to other processes where the organization interacts with the customer (3.3).

Note 2 to entry: Complaints can be made directly or indirectly to the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .9. 3, modified — Notes 1 and 2 to entry have been added.]

3.3 Customer

person or organization (3.8) that could or does receive a product or a service that is intended for or required by this person or organization

EXAMPLE Consumer, client, end-user, retailer, receiver of product or service from an internal process, beneficiary and purchaser.

Note 1 to entry: A customer can be internal or external to the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .2 .4]

3.4 Customer satisfaction

customer's (3.3) perception of the degree to which the customer's expectations have been fulfilled.

Note 1 to entry: It can be that the customer's expectation is not known to the organization (3.8) , or even to the customer in question, until the product or service is delivered. It can be necessary for achieving high customer satisfaction to fulfil an expectation of a customer even if it is neither stated nor generally implied or obligatory.

Note 2 to entry: Complaints (3.2) are a common indicator of low customer satisfaction, but their absence does not necessarily imply high customer satisfaction.

Note 3 to entry: Even when customer requirements have been agreed with the customer and fulfilled, this does not necessarily ensure high customer satisfaction.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .9.2]

3.5 Customer service

interaction of the organization (3.8) with the customer (3.3) throughout the life cycle of a product or a service

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .9.4]

3.6 Feedback

<customer satisfaction> opinions, comments and expressions of interest in a product, a service or a complaints-handling process

Note 1 to entry: Feedback can be given in relation to other processes where the organization (3.8) interacts with the customer (3.3).

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .9.1, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.7 Interested party stakeholder

person or organization (3.8) that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

EXAMPLE Customers (3.3), owners, people in an organization, providers, bankers, regulators, unions, partners or society that can include competitors or opposing pressure groups.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .2. 3, modified — Note 1 to entry has been deleted.]

3.8 Organization

person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, association, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3 .2 .1, modified — Note 2 to entry has been deleted.]

4 Guiding principles

4.1 General

Adherence to the guiding principles set out in 4.2 to 4.15 is recommended for effective and efficient handling of complaints.

4.2 Commitment

The organization should be actively committed to defining and implementing a complaints-handling process.

4.3 Capacity

Sufficient resources should be made available for and committed to complaints handling and should be managed effectively and efficiently.

4.4 Transparency

The complaints-handling process should be communicated to customers, personnel and other relevant interested parties. Individual complainants should be provided with adequate information about the handling of their complaint.

4.5 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 and services were offered or provided in, including alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, or audiotape, so that no complainants are disadvantaged.

4.6 Responsiveness

The organization should address the needs and expectations of customers with respect to complaints handling.

4.7 Objectivity

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

4.8 Charges

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

4.9 Information integrity

The organization should ensure that the information about its complaints handling is accurate and not misleading, and that data collected are relevant, correct, complete, meaningful, and useful.

4.10 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 or disclosure is required by law.

NOTE Personally identifiable information is information that when associated with an individual can be used to identify him or her, and is retrievable by the individual's name, address, email address, telephone number or similarly specific identifier. The precise meaning of the term differs around the world.

4.11 Customer-focused approach

The organization should adopt a customer-focused approach with respect to handling complaints and should be open to feedback.

4.12 Accountability

The organization should establish and maintain accountability for, and reporting on, the decisions and actions with respect to complaints handling.

4.13 Improvement

Increased effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process should be a permanent objective of the organization.

4.14 Competence

Organization personnel should have the personal attributes, skills, training, education and experience necessary to handle complaints.

4.15 Timeliness

Complaints should be handled as expeditiously as feasible given the nature of the complaint and of the process used.

5 Complaints-handling framework

5.1 Context of the organization

In planning, designing, developing, operating, maintaining and improving the complaints-handling process, the organization should consider its context by:

- identifying and addressing external and internal issues that are relevant to the organization's purpose and that affect its ability to achieve complaints-handling objectives;
- identifying the interested parties that are relevant to the complaints-handling process, and addressing the relevant needs and expectations of these interested parties;
- identifying the scope of the complaints-handling process, including its boundaries and applicability, and taking into account the external and internal issues and the needs of interested parties noted above.

5.2 Leadership and commitment

Top management should demonstrate leadership in, and the organization should be actively committed to, effective and efficient complaints handling. It is particularly important that the commitment is shown by, and promoted from, the organization's top management.

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

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

5.3 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 relevant 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:

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

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

5.4 Responsibility and authority

5.4.1 Top management should be responsible for:

- a) ensuring that the complaints-handling process and objectives are established within the organization;
- b) ensuring that the complaints-handling process is planned, designed, developed, operated, 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 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 their responsibilities and authority in addition to the responsibilities and authority set out in 5.4.2;
- 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.

5.4.2 The complaints-handling management representative should be responsible for:

- 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.

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

- 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.

5.4.4 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;
- show good interpersonal and good communication skills.

5.4.5 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;
- report complaints which have a significant impact on the organization.

6 Planning, design and development

6.1 General

The organization should plan, design and develop an effective and efficient complaints-handling process in order to increase customer loyalty and satisfaction, and also to improve the quality of the products and services 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. The organization should understand the expectations and perceptions of customers and other relevant interested parties related to complaint handling. When establishing and using a complaints-handling process, the organization should consider and address risks and opportunities that can arise.

This involves:

- monitoring and evaluating processes and external and internal issues concerning risks and opportunities;
- identifying and assessing specific risks and opportunities;
- planning, designing, developing, implementing and reviewing corrective actions and improvements pertaining to identified and assessed risks and opportunities.

As defined in ISO 9000:2015, 3 .7.9, risk is the effect of uncertainty, which can be negative or positive. In the context of complaints handling, an example of a negative effect is customer dissatisfaction resulting from insufficient resources to handle the volume or complexity of complaints received within the specified time limits, and an example of a positive effect is that the organization reconsiders the resources associated with complaint handling as a result of a review of the training provided to the personnel in contact with customers. These risks can be addressed by reviewing the allocation and deployment of resources leading to the provision of additional personnel, training or options for access to the complaints-handling process.

An opportunity is related to identification of a new possible way of realizing positive outcomes, which does not necessarily arise from the organization's existing risks. For example, the organization can identify a new product, service or process as a result of a customer suggestion provided in the course of handling a complaint.

6.2 Objectives

Top management should ensure that the complaints-handling objectives are established for, and communicated to, 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, design and development 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.

NOTE A flowchart showing the steps of handling individual complaints is provided in Annex D.

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 relevant 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:

- a description of the complaint and relevant supporting data;
- the requested remedy;
- the products and services 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 E.

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. The complainants should be treated courteously and be

kept informed of the progress of their complaint through the complaints- handling process.

7.4 Acknowledgement of complaints

Receipt of each complaint should be acknowledged to the complainant immediately (e.g. through post, phone or email).

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. Complaints should be addressed promptly in accordance with their urgency. For example, significant health and safety issues should be processed immediately.

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, 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 regarding escalation).

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 (see Annex F).

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. Information collected should be relevant, correct, complete, meaningful and useful.

This should include:

- 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 recording media, since records in these media can be lost as a result of mishandling or obsolescence;
- 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 their 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, to help eliminate the underlying causes of complaints, and to identify opportunities for improvement or changes in processes, products and services offered.

8.3 Evaluation of the 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 1 One method of improving satisfaction with the complaints-handling process is to simulate a contact with a complainant and the organization.

NOTE 2 See ISO10004 for guidance on monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction.

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;

- process suitability and effectiveness 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 G.

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;
- identify and address instances of nonconformity with health, safety, environmental, customer, statutory, regulatory and other relevant requirements;
- identify and correct product and service deficiencies;
- identify and correct process deficiencies;
- assess risks and opportunities and the need for changes to the complaints-handling process and products and services offered;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken in relation to risks and opportunities;
- evaluate potential changes to the complaints-handling policy and objectives.

8.6.2 The input to management review should include information on:

- external factors such as changes in statutory and regulatory requirements, competitive practices or technological innovations;

- internal factors such as changes in the policy, objectives, organizational structure, resources available, and products and services offered or provided;
- the overall performance of the complaints-handling process, including customer satisfaction surveys, and the results of the continual monitoring of the process;
- feedback on the complaints-handling process;
- the results of audits;
- risks and opportunities, including the related actions;
- effectiveness of the actions taken to address risks and opportunities;
- the status of corrective actions;
- follow up actions from previous management reviews;
- 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 and service improvement;
- 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 and services. This can be achieved through corrective actions, actions taken in relation to risks and opportunities, 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 lessons learned and best practices in complaints handling;
- foster a customer-focused approach within the organization;
- encourage innovation in complaints-handling development;
- recognize exemplary complaints-handling behaviour.

Annex A

(informative)

Interrelationship of ISO 10001, this document, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004

Figure A.1 Illustrates the organization's processes related to code of conduct, complaint handling, external dispute resolution, and customer satisfaction monitoring and measuring.

A complaint can be initiated by a customer or another complainant

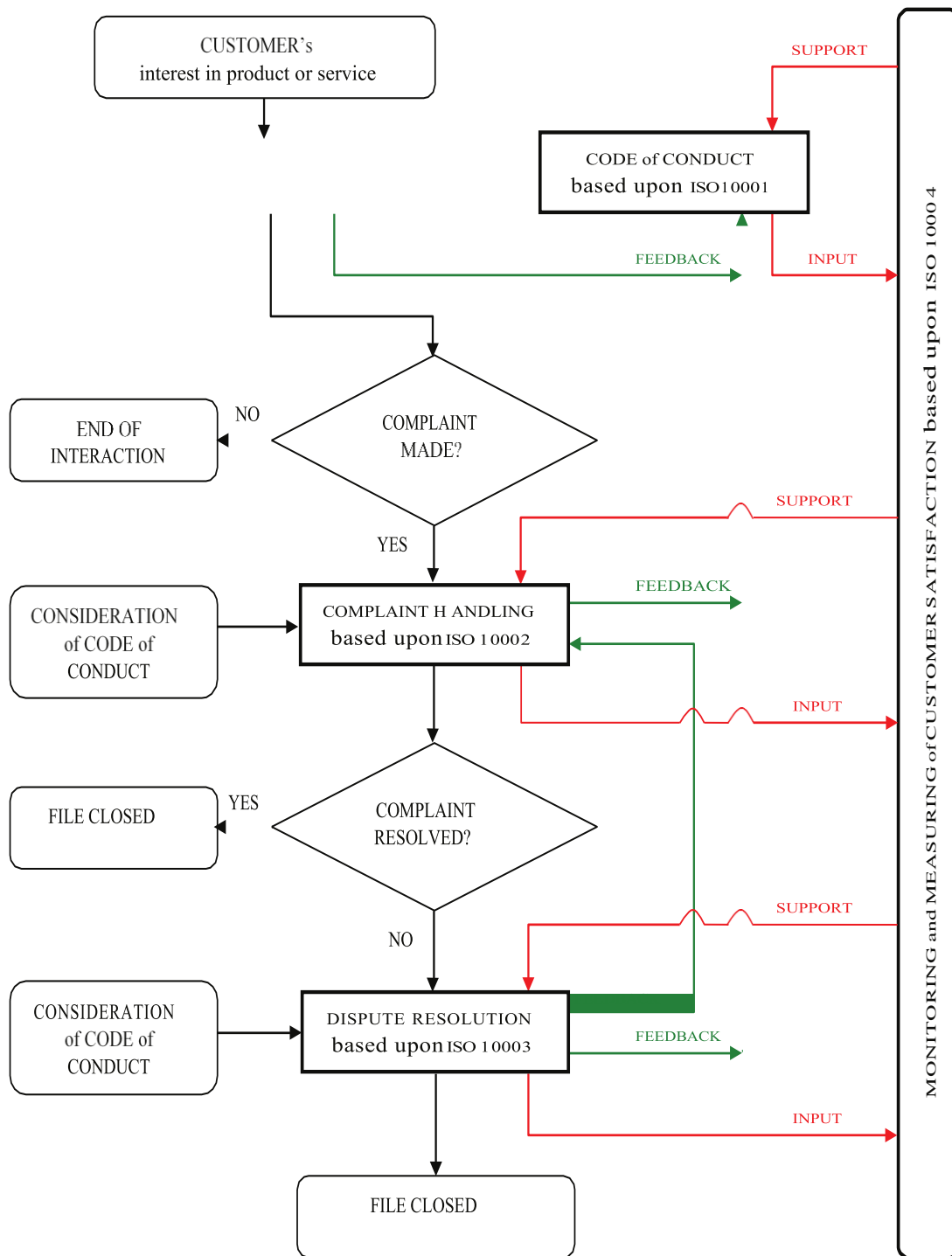


Figure A.1 — Interrelationship of ISO 10001, this document, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004

Annex B

(informative)

Form for complainant

1 Details of complainant

Name/organization _____

Address _____

Post Box No. _____

Emirate _____

Country _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

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

Details of person to be contacted (if different from above)

2 Product description / service description

Reference number (if known or applicable) _____

Description

3 Problem encountered

Date of occurrence _____

Description

4 Remedy requested

Yes

No

Description

5 Date, signature

Date _____ Signature _____

6. Enclosures

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

Annex C

(informative)

Objectivity

D.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 and expectations.

D.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;
- 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.

D.3 Separating complaints-handling procedures from disciplinary procedures

Complaints-handling procedures should be separated from disciplinary procedures.

D.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.

D.5 Objectivity monitoring

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

Measures may include:

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

**Annex D
(informative)**

Complaints-handling flowchart

Figure D.1 Illustrates the steps of handling individual complaints.

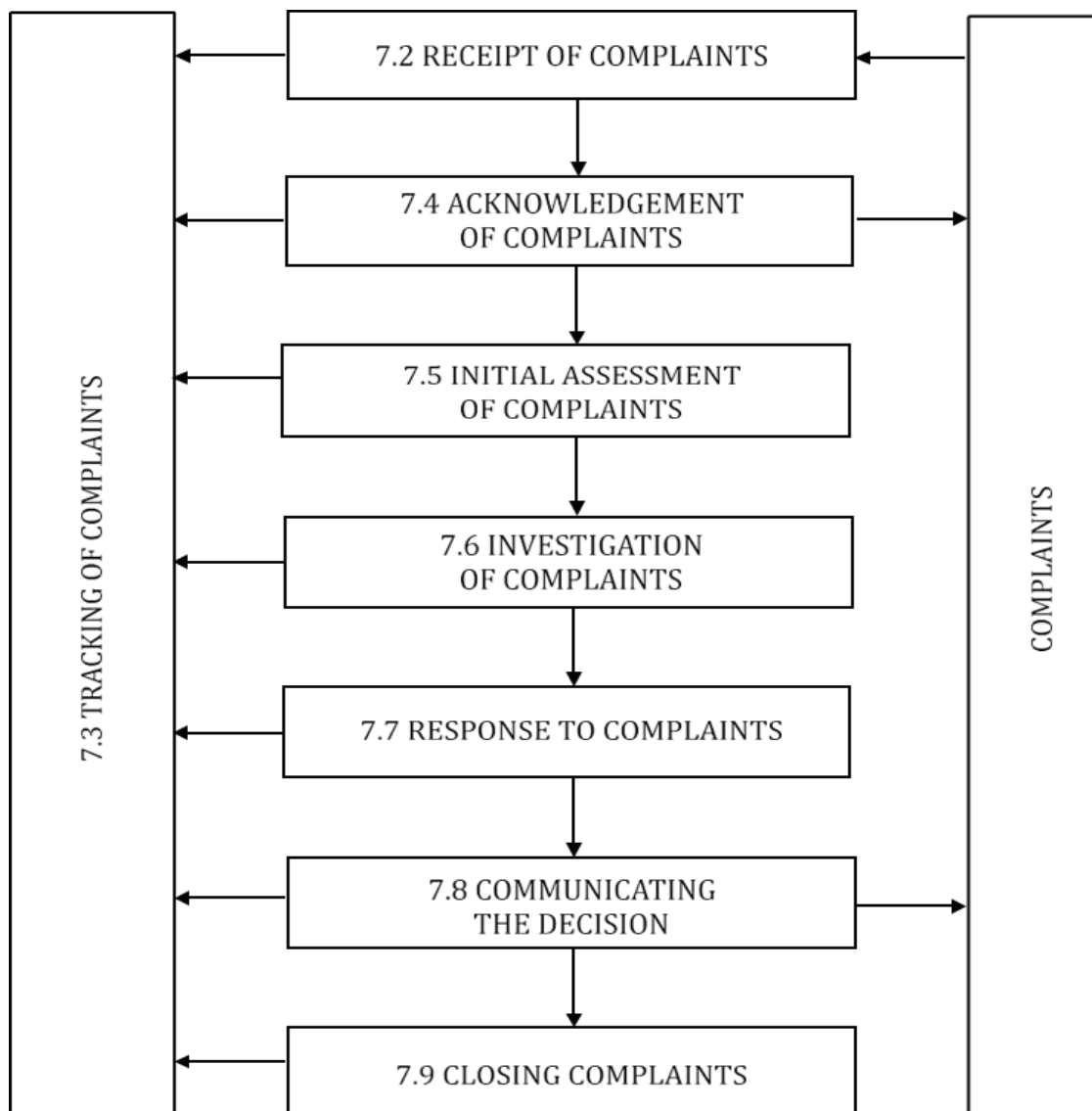


Figure D.1— Complaints-handling flowchart

Annex E

Complaint follow-up form

(Form for internal use only)

1 Details of complaint receipt

Date of complaint _____

Time of complaint _____

Name of recipient _____

Complaint medium Phone • Email • Internet • Personal •

Postal mail • Others •

Unique identifier code _____

2 Details of complainant (See form for complainant)

Reference number of complaints _____

Relevant data on complaint _____

Complaint referred by _____

3 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:

4 Complaint assessment

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

Severity: _____

Complexity: _____

Impact: _____

Safety concern? Yes • No •

Need for immediate action Yes • No •

Availability of immediate action Yes • No •

Likelihood of compensation Yes • No •

5 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
- 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:

6 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 F
(informative)**

Escalation flowchart

Figure F.1 is an escalation flowchart.

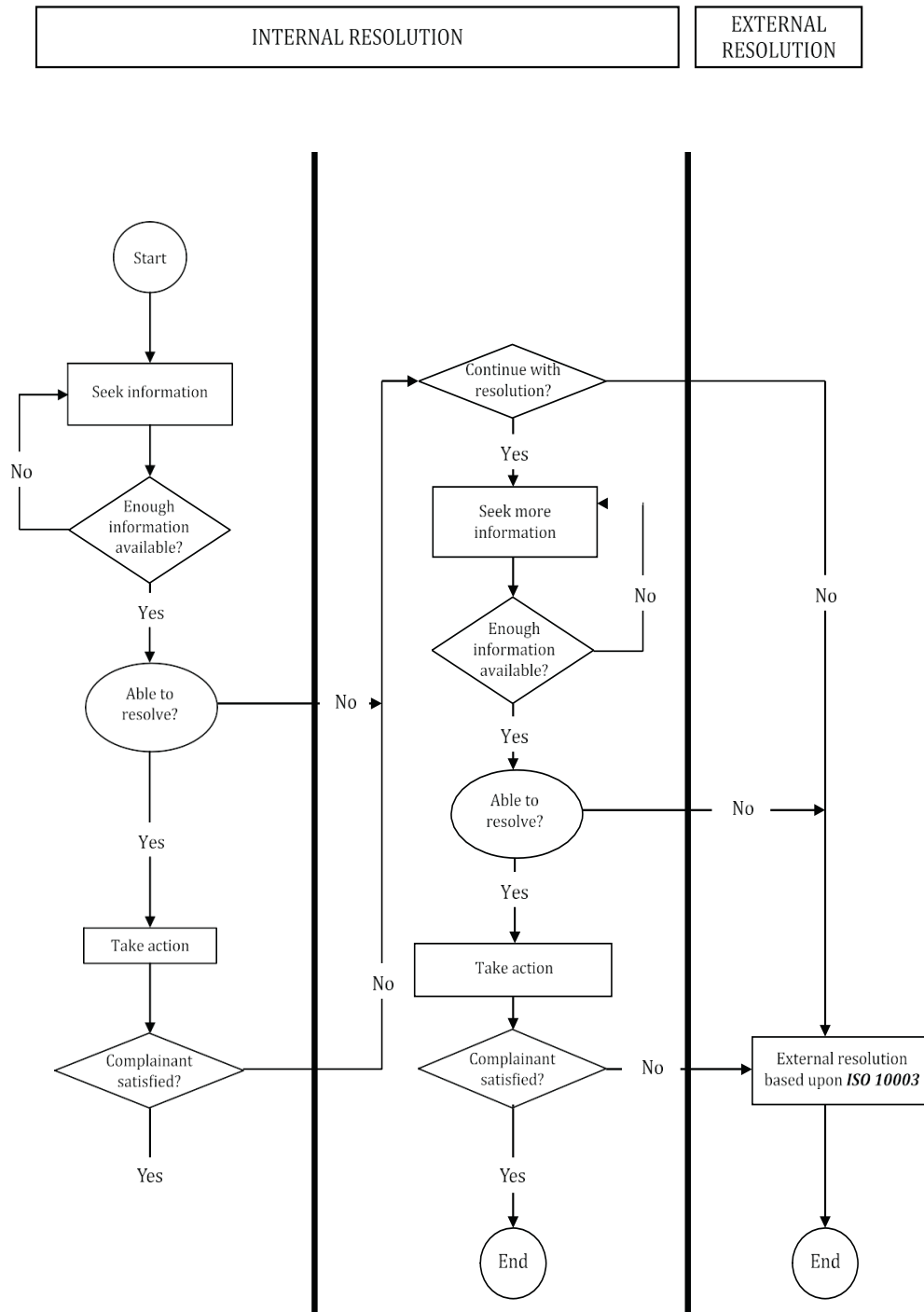


Figure F.1- Escalation flowchart

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;
 - ensure that improvements are implemented.

- b) The complaints-handling management representative should:
 - establish a process of performance monitoring, evaluation, and reporting;

- 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;
 - 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, products and services 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:

- 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 in contact with customers who are trained in complaints handling;
- 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 processes required for corrective actions and actions taken in relation to risks and opportunities, when appropriate.

G.3.3 Monitoring data

The monitoring of data is 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);
- repeat complaints or recurrent problems that have not been complained about;
- 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;
- an increase in the number of complaints after the introduction of a new complaints-handling process can reflect an effective process rather than poor products and services.

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;
- 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.

Annex I (informative)

The Customer Service Code of Conduct

The Customer Service code of conduct is a guide on core values and expected behaviour for Customer service professionals developed by **Logic Utilities**.

Values

- Cheerfulness
- Empathy
- Responsiveness
- Respect
- Honesty

Conduct

1. Always keep in mind that organisations exist because of customers. Your job exists because of the customer. Before you serve each customer keep in mind that they are the reason you are into business and serve them in a way that fulfils that mission.
2. Maintain a positive attitude at all times, it is the right recipe for a great day at work.
3. Always honour the promises made by the organisation to the customers and ensure they get the best deal.
4. When a customer brings a complaint to you and you discover that it was their fault, still let them leave with dignity, without them feeling embarrassed or disgraced.
5. Be grateful to customers for raising their complaints. It is a gift they are offering you. Many unsatisfied customers just walk away.
6. When serving customers, tailor the level of engagement with each customer's unique needs. Customers cherish personalization of products and services.
7. Keep a smile at all times.
8. Greet customers warmly and show them that you are happy to serve them.
9. Notify your hierarchy quickly of any challenges and complaints you cannot handle and follow up on their resolution. Do not wait till things become out of control.
10. Always update the customer on the evolution of their request, so as to avoid information gaps that lead to poor service.
11. Know your customer's names and learn to use it when interacting with them. This shows they are unique, and you know them personally.
12. Look neat at all times. Your looks are part of your body language and could be sending wrong signals.
13. Do not discuss non-work-related issues with a colleague when serving a customer. Even when it is work-related discussions, be brief and focus on the customer.
14. Never shout or talk across a customer, move to the person you want to talk to and talk in a calm and low tone. Talking loudly makes you look unprofessional.
15. Take time to know your products and services. Customers nowadays are very knowledgeable and can verify the facts you present. A display of a lack of product knowledge leads to a poor experience.

16. Provide the right information to customers. Do not trick them into signing deals or buying products.
17. Carefully assess your customer's needs and recommend the best products for them, even if they are not the most profitable for the company.
18. Never share the customers' private information without their consent.
19. Display equal respect for all customers. No customer is more important than another.
20. Always give customers a listening ear, listening enables you to get the facts of their story and also permits them to explain their needs.
21. Your first job description is to give every customer at every interaction with you, their best experience ever with your brand.
22. Your colleagues are not your competitors always share your customer service best practices with them and be open to learning from them.
23. Never take personal what the customer says or writes when they are frustrated. Remain composed and act professionally at all times. This could be the beginning of their best experience with the brand if handled well.
24. At the end of every interaction, thank the customer for coming and ask them if they are satisfied with the service received.
25. Notify your hierarchy of any observations about a customer's behaviour which could lead to a future bad experience, this proactive way of dealing with problems creates raving fans.
26. Do not wait for problems to erupt, solve potential problems as they are developing. This is a demonstration of customer experience heroism.
27. Do your work well, keeping it simple and easy, this makes your colleague's work better.
28. Use positive language at all times when discussing with customers and colleagues, do not criticize or condemn.
29. Be polite and courteous, this makes you more accessible and makes it easy for customers to approach and trust you.
30. Take ownership of the complaints customers bring to you. Follow up until they are resolved and notify the customers when a solution has been obtained.
31. Acknowledge emails and electronic submissions within the same day of reception.
32. Be time conscious and notify your hierarchy about challenges you have before and not after the deadline.
33. **Above all know that your mission is to be the bridge between the heart of the customer and the heart of the company.**

