

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS.

LIST OF CONTENTS:

1. SCOPE.
2. APPLICABILITY.
3. RESPONSIBILITY.
4. REFERENCES.
5. DEFINITIONS.
6. PROCEDURE.
 - 6.1 GENERAL.
 - 6.2 COMPLAINTS.
 - 6.3 APPEALS.
7. DOCUMENTATION.

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Prepared by: _____ (Sign)	Approved by: _____ (Sign)
Name: Manager System Documentation	Name: Chairman & Managing Director
Date: 04.07.2017	Date: 04.07.2017

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

1. SCOPE:

This procedure describes dealing with complaints and appeals to ensure timely, independent and effective resolution of complaints and appeals. This Procedure shall apply to all ICS documents whether generated internally and/or received from an external source by any ICS personnel. The complaint may be received in written and/or verbal and shall be dealt with. The complaints have to be lodged in FA/49 (FA_49_Complaint Form available at end of this manual).

The procedure also describes the method of selecting an appeal panel and procedure to be followed by ICS in the event of appeal being lodged.

The external and internal complaints will be segregated and the internal complaints will not be subjected to audit by Accreditation bodies. The details of external complaints will be made available to the client/interested parties and to the accreditation bodies. The internal complaints will be handled by Chairman Managing Director and will be used for improvement of the operations and Management system.

2. APPLICABILITY:

This procedure is applicable to all personnel of ICS and its contractor engaged for ICS Services concerning complaints and appeals.

3. RESPONSIBILITY:

• CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR

Chairman & Managing Director has overall responsibility to develop, implement the procedure and control of complaints and appeal.

Ensuring that the complaints/appeals-handling process and objectives are established within the organization;

Ensuring that the complaints/appeals-handling process is planned, designed, implemented, maintained and continually improved in accordance with the complaints/appeals-handling policy of the organization;

Identifying and allocating the management resources needed for an effective and an efficient complaints/appeals-handling process;

Ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints/appeals-handling process and the need for a customer focus throughout the organization;

Ensuring that information about the complaints/appeals-handling process is communicated to customers, complainants, and, where applicable, other parties directly concerned in an easily accessible manner;

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Appointing a complaints/appeals-handling management representative and clearly defining his or her responsibilities and authority;

Ensuring that there is a process for rapid and effective notification to top management of any significant complaints/appeals;

Periodically reviewing the complaints/appeals-handling process to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently maintained and continually improved.

- **MANAGER**

Manager is responsible to investigate, analyse, answer and follow up the Complaints/appeals.

Establishing a process of performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting;

Reporting to top management on the complaints/appeals-handling process, with recommendations for improvement;

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.

To nominate Investigator and keep the CMD informed if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days from the date of receipt of FA_49 Complaint Form.

- **RECEIVER**

Receiver of a complaint is responsible for the record of complaint received in FA_49_Complaint Form and not to resolve the complaint on the spot, unless discussed with the Manager (Certification) / Chairman Managing Director.

To forward FA/49_Complaint Form to the concerned who would wish to lodge a complaint.

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

Ensuring that the complaints-handling process is implemented;
Liaisoning with the Manager Certification for handling of complaints

Ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and of the need for a customer focus;

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Ensuring that information about the complaints-handling process is easily accessible;

Reporting on actions and decisions with respect to complaints handling;

Ensuring that monitoring of the complaints-handling process is undertaken and recorded;

Ensuring that action is taken to correct a problem, prevent it happening in the future, and that the event is recorded and resolved in maximum 30 days from the date of receipt of FA_49 Complaint Form;

Ensuring that complaints-handling data are available for the top management review.

▪ INVESTIGATOR

To carry out an independent investigation, review & analyse the complaint & provide Root Cause Analysis, Corrective Action & Preventive Action.

All personnel in contact with customers and complainants shall 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.
- Resolve the same in 30 days from the date of receipt of FA_49 Complaint Form.

All personnel shall

- 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.

• PANEL

Responsible to pass judgment on the appeal against any decision or measure taken by ICS, against a organisation.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

- **CHAIRPERSON**
The person responsible for the smooth functioning of the Appeal Panel to ensure Appeal procedure is followed who is nominated by chairperson of TAC in consultation with ICS Chairman & Managing Director / Director.

4. REFERENCES:

ISO 17021 : 2011 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management system.

ISO 17021-1 : 2015 Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Part 1: Requirements

ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection.

ISO 17025 : 2005 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

ISO 10002 : 2004 Quality management – Customer satisfaction- Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations.

ISO 22003 : 2013 Food safety management systems – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems.

ISO 27006 : 2015 Information technology — Security techniques -Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of information security management systems

ISO 30003 : 2009 Ships and Marine technology – Ship Recycling Management Systems – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of ship recycling management

ISO 13485 : Technical Criteria for Certification of Medical Devices

ICMed 13485 :Technical Criteria for Certification of Medical Devices – ICMED 13485

ICMed 9000 :Technical Criteria for Certification of Medical Devices – ICMED 9000

Accreditation Body's relevant procedures

5. DEFINITIONS:

ORGANISATION :

Group of people and facilities with an arrangement of responsibilities, authorities and relationship that receive a product or service.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

CUSTOMER:

Organization or person that receives a product

APPEAL:

A formal expression of dissatisfaction by a Customer / Organisation and interested parties and /or affected parties with a decision of the Certification Body that is directly related to their Certification status.

PANEL:

A group of people selected for investigation, review and recommendation assembled by the Certification Body's Technical Advisory Committee to discuss and make recommendations on the specific issue.

COMPLAINT:

A formal expression of dissatisfaction with some matters related to ICS, an Applicant and/or Registrant and interested parties and / or affected parties for certification of management system, a Certification body and a certified products/ individual/services.

CATEGORY OF COMPLAINTS:

External Complaints: Complaints from Customers and other interested parties.

Internal Complaints: Complaints within ICS organisation.

6. PROCEDURE:

6.1 GENERAL

It is a well known fact that customer is shy to make complaints and will desert soon upon finding the alternate arrangement. Rarely a customer take the time & trouble to lodge a complaint; hence ICS will endeavor to take immediate action in order to resolve the complaints by any claim of dissatisfaction, formal or informal (written and/or verbal) that is brought to its attention. Complaints are like school books that provide ICS with information as an 'opportunity to improve'.

Complaints represent a potential incident and an indication to possible nonconformity.

On receipt of any complaint in any mode the receiver shall acknowledge the complaint and forward FA/49_Complaint Form to the complaint and get the complaint lodged in ICS complaint format i.e. FA/49.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

The complaint may not be about ICS directly, it may be related to ICS indirectly (which may be related to the certified / registered organization by ICS. Such complaints are also treated with the same degree of concern as it is related to ICS.

In order to ensure that the complaints/appeals-handling process operates effectively and efficiently, top management shall 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/appeals-handling process shall be the important factor.

The Certified Organisation and/or Applicant and interested parties and / or affected parties seeking Certification may make an appeal against the decision of ICS with respect to the following:

- Refusal to accept an Organisation's application for the certification
- Failure to recommend the certification
- Cancellation, suspension and withdrawal of the 'Certificate of Compliance'
- An appeal by third party against the decision to grant the certification

6.2 COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

Communication

Information concerning the complaints-handling /Appeals handling process, is made publicly accessible through the ICS Website. It shall be readily made available to customers, complainants and other interested parties. The Complaint Form_FA 49 is made available on the website for lodging of complaint.

The complaint must be made in writing and sent vide email to info@icspl.org or to the Corporate Address to the Manager Certification with complete details of the complainant (name, address, organization etc.) and description of the problem and the Complaint Co-ordinator will acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days (excluding postal time) with brief details and approximate time required for addressing the complaint. In case of any mail / communication received as complaint, Manager Certification shall forward FA_49 to the complainant within 2 working days to formally lodge the complaint.

The FA_49 clearly gives option to the complainant as to what information he may like to make public or keep confidential only between ICS and the complainant.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Receipt of complaint

Upon reporting of the initial complaint / appeal, the complaint / appeal shall be recorded with supporting information and a unique identifier code in the Complaint /Appeal Register on a yearly basis.

- A description of the complaint / appeal and relevant supporting data;
- The products or related organization practices complained about;
- Immediate action taken (if any).

A written and / or verbal complaint related to quality should be received in the Complaint Form_FA49. All the necessary details of the complaint should be filled in properly by requesting additional information that may be necessary. The complaint serial number will be allotted from the complaint register on a yearly basis.

The complaint received at ICS station shall be communicated immediately by the Station Manager to Manager (Certification).

The Complaint received in the Complaint Form_FA49 at Corporate shall be forwarded to the Station for necessary information and action.

On receipt of the complaint it shall be confirmed whether the complaint related to the activities that ICS is responsible for and, if so shall deal with it. If the complaint relates to a certified client, then examination of the complaint shall consider the effectiveness of the certified management system.

Tracking of complaint

The complaint shall 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 shall be made available to the complainant upon request and at regular intervals, at least at the time of pre-set deadlines. The complaint shall be tracked in order to ensure effective and timely closure.

Acknowledgement of complaint

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

Initial assessment of complaint

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

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Appointment of Independent Investigator :

On receipt of the complaint FA/49 (Complaint Form) it shall be forwarded to Manager Certification for appointment of independent investigation depending upon the type of complaint. Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) reserve the right to dislodge complaints which are not supported with sufficient details in FA/49 or in the ones FA/49 is not filled

Investigation of complaints/appeals

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

The investigator of the complaints/appeals shall not have any conflict of interest in the case being investigated.

The persons involved in the investigation of the complaint shall ensure confidentiality requirements are taken care.

A short notice audit may also be call upon the client and/ or complainant to investigate the complaint, corrective action taken, preventive action and its effectiveness on the client's certified management system. The investigator shall forward his response by means of a Complaint Investigation Report in FA_50 to Manager Certification and copy to Chairman & Managing Director he shall update the FC/25_Complaint Non Conformity and corrective Action Record complaint NC Report.

Response to complaints/appeals

Following an appropriate investigation, ICS shall offer a response for example correct the problem and prevent it happening in the future. If the complaint cannot be immediately resolved, then it shall be dealt with in a manner intended to lead to its effective resolution as soon as possible

Complaint shall be responded without delay. If the investigation is expected to take time, a preliminary response shall be immediately sent to the concerned person / customer.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Communicating the decision

The decision or any action taken regarding the complaint, which is relevant to the complainant or to the personnel involved, shall be communicated to them as soon as the decision or action is taken, the complaint if not resolved in 90 days from the date of receipt of FA_49 Complaint Form shall also be communicated to the Accreditation Body.

The decision to be communicated to the complainant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by individual (s) not previously involved in the subject of the complaint.

Closing the complaint

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

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

Manager (Certification) shall continue to monitor the progress of the complaint until all reasonable internal and external options of recourse are exhausted or the complainant is satisfied.

Complaints, which may lead to legal or financial consequences, shall also be brought to the attention of Chairman & Managing Director and Financial Controller.

Complaints, which are already being addressed or being taken-up or referred to authorities such as Judiciary or an Arbitrator appointed by the parties, shall be immediately treated as closed and ICS shall not be responsible for conducting additional investigations on the same. Further action will be taken by ICS considering final verdict by the Judiciary / Arbitration proceedings.

Whenever possible, formal notice of the end of the complaint handling procedure shall be given to the complainant.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint they may if feel suitable refer the matter to the Accreditation body.

ICS shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the complaints handling process.

Submission, investigation and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

Any valid complaint about a certified client shall also be referred by the ICS to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Maintenance and improvement

Collection of information

ICS shall record the performance of its complaints/appeals-handling process. ICS shall ensure that the information on complaints/appeals and the related documents are properly managed and protect any personal information and ensure the confidentiality of complainants.

Status of the complaints/appeals and customer feedback should be reviewed once in a month and records maintained and same shall be reviewed in the management review meeting.

Records

Open a complaint file and the written complaint / appeal together with the complaints form, related documents, Complaint Investigation Report FC/25_Complaint Non Conformity and corrective Action Record and Complaint Training form FA/50_Complaint Follow-up Form subsequent corrections or corrective actions identified as quality records and shall be archived for a period of 5 years.

A copy of the entire complaint proceeding after closure of the complaint will be forwarded to the concerned station and maintained at station level.

Utmost care shall be taken to preserve records related to complaints / appeals as electronic files and magnetic recording media, since records in these media can be lost as a result of mishandling or obsolescence;

Records of the type of training and instruction that individuals involved in the complaints-handling process have received shall be maintained.

Analysis and evaluation of complaints / appeals

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

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

Satisfaction with the complaints/appeals-handling process

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

Monitoring of the complaints-handling process

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

Auditing of the complaints/appeals-handling process

ICS shall regularly perform or provide for audits in order to evaluate the performance of the complaints/appeals-handling process.

Management review of the complaints/appeals-handling process

CMD of the organization shall review the complaints/appeals-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/appeals-handling process and products offered, and
- To evaluate potential changes to the complaints/appeals-handling policy and objectives.

The input to management review shall 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/appeals-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.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

The output from the management review shall include

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

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

Continual improvement

ICS shall continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints/appeals-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. ICS shall take action to eliminate the causes of existing and potential problems leading to complaints in order to prevent recurrence and occurrence, respectively. The organization shall

- Explore, identify and apply best practices in complaints/appeals handling,
- Foster a customer-focused approach within the organization,
- Encourage innovation in complaints/appeals-handling development, and
- Recognize exemplary complaints-handling behavior.

6.4 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR APPEALS

6.4.1 INFORMATION ON APPEAL:

A separate file for each customer on the receipt of appeal and all pertinent information will be in this file.

Register the appeal giving brief description of the appeal shall be maintained and serial number sequence from the appeal register shall be allotted to each appeal.

The status of appeals shall be maintained at regular intervals and informed to the Managing Director on a quarterly basis. Its status shall be compiled annually for presentation to the Management Review meeting.

In case the information is incomplete, not adequate to take action, the Manager shall arrange to receive further information from the Client.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

6.4.2 Appeal Panel

6.4.2.1 The Appeal Panel shall consist of Finance Manager, Certification Manager, Industrial Expert and Managing Director and a member/s of the Technical Advisory Committee. The above composition of the appeal panel shall have the approval of the appellant who has the right to object or for request change of the composition of the Appeal Panel.

6.4.2.2. The Managing Director will provide the Secretary who is non-voting member of the panel.

6.4.3. HOW TO LODGE AN APPEAL:

6.4.3.1 An appeal shall be lodged in writing not later than forty days after notification of the decision to the certified client or applicant

6.4.3.2 An Appeal shall be lodged by sending a substantial letter of appeal by registered mail or equivalent, to the attention of Managing Director

6.4.3.3 Together with the letter of appeal, the Appellant will forward a deposit of INR 25,000/- to cover the costs, which might be incurred in respect of the appeals.

6.4.4 INFORMATION:

The client is informed about the appeal procedure, which they can make against ICS. This procedure will be made available to them on request / is publicly available on website. If requested by members of the Panel to provide information in relation to an appeal, the employees of ICS as well as any external experts involved in the assessment of a certified organisation or applicant shall do so. The provision of information will be without prejudice towards all others.

The above information about provision of Appeal is given in CM 5, Certification of Management System, public document, available on our website.

6.4.5 Confidentiality:

The member of the Panel shall be placed under an obligation of confidentiality concerning anything that might come to their knowledge during their function with regards to Accreditation Body, ICS certified supplier or Applicant audits customer.

6.4.6 Registration of Appeal.

A brief description of the appeal shall be against the appeal and S.No. shall be given which shall be used in all future correspondence.

The status of the Appeal shall be maintained at regular interval of six months.

A file shall be opened under the allocated number for each appeal in order to collect all necessary information's relating to the appeal.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

In case the information is incomplete, the client or Applicant shall be contacted immediately to receive – all necessary and relevant information, which is sufficient for Appeal panel to initial further action.

6.4.7 ICS shall be responsible for gathering and verification of an appeal in order to validate the appeal

ACTION.

Secretary will inform the Chairperson of TAC immediately upon receiving the completed appeal.

Appellant should submit the deposit money within a week, Managing Director may grant an extension of another one week to receive the deposit. In the event that the appellant not made the deposit at the extension; the Managing Director has right to dismiss the Appeal.

The Managing Director shall inform the Appellant in writing on dismissal for the appeal.

The Appeal Panel has right to consult any expert opinion and to take all measures and make all provision to have fair and sound judgment by having one or more sessions.

Both the Appellant and the Panel have the right to avail themselves of any assistance from experts, witnesses provided all such details are provided in writing to the Panel or to the appellant. Such information shall be forwarded to the interested parties at least one week in advance before the date of any hearing.

The Chairperson of TAC will nominate the Chairperson of the Panel. Chairperson will also ensure that there is no conflict of interest among the Appeal Panel that might influence the results of the appeal process.

The Chairperson of the Panel will arrange the session / meeting in consultation with the other panel members and will inform the Managing Director immediately.

The appeal panel meeting shall be held not later than three weeks after the receipt of the completed appeal with deposit money. The Appellant will be given one-week advance notice with detail of the date, venue and time for the meeting.

6.4.8

JUDGEMENT

Judgment shall be fair and based on ICS Certification Manual and relevant Procedures:

Decision will be based on the consensus arrived at by the panel. The judgment shall be conveyed to the concern parties, which will be binding on them.

The appeal panel may refer the matter to the TAC for final decision in the exceptional circumstances.

The judgment shall be signed by all members of the Appeal Panel.

CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION MANUAL - Doc No: CM 16

The panel is obliged to make decision within 3 months and Chairperson and / or Managing Director may give extension in exceptional case.

The cost of the appeal is determined by the Managing Director based on the prevailing ICS fees and reimbursement of expenses towards travel and subsistence.

Cost of the conducting an appeal will be borne by the Appellant associated with the conduct of an unsuccessful appeal.

In case of appellant has been order to pay them it is to be adjusted from the deposit and any surplus will be returned to the appellant. The Appellant is obliged to pay remaining amount due to ICS immediately within two weeks after the receipt of the invoice against appeal.

Submission, investigation and decision n appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

6.4.9

REVIEW

The Appeal shall be included as an agenda item for the Board Meeting and TAC meeting.

Appeal shall also be discussed in the Management Review Meeting.

The effectiveness of actions taken shall be verified after appropriate time lag and the same shall be recorded for reporting to the subsequent MRM and TAC Meeting.

7. DOCUMENTATION:

The following document will be maintained by ICS

- Complaint (External)
- Complaints File (Internal)
- Appeals file.
- MRM Minutes
- TAC Minutes