

## COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

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## PROCESS FOR THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

### 1. SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to establish a procedure for the efficient handling of Complaints and Appeals to enable the consistent application of Clause 7.5 and 7.6 of ISO/IEC 17020:2012 for performing reliable inspections.

### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

The specific responsibilities are assigned in section 5 of this document.

### 3. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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

SAIFP PR POL100                      Quality Manual

### 4. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

#### 4.1. DEFINITIONS

- a) **appeal:** request by the provider of the item of inspection to the inspection body for reconsideration by that body of a decision it has made relating to that item.
- b) **complaint:** expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization to an inspection body, relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected.

#### 4.2. ABBREVIATIONS

SAIFP                      SOUTHERN AFRICAN INSPECTORATE FOR FIRE PROTECTION NPC

### 5. PROCESS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

SAIFP Inspection Body shall manage and take responsibility for all decisions at all levels of the Complaint and Appeal handling process.

#### 5.1. Complaints

- a) This procedure maps the process operated by SAIFP Inspection Body to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints lodged by a third party (member from the public or a

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company). This process shall be publicly available at least through the SAIFP Inspection Bodies website.

- b) As a general requirement, all complaints shall be lodged in writing and shall be accompanied with relevant supporting evidence.
- c) When a complaint is lodged with SAIFP Inspection Body, it shall confirm whether the complaint relates to inspection activities that it is responsible for.
- d) All complaints investigated shall be subject to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and to the nature of the complaint.
- e) SAIFP Inspection Body shall inform the client implicated about the lodged complaint at the earliest time.
- f) If the complaint relates to a certified client, the investigation regarding the complaint shall consider the effectiveness of the company's inspection protocol.
- g) SAIFP Inspection Body shall take responsibility for the complaint resolution process, which shall include the following actions:
  - 1. logging all received complaints.
  - For Further detail, refer to: [SAIFP F830 CA & PA Status and Tracking sheet.](#)
  - 2. acknowledging receipt of the complaint;
  - 3. inform the complainant of the process that will be followed;
  - 4. informing the implicated client of the complaint and process that will be followed;
  - 5. validating and investigating the complaint;
  - 6. deciding what actions are to be taken in response to the complaint;
  - 7. tracking and recording complaints;
  - 8. ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken by the implicated client;
  - 9. informing the complainant about the progress with the complaint investigation;
  - 10. informing and notifying the complainant of the complaint resolution and outcome.
- h) SAIFP Inspection Body shall review the validity, extent and importance of the complaint by considering the following elements:
  - 1. lack of service;
  - 2. commercial dispute;
  - 3. product and or facility safety;
  - 4. misuse of test reports, inspection report and/ or logos;
  - 5. certified management systems;
  - 6. potential to undermine the reputation of SAIFP Inspection Body or its associated Accreditation providers.
- i) SAIFP Inspection Body shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint and institute appropriate correction and corrective action to resolve the complaint. It shall ensure that the persons engaged in the complaint resolution process are different from those who were part of the inspection process.
- j) The following action could apply where appropriate:

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1. Where the nature of the complaint is identified as process related:
  - the implicated client shall be informed of the complaint in writing;
  - a short notice inspection will be conducted on the certified company at their expense to obtain objective evidence related to the processes, products or areas of the complaint;
  - identified non-conformances shall be actioned by the implicated company, who will submit a complete action plan indicating by when, by whom and what action will be taken to address the non-conformances;
  - SAIFP Inspection Body will not be held responsible for any financial claims because of poor services or products delivered by the certified company.
2. Where a complaint is raised or made known by public media (newspaper, radio or television), implicating a certified company of SAIFP Inspection Body:
  - the client shall be informed of the complaint in writing;
  - a short notice audit will be conducted on the certified company at their expense to obtain objective evidence related to the processes, products or areas of the complaint;
  - identified non-conformances shall be actioned by the implicated company, who will submit a complete action plan indicating by when, by whom and what action will be taken to address the non-conformances;
  - SAIFP Inspection Body will not be hold responsible for any financial claims because of poor services or products delivered by the certified company.
- k) Specific scheme requirements shall be considered by SAIFP Inspection Body in determining the required or appropriate action.
- l) SAIFP Inspection Body shall determine, together with the client and the complainant, whether and to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public.

### 5.2. Appeals

- a) This procedure maps the process operated by SAIFP Inspection Body to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals lodged by its clients.
- b) A description of the appeals-handling process shall be publicly accessible at least through the SAIFP Inspection Bodies website.
- c) It shall ensure that the persons engaged in the appeals-handling process are different from those who were part of the inspection process.
- d) Lodging an appeal, its investigation and subsequent decision shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appealing person or company.
- e) The appeals-handling process shall include the following actions:
  1. logging all received appeals;



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For Further detail, refer to:

[SAIFP F830 CA & PA Status and Tracking sheet](#)

2. acknowledging receipt of the appeal;
  3. inform the appellant of the process that will be followed;
  4. validating and investigating the appeal;
  5. deciding what actions are to be taken in response to the appeal;
  6. tracking and recording appeals;
  7. ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken;
  8. notifying the appellant that the process is concluded and closed.
- f) Where the appeal is lodge to dispute the certification decision, a complete investigation shall be conducted by person not previously involved in the subject of the appeal. The following shall be considered:
1. all objective evidence provided by the appellant;
  2. all objective evidence provided by the audit team;
  3. the requirements of the applicable standard and normative references.

This may require that the investigation team may have to access the premises of the appellant to verify the submitted evidence to ensure compliance with the required standard and normative references.

- g) SAIFP Inspection Body shall notify the appellant in writing of the outcome of the appeal investigation and corrective action taken, if appropriate.

## 6. RECORDS

Records of any Complaints or Appeals received will be kept in the inspection files of the respective clients.

The following records apply:

For Further detail refer to:

[SAIFP F830 CA & PA Status and Tracking sheet](#)



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### 7. Document Control

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#### Document control

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