





STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF ZIMBABWE

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS / APPEALS PROCEDURE

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Revision status: 4	Prepared By: Manager – Marketing & PR	Approved By: Director General
Effective date : 1 July 2013	Signature: 	Signature: 

1. Purpose

To ensure that complaints, requests for help, appeals or disputes received from the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) internal and external clients as well as all those that do business with SAZ are dealt with completely, effectively and efficiently in order to take the necessary corrective action and to rectify any shortcomings in the Association's procedures and practices and prevent recurrence of the same.



2. Scope

This procedure covers all complaints and grievances from persons or organizations from inside and outside the SAZ regarding matters arising from the Association's activities and is applicable to all personnel involved in complaints handling.

3. Responsibility

Manager - Marketing & PR to:

- Record all complaints to the Association
- Co-ordinate the procedure and ensure that all complaints are investigated
- Liase with Departmental Heads for follow up on complaints
- Send interim report to complainant and close out raised complaints

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4. Definitions

A complaint is any charge, obligation, protest or grievance received that relates to the actions or performance of the Association's employees to alleged problems arising from any of SAZ's products.

A product is a result of a process, while a process is a set of interrelated or interaction of activities, which transform inputs into outputs. There are four generic product categories, i.e. services (e.g. transport), software (e.g. computer program, dictionary), hardware e.g. engine mechanical part) and processed materials (e.g. lubricant).

5. General Rules

- 5.1 All complaints, appeals, disputes and requests for help to the Association should be directed to the Manager - Marketing and PR who shall maintain a register (M & PR Form 2) and ensure that all these are investigated and dealt with as per procedure.
- 5.2 The Manager - Marketing & PR is responsible for drawing the attention of the relevant Head of Department and/or the Director General to any complaints that warrant their involvement.
- 5.3 Complaints received by another Division/Department will be passed on to the Manager - Marketing & PR, who will arrange for it to be handled accordingly.
- 5.4 Complaints received personally by Heads of Departments or Director General will be passed on to the Manager - Marketing & PR who will direct them to the relevant department concerned. The Departmental Head shall be responsible for handling these complaints and providing appropriate answers for communication to the complainant, with copies to the original recipient.

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- 5.5 Complaints which have possible legal implications must be referred to the Director General before any statement or correspondence is sent to the complainant.
- 5.6 Complaints against SAZ staff members should be directed via the Manager - Marketing & PR to the Head of Department of the staff member concerned who must deal with the complaint through the SAZ Code of conduct.
- 5.7 Complaints of a minor nature which do not warrant investigation and do not reflect adversely on the SAZ should be handed over to the Manager - Marketing & PR who nevertheless will keep records of all such complaints which will be regularly analyzed at the monthly Departmental Heads meeting.
- 5.8 All relevant records pertaining to any customer complaint must be kept for a period of not less than three years.

6. Activity Description

Complaints may be received verbally, telephonically, during a discussion or meeting or in writing. It is essential to obtain as much information as possible, particularly details of the source of complaint, that is name, organization where applicable, address, telephone numbers, fax number and all proven facts, if possible, physical evidence such as samples of the products and any other relevant information.

6.1 Procedure on receipt of complaint

- 6.1.1 Complaints will be acknowledged in writing within three working days from the date of receipt using MPR standard letter 1.

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6.1.2 All complaints received by post or fax to the attention of the Director General, Departmental Heads and Divisional Managers must be forwarded to the Manager - Marketing & PR for central registration and follow up control.

6.1.3 All complaints received will be recorded in the M &PR Form 1, which is kept by the Manager - Marketing & PR and statistical summaries of complaints will be discussed at the monthly Departmental Heads meetings.

6.1.4 The Manager - Marketing & PR shall ensure that the complaints, requests for help, appeals or disputes are investigated in depth within three weeks (21 working days) of receipt by assigning responsibility to investigate to the relevant department.



6.2 **Procedures for corrective actions**

The investigation of complaints should seek to establish the root causes (not the superficial symptoms) of the complaint and to develop acceptable solutions. This is the responsibility of the relevant Departmental Head.

6.2.1 Each Departmental Head investigating a complaint will keep the Marketing Department informed of the progress on the investigation. If the complaint takes over two weeks to resolve, an interim report with a corrective action plan will be sent to the complainant by the Manager - Marketing & PR.

6.2.2 On completion of such investigations, the staff concerned will discuss his/her findings, preventive action and proposed corrective action with the Departmental Head, who if satisfied will give the go ahead to closing of the particular complaint investigation. A final conclusion to the complaint will be formally recorded in the complaints file.

Corrective action necessitated by complaints e.g. to rectify defective procedures or to recall faulty products by a mark holder must be initiated and monitored by the Departmental Head.

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6.3 Procedure to close a complaint

Each complainant will receive a formal report on completion of the investigation. If after an initial examination of the problem, a lengthy investigation is anticipated i.e. longer than two weeks; the complainant must be advised and be given an indication of when the final report will be ready.



In such a case, an interim report must then be presented to the complainant with an action plan that indicates when the complaint will eventually be resolved.

Reports and letters relating to the complaint (s) will be signed by the relevant Departmental Head. Correspondence relating to serious complaints will need to be signed by the Director General.

6.4 Appeals

The complainant is entitled to refer the matter to the Director General in the case where he/she feels that the complaint has not been adequately addressed. The Director General will involve the Departmental Head in the re-examination of the problem. The Director General will sign the resultant correspondence to the complainant. In the case where the complaint becomes a dispute and/or an appeal, the whole issue is referred to the Executive Committee by the Director General, which shall appoint an Arbitration Committee to attend to the issue and give its formal decision.

The Arbitration Committee Chairman or his/her formally appointed representative shall act as Chairman. The Committee shall appoint one of its members to be the Secretary to the Committee.

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- 6.4.1 The Chairman of the Arbitration Committee shall be responsible for setting the hearing dates, notifying other committee members of the date and venue of the hearing. The hearing shall be within one month of the receipt of the complaint, dispute or appeal by the Arbitration Committee.
- 6.4.2 The Arbitration Committee shall make its final decision known to the parties concerned through the Director General and the Arbitration Committee Chairman shall then close out the case.
- 6.4.3 If the complainant still does not agree with the findings of the Arbitration Committee the issue may have to be referred to a Zimbabwean Court of law. However, efforts shall always be made to ensure that appeals, complaints and disputes are resolved within the confines of the SAZ.
- 6.4.4 This procedure shall be brought to the attention of all SAZ employees, customers and all those who do business with SAZ in hard and/or soft copy.

7. Relevant Documents

- 7.1 MPR Standard letter number 1/ fax of acknowledgement of complaint
- 7.2 Intermediate reports and /or corrective action plans
- 7.3 Close-out letter/fax/report
- 7.4 M & PR Form 1
- 7.5 NECCS Code of Conduct

Authorized by,



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Eve C Gadzikwa

Director General