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Supersedes: March 2, 2021
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Approved By: Tammie Van Buren

1. Reference

In accordance with current GFSI Benchmarking Requirements and the SQF Food Safety and Quality Codes, the SQFI has established this procedure for handling complaints. Complaints may be submitted against any of the following SQF:

- certified sites,
- certification bodies,
- auditors,
- training centers,
- registered consultants, and/or
- staff or services
- accreditation bodies

Where a complaint is registered about the conduct or behavior of an auditor or certification body personnel or against a certified site, the complaint shall first be referred to the certification body for investigation and resolution. Where a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the certification body, the matter shall be resolved by the SQFI Compliance Manager with advisement from the SQFI Ethics Committee.

Comments about the SQF Code or the SQF assessment database can be provided via the “stakeholder feedback” section of the website located on the resource tab at www.sqfi.com and is outside the scope of this procedure.

SQF reserves the right to self-submit a complaint against any of the entities listed above.

2. Source

Complaints may be received by any SQFI staff via phone, e-mail, SQFI web-site or social media. Complaints shall be forwarded to the SQFI Compliance Manager or designee.

A complaint form shall be used to gather general information regarding the complaint and includes at a minimum the following:

- Who the Complaint is against (Name/Category)
- Description of the complaint

Complainant information is included in the complaint form unless the complainant asks to remain anonymous. If that is the case, the complainant information will be recorded in the Complaint Log but identified as anonymous on the form.

3. SQFI Policy

3.1 Recording Complaints

3.1.1 All complaint forms received are recorded in the SQFI Complaint Log and a folder is created to store all relevant information.

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3.2 Complaints against Certified SQF Sites

- 3.2.1 Complaints regarding SQF Certified Sites shall be directed to and addressed by the Certification Body contracted by the site. Results of the investigation and resolution, including response to the complainant if applicable, will be submitted to the SQFI Compliance Manager for closure.
- 3.2.2 SQFI will review the actions taken by the Certification Body and verify that the findings are suitable for the complaint made. If SQFI does not see the actions taken by the Certification Body as being sufficient, SQFI will determine if any additional measures are needed to ensure the integrity of the program is upheld.
- 3.2.3 If upon investigation of a complaint it is determined that there has been a substantiated breakdown of a site's SQF System or any other condition not in accordance with the SQF Code and/or other supporting documents the Certification Body shall suspend Certification as outlined in the SQF Food Safety Code Part A.
- 3.2.4 The final decision of the complaint shall be communicated in writing to all parties involved in the complaint and closed in the SQFI Complaint log.

3.3 Complaints against Certification Bodies or other Parties (SQF consultants, SQF Trainers, SQF Auditors, and other SQF stakeholders)

- 3.3.1 Complaints about Certification Bodies, SQF auditors, or other SQF stakeholders shall be referred to the the appropriate party for resolution.
- 3.3.2 Where a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the matter shall be resolved by the SQFI Compliance Manager with advisement from the SQFI Ethics Committee as needed. The SQFI Ethics Committee will determine the resolution that best upholds the values, policies and procedures of SQFI.
- 3.3.3 The decision of the SQFI shall be communicated in writing to the complainant and the other parties concerned and shall be closed in the SQF Complaints log.

3.4 Complaints against SQFI Staff or services

- 3.4.1 Where a complaint is received regarding SQFI's staff or services, the SQFI compliance manager, or designee, shall present the complaint to the SQFI Senior Vice President (SVP) to determine the resolution that best upholds the values, policies and procedures of SQFI.
- 3.4.2 Where the issue is systemic or cannot be easily fixed within a reasonable timeframe, the issue shall be raised and discussed at the next SQFI staff meeting and a decision taken on how, when, where, and who will correct or change the procedure to resolve the issue.



Safe Quality Food Institute
Policy Manual
Complaint Procedure



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- 3.4.3 The issue shall remain on the agenda of the SQFI staff meetings until the matter has been resolved, the complainant has been advised and the complaint has been closed out.
- 3.4.4 The complaint and resolution shall be recorded in the SQFI complaint log and identified as closed following resolution.