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All complaints and appeals will be treated confidentially, in accordance with the Warringtonfire Impartiality and Confidentiality Procedure (EWC-QU-PD-153).

1. General

A complaint/appeal can be defined as those issues around the certification decision, certification status, results of inspections or audits, late delivery, resourcing or quality.

They should not be confused with enquiries from clients as to, for instance, will the agreed deadline be complied with for site visits and reporting. These requests will probably come directly to Project Manager and this information should be recorded in the job file along with the answer(s) given to the client.

Complaints/Appeals can be written (letter or email) or verbal (face to face or telephone) communication or comment from a customer.

Complaint:

Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by the customer (individual or organisation), relating to Warringtonfire Certification Limited's certification and Inspection activities, where a response is expected.

Appeal:

Request by the customer (individual or organisation), for reconsideration of a decision Warringtonfire Certification Limited has made in relation to certification activities, certification status or inspection activities.

Complainant:

Party who makes the complaint

Appellant:

Party who disagrees with a decision and submits an appeal

2. Complaints

Warringtonfire is committed to the timely resolution of all complaints received relating to its accredited and other services. It is the responsibility of all personnel to make Management aware of instances of a complaint by a client or other parties.

- i. All complaints should be addressed to the Warringtonfire Quality Manager at complaints@warringtonfire.com. The Quality Manager will notify other relevant parties as deemed appropriate.
- ii. Upon receipt of a complaint, Warringtonfire will confirm whether the complaint relates to activities for which it is responsible. When Warringtonfire decides the complaint is not justified, the complainant will be informed of this decision in writing.
- iii. Where the complaint is considered valid by Warringtonfire, the Quality Manager will add the details to the Intelex System which allocates a unique reference number. It will be logged and tracked throughout the incident management process, including any actions and outcomes.
- iv. The Quality Manager will assign the complaint to a relevant person and will initiate corrective action to address the complaint. The person assigned will be independent of any certification activity relating to the complaint.
- v. Warringtonfire will acknowledge receipt of formal complaints, identifying the person assigned to conduct the investigation and a date by which a response can be expected. Complainants shall be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

- vi. The person assigned to review and approve any decision to resolve the complaint will be independent of any certification activities relating to the complaint and will not have worked either directly or in consultancy with the client for a minimum period of two years.
- vii. It is the responsibility of the Warringtonfire Quality Manager to ensure that complaints are fully investigated to identify the root cause, and corrective actions implemented to prevent recurrence. Records shall be maintained of all information pertinent to the complaint.
- viii. When the complaint relates to a certified individual or company, Warringtonfire will inform the individual or company.
- ix. On completion of the investigation, the outcome will be formally communicated to the complainant and the complaints process closed.
- x. Should the complainant decide to appeal against the decision, the Appeals Procedure shall be invoked.

3. Appeals

Applicants and certificated manufacturers/*companies* have the right of appeal against any decision (*including the outcome of a complaint*) made by Warringtonfire. To invoke this procedure, the appellant shall accept the following procedure:

- i. Notice of any appeal shall be made in writing (includes electronic correspondence) and addressed to The Warringtonfire Quality Manager within 14 days of official notification of the decision. The appellant shall clearly set out the grounds for the appeal
- ii. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Quality Manager will add the details to the Intalex System which allocates a unique reference number. It will be logged and tracked throughout the incident management process, including any actions and outcomes. The appellant shall be kept informed of the progress of the appeal.
- iii. The appeal shall be reviewed by the Warringtonfire General Manager *or nominated deputy* (who may consult the Chair of the Warringtonfire Impartiality Committee), who may contact the appellant to discuss the grounds for the appeal and may request further details if they believe there is insufficient information on which to make a judgment.

The Warringtonfire General Manager shall attempt to resolve the appeal within one month of receipt of the written appeal.

- iv. In the case of resolution, the Warringtonfire General Manager will write to the appellant confirming the outcome of the appeal. If the appeal can be resolved as detailed above, no appeals panel shall be constituted.
- v. If the *General Manager's* review fails to resolve the appeal, the manager shall contact the Warringtonfire Impartiality Committee Chair and request the constitution of an Appeals Panel. Warringtonfire shall endeavour to facilitate hearing of an appeal by an Appeals Panel within 3 months of receipt of the written grounds for appeal. *Prior to the Appeals Panel hearing any associated costs (up to a maximum of £1,500) will need to be paid in advance by the appellant (refundable only where the Appeals Panel finds in favour of the appellant).*
- vi. An Appeals Panel specifically constituted for hearing an appeal, which cannot be resolved by the Warringtonfire General Manager, will comprise three members of the Warringtonfire Impartiality Committee, as selected by the Chair. They will be selected such that no member has any direct or indirect commercial interest in the appeal. The Chair of the Impartiality Committee will not be a member of the Appeals Panel, but they will nominate one of the three members as the Appeals Panel Chair.

- vii. An Appeals Panel convened from members of the Warringtonfire Impartiality Committee is a wholly independent body not employed by Warringtonfire. The members of the Impartiality Committee:
 - are not employed by Warringtonfire.
 - are not paid by Warringtonfire.
 - act independently of Warringtonfire’s day to day business activities.
 - give of their time voluntarily to monitor the activities of Warringtonfire as an “independent body of individuals representing various interests” overseeing Warringtonfire activities.
- viii. The Impartiality Committee is formed from a group of Enforcers, Regulators, Manufacturers, Insurers, Users / Specifiers who act as a voluntary committee to oversee impartiality across the activities of Warringtonfire.
- ix. When the subject of the appeal involves technical matters, the Impartiality Committee Chair may arrange for one or more persons having suitable technical expertise to be available for consultation by the Appeals Panel. In such cases the Chair will ensure that the persons nominated have no previous involvement with the certification issue in question.
- x. The appellant will be notified of the proposed date of the appeal hearing, the composition of the Appeals Panel and any technical advisors to be made available to the panel not less than 14 days before the date of the meeting. The appellant may challenge the composition of the panel and/or the technical advisors within 2 days of being informed of the composition and shall provide written reasons for any challenge.
- xi. The Appeals Panel Chair will consider the reasons for any challenge and at their sole discretion will decide whether the composition of the Panel or technical advisors will be changed. In choosing any replacements, the Appeals Panel Chair will consider the reasons for the challenge to ensure that as far as possible the same objections will not apply to the replacements. No further challenges will be considered.
- xii. The appellant has the right to be supported at the hearing of the Appeals Panel by a representative of their choice. Any such representative shall be notified to the Chair of the Appeals Panel 14 days prior to the hearing. The Chair has the right, on behalf of the Appeals Panel, to challenge any such nomination.
- xiii. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be decided by a simple majority and the decision will be final.
- xiv. The Warringtonfire General Manager will be responsible for arranging the timing and location of the hearing by the Appeals Panel which will be advised to the appellant at least 7 days in advance.
- xv. The original decision will remain in force pending the meeting of the Appeal Panel at which the appellant, the Warringtonfire General Manager, and any other relevant member of Warringtonfire will be entitled to be heard in confidence. The Warringtonfire Manager or any other person nominated by the Appeals Panel will be responsible for implementing the decision of the Panel. The Chair of the Appeals Panel will ensure that the appropriate action is correctly implemented.
- xvi. The Appeals Procedure above accommodates an appellant who is resident in UK/Europe. If an appeal needs to be heard for an appellant who is resident elsewhere in the world, other arrangements may be made whereby an appeal is heard locally if a more convenient representative office of Warringtonfire is available. If this happens, which will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Impartiality Committee, the appellant will be advised of the procedure and timescales.

4. Normative References

EWC-QU-PD-153 - Warringtonfire Impartiality and Confidentiality Procedure

5. Amendment Record

To ensure that each controlled copy of the Quality Management System contains a complete record of amendments, this amendment record is updated as issued with details of the amendment.

Details of amendment	Date	Superseded Issue No.	New Issue No.
Update to format to include index, normative references and amendment record. Addition of General section which includes definitions Updates to Appeals and associated charges Amendments shown in grey italic	06/01/2023	7	8
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