



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe how complaints relating to the manner in which ACE perform building regulatory functions are handled.

Scope

This document describes how we treat complaints about our services, how they are logged, tracked, investigated, resolved and, if applicable, how we can use them to identify and harvest opportunities to improve our service.

The process covers not only complaints specifically against the performance of building consent authority functions but also territorial authority responsibilities owned by the building team.

Abbreviations

BCA Building consent authority
TA Territorial authority

References

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of each person involved in the process:

Building control manager

What roles are valid here?

Building Complaint Co-ordinator:

The building complaints co-ordinator is responsible for

- receiving all complaints including Mayorals.
- creating the complaint file and completing the ‘complaint details form’ (if not already completed).
- logging the complaint into the register.
- forwarding the customer a ‘complaint acknowledgement letter’, advising the complainant who is responsible for investigation of complaint.
- allocating the complaint to appropriate case manager to action.
- ensuring all complaints are responded to within targeted timeframe.
- receiving a copy of the draft ‘complainant finalisation letter’ and ‘complaint finalisation report’.
- obtaining building manager sign off of the resolution letter/ report.
- updating the complaint database and scanning of related documents into a complaint file on g:\drive.

Reviewed by	Senior Specialist – Building Regulatory Services	Date	
Reviewed by	Principal Building Officer –PATS	Date	
Approved by	Manager Building Control – Regulatory Services	Date	
Version	1.0	Date	



- Ensuring that the complaint is made ‘confidential’ in the database so that the public cannot read the information.
- gathering statistical information summarising all complaints (on a monthly basis) and forwarding a written report to the Manager Building Control

Building Complaint Case Manager:

The complaint case manager is responsible for

- receiving the complaint file.
- reviewing and investigating all complaints received within targeted timeframes.
- analysing and resolving complaints.
- raising complaints with Manager Building Control where complaint is outside the control of the Team Leaders role and responsibilities.
- drafting a response to the complainant detailing actions taken.
- notifying the building complaint co-ordinator the resolution of a complaint through forwarding of a completed *complaint finalisation report* and copy of the customer resolution letter.

Manager Building Control:

The Manager Building Control is responsible for

- receiving monthly summary report of all complaints received
- reviewing actions taken
- reviewing for systematic and recurring problems
- taking necessary steps in respect to complaints involving staff
- ensuring that timeframes are not exceeded.
- advising Management Review Team.

Building Manager:

Any building manager is responsible for

- reviewing the resolution letter/complaint finalisation report and the approval or direction further actions.

Procedure

The following table outlines the customer complaints procedure:

Step #	Description	Responsibility



Roles and Responsibilities

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- Ensuring that the complaint is made 'confidential' in the database so that the public cannot read the information.
- gathering statistical information summarising all complaints (on a monthly basis) and forwarding a written report to the Manager Building Control

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- reviewing the resolution letter/complaint finalisation report and the approval or direction further actions.

Complaint Definition

Complaint- An expression of dissatisfaction with the organisation's procedures, staff or quality of service that requires a response.[Customer Centres Group definition]

Formal request for information - A request for information from one of the following offices:

- Directorate Support.
- Democracy Services.

Note: This does not include Official Information Requests which follow the process detailed at <http://citynet.aucklandcity.govt.nz/citynet/tools/guides/official/default.html>

Complaints may originate from the following sources:

- Directorate support [CEO and Directors]
- Mayor's Office
- Elected representative via Democracy Services
- Regulatory Body i.e. the Department of Building and Housing, NZ Fire Service..
- Oral complaint direct to an ACE officer.
- Written complaint direct to an ACE officer.

Response Timeframes

All complainants shall be acknowledged within 24hrs of the receipt of their complaint.

All complaints shall be resolved within 15 working days. If there is some reason why this cannot be achieved the case manager shall:

- advise the building complaint co-ordinator [who will update the building complaint database]
- notify the complainant of the reason for any delay, set an expectation as to when the response will be available.

General Guidelines

All complaints and formal requests for information that meet the definitions above must be treated in accord with the Building Complaints Management Process [g-drive: /ace/public/building/ internal complaints procedure].

All complaints shall be forwarded to the Building Complaints Co-ordinator.



Written complaints shall be for addressed to:

The Complaints Co-ordinator
Building Team
Auckland City Environments
Private Bag 92516
Auckland

All complaints or requests for information received by ACE from elected representatives should be directed through Democracy Services. Unless the information request may be readily actioned and such logging would create an unreasonable administrative overhead.

This procedure shall not effect any requirement under the ACE Mayoral correspondence process.

All mayorals requiring a building team response shall be lodged by the building complaint co-ordinator.

Complaint Database structure

The procedure recognises 4 categories of complaint, namely:

- Service level
- Lack of action
- Allegation against staff
- Policy/ process

There are 5 sources of complaint recognised:

- Mayors Office [includes elected representatives]
- Directorate Support
- Regulator i.e. DBH, NZFS etc
- Customer to ACE written
- Customer to ACE oral

There are the following services areas recognised:

- meeting statutory time frames
- lodgement or vetting of building consent applications
- processing of building consent applications
- inspection of work under construction
- issuing of a notice to fix
- issuing of code compliance certificates
- issuing compliance schedules
- failure to provide appropriate information or advice
- fees and charges
- failure to meet legislative or building code requirements
- Other



There are 6 categories of resolution:

- Information provided
- Service request logged
- Not established
- Frivolous
- Investigated and not sustained
- Investigated and upheld

Improvement Opportunity are categorized as:

- System
- Process
- Procedure
- Team training
- Individual coaching/direction

References:

1.0 Procedure

1.1 Receive/ review issue/ confirm it's a complaint

Role: Building Complaint Co-ordinator
Receive complaint

Note: Staff should be encouraged to complete the 'Complaints Details Form'. This will ensure all the necessary information is provided to effectively log and assign the complaint.

Note: In some instances the officer will be able to resolve the complaint at first point, however if the resolution required an action that was not business as usual and/ or there are some learning opportunities, the matter should be logged and the lower 'resolution section' in the 'Complaint details form' also completed.

1.1.1 Follow complaint guidelines above to determine if it is a complaint under the Building Complaints Management Process.

1.1.2 Search any previous apparently related complaint in the following databases:

- ACE Complaint Management Database.
- RFS in Pathway-Worksmart.
- Workbench

Note: All Mayoral channel complaints [Mayor, Elected Representative/ CEO directed enquiries] follow the ACE Mayoral Process [this process only recognises complaints made through these channels.] Thus all 'Mayoral' channel complaints will be routed through the Building complaint co-ordinator and entered into our database using their 'Mayoral' complaint number.



1.2 Logs in database/ creates coversheet/ assigns

Role: Complaint co-ordinator

1. Log complaint in the *Building Complaint Management database*
2. Complete and mail a *complaint acknowledgement letter* to the complainant detailing the complaint case manager.
3. Determine most appropriate divisional manager or delegate to allocate the complaint to.
4. Assign complaint in database and complete an *ACE Building 'Complaint details form'* [if one has not already been completed] to use as a complaint coversheet.

1.3 Forward to assignee

Role: Complaints Co-ordinator

1. Forward complaint with attached coversheet ('Complaint details form') to assignee.

1.4 Receive/ assess and assign

Role: Any Building Manager or delegate

1. Receive complaint.
2. Review complaint.
3. Assign to another officer or retain to investigate themselves.

Note: In this case they shall update the complaint co-ordinator to this effect by e-mail providing the case managers details.

1.5 Receive/ assess/ update

Role: Complaint Case Manager

1. Receive complaint.
2. Review
3. Update

1.6 Document resolution recommendation/ improvement opportunities and forward

Role : Complaint Case Manager

1. For any complaint, complete 'Complaint finalisation report'. This includes:
 - Summary of complaint.
 - Itemisation of enquiries conducted.
 - Recommended resolution.
 - Identification of any improvement opportunities.
2. Complete draft letter on behalf of respective originating office as required.
3. Forward to delegated authority for approval.

Note: If a mayoral is a request for information and not a complaint, there is no requirement to complete a finalization report. Simply enter resolution status of 'complaint details form'.

1.7 Review/ amend/ forward

Role: Any building manager or delegate

1. Receive complaint file. At minimum this shall comprise:



- Cover sheet.
 - Written complaint.
 - Draft letter of response
 - Report
2. Review investigation/ opportunities/ recommendation and associated draft response.
 3. Make any amendments required.
 4. Forward to Building manager for approval.

1.8 Review/ amend/ approve

Role: Building Control manager

1. Receive complaint.
2. Review complaint and resolution letter.
3. Amend response as required.
4. Approve.
5. Forward to complaint co-ordinator.

1.9 Update database/ forward response doc's to appropriate office.

Role: Complaint co-ordinator

1. Remove report and file.
2. Update any improvement opportunities in database.
3. Enter resolution code from report and enter into database.
4. Change status code in the database to 'completed' with current date.
5. Forward the response documentation [this should include a letter for signature, in some instances it may be appropriate to forward a copy of the complaint/ formal request for information report to the directorate support office[this may support the rationale of the resolution which may not be articulated as clearly in the letter for the complainant].

1.10 Notify complainant of the result of the investigation/ recommendation

Role: Complaint Case Manager

1. Upon notice that the recommendation has been accepted contact complainant and explain:
 - Actions taken in regard to the complaint.
 - Findings of investigation.
 - Recommendation made to the respective office the complaint was received from.
 - Outline procedure that the office concerned will review the recommendation and advise their determination in due course.

2.0 Investigation Process

2.1 Conduct background enquiries

Role: Complaint Case Manager

1. Conduct relevant GIS/ property file enquiries.
2. Filter complaints database to determine if any previous related enquiries.
3. Any other enquiries that may be required prior to initial contact with complainant.



2.2 Liase with complainant/ confirm complainant details

Role: Complaint Case Manager:

1. Make direct contact with the complainant face to face or by phone.

Note:

In the instance of more complex, serious/ protracted/ intransigent complainants, a face to face meeting is recommended.

If the complaint amounts to an allegation a face to face interview must be conducted with every effort to obtain a written statement from the complainant.

2.3 Conduct relevant property/ witness enquiries

Role: Complaint Case Manager

1. Conduct all relevant witness and site related enquiries as required.
2. In the case of more serious complaints/ allegations signed written statements should be taken from witnesses.

2.4 Update progress status in database

Role: Building Complaint Case Manager

1. Updates shall be forwarded to the complaints co-ordinator in the current complaint area overdue/likely to be overdue providing the following information:
 - Complaint tracking number and complainant surname.
 - Status of investigation in couple of words, reason for any delay in completion and date by which investigation will have been completed. .

2.5 Receive update/ update complaint database

Role: Complaint Co-ordinator

1. Receive update and update complaint database

2.6 Identify any opportunities and determine resolution

Role: Complainant Case Manager:

1. Use complaint/ information request report template to:
 - Identify salient issues of complaint.
 - Identify any liability for parties/ council
 - Recommend appropriate course of action

3.0 Complaint / Information Request Report Process

This process details how Building Complaints will be reported to ensure the process provides the greatest benefit for the business and any improvement opportunities [process/ procedural/ system/ training] are identified and acted upon.



3.1 Send reminder notice to all case managers.

Role: Complaints co-ordinator

1. Forward reminder notice to all case managers by e-mail of any overdue correspondence.

3.2 Run end of month report and forward

Role: Complaints co-ordinator

1. Run report.
2. Report to include:
 - % completed within timeframe.
 - Volume by source.
 - Volume by resolution.
 - Volume by category.
 - Identified opportunities for improvement.
3. Forward to regulatory services manager and relevant divisional managers by

3.3 Review reports as part of Building Managers Monthly Agenda

Role: Building control manager

1. Review report trends. Identify any lack of compliance with timeframes and take action to support the complaint co-ordinator.
2. Discuss new opportunities identified and any significant progress on any of the action items.

3.4 Update team on identified improvement progress

Role: Building Management team

1. Update forum on identified improvement progress.
2. Cover off improvement action items with respective improvement owners in their team as action items in their respective 1:1's.