



PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Any inquiries about this procedure can be directed to:

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Copies of the procedure are available on request from the CCIL Office.

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1.0. Procedure on Handling Complaints

1.1. Commitment to Impartiality and Confidentiality

1.1.1 The Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories (CCIL) is committed to impartiality and confidentiality. The CCIL Certification Office operates the laboratory and technician certification programs objectively and strives to identify, analyze, and document the possibilities for conflicts of interest arising from the provision of certification and resulting relationships. The CCIL Certification Office does not provide certification in cases of unacceptable threat to impartiality.

1.1.2 Protecting laboratory and technician identification information is vital to the success of the CCIL Certification Programs and is the responsibility of all personnel (employees, contractors and members of the Aggregate, Asphalt, Concrete Certification Program Administration Committees (CPACs) and the CCIL Executive Committee). The information gathered and maintained by the CCIL Certification Office is considered proprietary and confidential. This information includes, but is not limited to, all technical, financial, personnel, client, and business information that is sensitive, confidential, private, or classified. Some proprietary and confidential information may be provided to the members of a CPAC Committee in the performance of their duties. Neither the CCIL Certification Office nor the members of the CPAC Committees will disclose confidential and proprietary non-public information without proper authorization of the owner of the information, unless required to do so by law.

1.1.3 For all complaints, CCIL commits to handling the matter in an impartial manner and to protect the identity of the complainant and the parties involved in the complaint. CCIL shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that all persons involved in investigations of complaints have no conflict of interest with any party involved in the complaint. (This is already stated in the previous clause)

1.2. General

1.2.1 This procedure details the process for addressing expressions of dissatisfaction or complaints related to:

- The unethical behavior of a CCIL member,
- A CCIL certified laboratory's compliance with CCIL certification requirements, or
- The CCIL certification program.

1.2.2 For the purposes of this document all reported concerns whether verbal or written, are considered "expressions of dissatisfaction" and an initial effort is made by appropriate CCIL personnel in accordance with Clause 1.2.3 to address such expressions of dissatisfaction in an efficient, informal manner. If an expression of dissatisfaction, such as the result of a misunderstanding or misinterpretation is not readily resolved to the satisfaction of the party who raised the concern, the matter is considered a potential complaint requiring at least a preliminary investigation to determine if a formal investigation is warranted and, if warranted, determine which method of investigation is most appropriate. As part of any investigation, it is required that CCIL receive evidence in writing.

1.2.3 In some cases, minor issues may arise due to the complainant's lack of understanding of some issue. In such cases, the matter can often be resolved with a timely discussion with the complainant. The CCIL representative receiving the expression of dissatisfaction shall forward the information to the most appropriate CCIL manager to determine if the matter can be addressed in this manner. The appropriate CCIL manager may be the Certification Program Manager, the Executive Director, or the National Office manager.

1.2.4 If the expression of dissatisfaction cannot be addressed as described above, the matter is considered a "complaint" which shall be addressed in a formal manner. Hereafter, the procedure will use the term complaint in the description of the procedure and its actions.

1.2.5 If an investigation of a complaint is to be undertaken, any laboratory that is being investigated shall be advised by the CCIL Executive Director in writing. At the same time, the laboratory shall be advised which of the procedures identified in Clause 1.3.2 will be followed. The timing of the written notification shall be at the discretion of CCIL so as not to jeopardize the integrity of the investigation.

1.3. Process for Investigating Complaints

1.3.1 All complaints shall be addressed to the CCIL National Office to the attention of the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be responsible to ensure that the investigation of the complaint takes place in accordance with the process described in this procedure. In particular, the Executive Director, who has no direct association with any member, with any laboratory, or with CCIL Certification, shall ensure that CCIL's commitment to impartiality and confidentiality is maintained. In cases where the Executive Director is not readily available when the complaint is received, the Office Administrator will ensure that the Executive Director is notified of the complaint.

1.3.2. There are two separate procedures for investigating complaints.

1. If the complaint relates to the activities of CCIL as a certification body or relates to a noncompliance of a certified laboratory operating under the CCIL certification requirements, the investigation of the complaint shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in Clause 2.4 of this document.

2. If the complaint is related to the unethical behavior of a CCIL member, the matter shall be referred to the Ethics Committee, as required in the CCIL By-Laws, and the matter shall be investigated in accordance with the Code of Ethics.

1.3.3 In cases when it is not initially clear to the Executive Director which of the two above-described procedures is to be used, the Executive Director shall assemble an ad hoc committee to assist the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall form the ad hoc committee from members of the CCIL Board of Directors and may include CCIL Certification personnel. To comply with the commitment to impartiality and confidentiality, the identity of the complainant and the party being investigated shall be withheld from the ad hoc

committee. Based on the decision of the ad hoc committee, the appropriate procedure described above is followed.

1.3.4 The Executive Director shall respond in writing to the complainant, acknowledging receipt of the complaint and advising what procedure will be used to investigate the complaint. If no investigation is undertaken, the Executive Director shall advise the complainant in writing and explain its decision not to pursue the matter.

1.3.5 Any inquiries regarding this general procedure and the handling of complaints can be addressed to:

Executive Director
Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories
PO Box 41027
Ottawa, ON
K1G 5K9
Email: ccil@ccil.com

2.0 Complaints involving CCIL Certification and CCIL Certified Laboratories

2.1. Purpose and Scope

2.1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to define the steps related to complaints relating to certification. The complaint may be related to a CCIL certified laboratory's or CCIL certified technician's compliance with CCIL certification requirements or related to the CCIL certification program. Any complaint received by the (CCIL) Certification Office will be referred to the Executive Director.

2.1.2 If the complaint involves an alleged non-compliance of a CCIL certified laboratory, this procedure is followed only if the alleged non-compliance is within the laboratory's scope of certification. As a laboratory certifier, CCIL has no authority to investigate a complaint against a laboratory outside the laboratory's scope of certification. In such circumstances, however, if the laboratory is a CCIL member and if the laboratory may have contravened CCIL's Code of Ethics, then the complaint shall be referred to the Ethics Committee for consideration.

2.2. Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions shall apply.

Appellant - any laboratory which is making an appeal against a decision made by CCIL relating to a complaint.

Appeal - any request by a laboratory for reconsideration of a decision made by CCIL relating to a complaint.

Complaint - an expression, in writing, of dissatisfaction made to CCIL, relating to malpractice, competence, unethical conduct or misrepresentation by certified laboratories or technicians, or laboratory employees, or to the conduct of the Certification Program by CCIL, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complainant - any party that is making a complaint.

Dispute - a disagreement with a decision made in writing, after pursuing the appeal process.

2.3. Responsibility

The implementation and maintenance of this procedure is the responsibility of the CCIL Board of Directors.

2.4. Action

2.4.1 Complaints

- 2.4.1.1** All complaints related to the conduct of a CCIL certified laboratory or technician shall be in writing. Upon receipt of a verbal complaint, the CCIL representative initially contacted shall record the details of the complaint and instruct the complainant to submit their complaint in writing to the CCIL Executive Director. As described in clause 1.3 of this document, a decision shall be made as to the procedure to be followed to investigate the complaint.
- 2.4.1.2** If the complaint is related to certification and a decision is made to have the complaint investigated using Procedure 1 under Clause 1.3.2, the Executive Director shall forward all supplied information to the CCIL Certification Program Manager, with a copy to the CCIL Administrative Assistant, ensuring impartiality requirements are met. The information contained in the written submission shall be used to complete a CCIL Complaint Report Form provided as Appendix I of this document. The written complaint will be attached to the form. If the complaint does not relate to certification and Procedure 2 under clause 1.3.2 is selected, the Executive Director refers the complaint to the Ethics Committee for resolution. Clauses 2.4.1.3 to 2.4.1.9 only apply to complaints involving certification.
- 2.4.1.3** Where the complainant chooses not to confirm a complaint in writing relating to the conduct of a laboratory or technician, whether certified or not, no further action will be taken. Where the complainant chooses not to confirm a complaint in writing, that relates to CCIL procedures, the complaint will be reviewed, and the Certification Program Manager will implement any improvement considered beneficial to the Certification Program.
- 2.4.1.4** The CCIL Administrative Assistant shall assign the appropriate reference number

to the complaint using the Complaints/Appeals/Dispute Tracking Form provided in Appendix 2 of the document "CCIL Procedure for the Suspension, Withdrawal, Appeals and Disputes of Certification".

- 2.4.1.5** Where the complaint relates to the activities of a laboratory or a technician certified by CCIL, the complainant shall be asked if the complaint has been brought to the laboratory's attention through the laboratory's complaints handling procedure. If this has not been done, the complainant shall be encouraged to pursue that course of action first. If the complainant has tried to resolve the issue with the laboratory without success, the Certification Program Manager shall accept the complaint according to the requirements described herein.
- 2.4.1.6** All complaints submitted to CCIL shall be complete and include supporting evidence. If the complainant does not provide documentation to support the allegations within 30 days of receipt of the complaint, the file shall be closed, and the complainant will be notified in writing.
- 2.4.1.7** Where the complaint relates to the activities of a laboratory or person not certified by CCIL, the complainant shall be advised that CCIL will only accept a complaint that relates to a laboratory or technician certified by CCIL. The Certification Program Manager shall accept any complaint that relates to the conduct of the Certification Program itself.
- 2.4.1.8** The Certification Program Manager shall commence the investigation of the documented complaint through discussions or correspondence with all parties concerned and by arranging a laboratory inspection if warranted and shall normally make a preliminary decision concerning the complaint within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.
- 2.4.1.9** If an investigation of a complaint is to be undertaken, any laboratory or technician that is being investigated shall be advised by the CCIL Certification Office in writing. At the same time, the laboratory shall be advised which of the procedures identified in Clause 1.3.2 will be followed. The timing of the written notification shall be at the discretion of CCIL to not jeopardize the integrity of the investigation.
- 2.4.1.10** On conclusion of the investigation the Certification Program Manager shall, in consultation with the Director of Certification Programs, prepare a report on the investigation, including identification of any nonconformances uncovered and a required plan of action. If the complaint relates to the activities of CCIL as a certification body, the report shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. If the approved investigation report identifies nonconformances by a laboratory, the laboratory shall be responsible for the cost of any laboratory inspection conducted as part of the investigation.
- 2.4.1.11** If the approved investigation report identifies non-conformances, the non-conforming party shall normally be required to resolve the issue within 30 days of

being advised by the Certification Program Manager. If the investigation report finds that a laboratory has knowingly or repeatedly not conformed to certification requirements, the laboratory shall be subject to appropriate actions as determined by the Certification Program Manager in consultation with the Director of Certification Programs.

2.4.1.12 The Certification Program Manager shall complete the CCIL Complaint Report Form and request the complainant to sign and return a copy of the form. The Certification Program Manager shall provide the Executive Director with a copy of the CCIL Complaint Report Form and shall retain and file all documents relating to the complaint at the Certification Office. The CCIL Administrative Assistant shall update records to indicate the resolution of the complaint.

2.4.2 Appeal

On receipt of notice that the laboratory in question is appealing the decision made by CCIL, the Certification Program Manager shall follow the procedure "CCIL Procedure for the Suspension, Withdrawal, Appeals and Disputes of Certification".

2.4.3 Dispute

Where the appellant expresses non-acceptance of the ruling given by the Appeals Subcommittee, the appellant may dispute the decision. The Certification Program Manager shall follow the procedures contained in "CCIL Procedure for the Suspension, Withdrawal, Appeals and Disputes of Certification".

Appendix 1

Complaint Report Form

- 1. Complaint/Appeal/Dispute No: _____
- 2. Date received: _____
- 3. Recorded by (CCIL Personnel): _____
- 4. Complainant/Appellant (Company or Individual): _____
 - (a) Contact Person: _____
 - (b) Address: _____
 - (c) Telephone Number: _____
 - (d) Fax Number: _____
 - (e) E-mail: _____
- 5. Complaints Against Certified Laboratory or Technician: _____
 - (a) Laboratory/technician Name: _____
 - (b) Laboratory/technician Address: _____
 - (c) Laboratory Contact: (if known) _____
- 6. Clear description of Complaint/Appeal/Dispute: _____

Complainant's Name: _____ Complainant's Signature: _____

7. Complaints Against CCIL:

- (a) CCIL Interpretation of Requirements: _____
- (b) Outgoing CCIL document: _____
- (c) Management system documentation: _____
- (d) Personnel behavior: _____
- (e) CCIL Delivery time: _____
- (f) Other (Specify) _____

8. Actions Taken or Proposed:

(a). Accepted by Complainant Rejected by Complainant

Complainant's Signature: _____

Date:

Name: _____ Signed in the presence of: _____
(CCIL Representative)

Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

9a. Decisions) made on any deficiency identify from the complaint; appeal, dispute or other:

9b. Date of settlement and reference document(s):

10. Corrective action and schedule for implementation:

11. Results of corrective action:

12. Effectiveness of corrective action:

13. Certification Program Manager comments:

14. Certification Program Manager's name:

Date:

Signature: