1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide for the fair and equitable handling of appeals and complaints of an interested party. Appeals and complaints brought before EAGLE by clients or other parties shall be subject to EAGLE procedures.

2.0 SCOPE

Appeals and complaints brought before EAGLE by clients or other parties.

3.0 CONTENT / CONTEXT

Submission, investigation and decision on complaints or appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant/appellant.

A complaint or appeal request may be submitted by contacting the EAGLE office in writing via electronic inputs or hardcopy. To submit a complaint or appeal through our website, please click the “contact us” link and provide details in the webform.

A. COMPLAINTS: A complaint against EAGLE or against an EAGLE client. Any interested party can submit a complaint. This may include various types of complaints, including integrity or whistleblower concerns.

1) Once received, the item will be entered into EAGLE’s complaints handling process. Information, data and evidence should be provided to the best of the complainant’s ability to support the investigation process.
2) A competent reviewer will be assigned based on the nature of the complaint, and an investigation will be conducted to determine actions that are required.
    a. If investigation shows it applies to EAGLE certification activities, EAGLE will address it by opening a CAR or PAR for systemic process improvement, and if it applies to a certified client, then examination will consider the effectiveness of the certified management system.
    b. Any valid complaint against a certified client will be communicated to the client organization in a timely manner.
    c. Confidentiality will be applied as appropriately as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complainant.
3) EAGLE is responsible for the gathering and verifying of all needed information to validate the complaint.
4) EAGLE may choose to address investigation with a corrective action request or a special audit.
5) As appropriate, EAGLE will acknowledge the complaint and provide progress reports to the complainant.
6) The decision to be communicated to the complainant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, individuals not previously involved in the subject of the specific complaint.
7) For AS complaints against EAGLE, results of internal complaint process will be reported to complainant within 60 days of date of complaint. (see EMIS complaint module)
8) EAGLE will confirm with interested parties as to whether (and to the extent in which) the complaint is resolved and the resolution shall be made available to appropriate interested parties.
    a. If a complaint comes in from a Certification Program Owner (CPO) or Scheme Owner, EAGLE will obtain appropriate information from the CPO or Scheme Owner.
    b. See Document 1 regarding reporting severe integrity/ethics complaints to appropriate interested parties, including Oversight or Scheme Owners.
    c. The closure notes in EMIS should include what date the final email was sent to the complaintive about the appeal with a copy of the email attached under complaint evidence.

B. APPEALS: An Appeal is a request for review and evaluation of a decision or output of an audit result, usually nonconformities, but it could also be a disagreement to the issuance and/or suspension of the certificate or other audit result.

1) Key Points:
   a. An appeal must be submitted by completing the attached form (Attachment A) and sent to the Certification Manager within 7 calendar days from the last day of the audit. If the appeal is not submitted within 7 calendar days, the appeal will be denied.
   b. The appeals process shall not impact the timings of nonconformity management or the certificate decision process. The organization is responsible to ensure that timing requirements are met if appeal is denied.
   c. An appeal cannot be submitted after the required closure due date or certification decision has been made.
2) Reference EAGLE Document 5, or program-specific documents for timing requirements of closure.
3) An appeal cannot be submitted for a withdrawal decision. If a client disagrees with the suspension criteria or conditions, the appeal should be submitted at the time of suspension notification but cannot be submitted after a withdrawal decision has been made. Note: Only in rare, exceptional circumstances will a withdrawal decision not include a suspension first. If no suspension was executed prior to withdrawal, then it may be acceptable to submit an appeal to the withdrawal decision.
4) EAGLE is responsible for gathering needed information and all decisions at all levels of the appeals handling process. Persons engaged in the process are those different from those who carried out the audits and made certificate decisions.
5) EAGLE will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and will provide progress reports to the appellant.
6) The decision to be communicated to the appellant shall be made by or reviewed and approved by persons not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.
7) EAGLE will notify the appellant of the outcome at the end of the appeal handling process via email.
8) EAGLE's appeal process has two levels that occur if an auditor leaves the site with the issue unresolved.
   a. Appeal Level-Office Review: Any complaint dealing with the certification process or interpretation of any standard, or the certification decision shall be directed to a Level 2 by completing the attached form. The appeal review and decision will be completed within 30 days of the date of the appeal submittal.
   b. Appeal Level-Committee Review: If the appellant is not satisfied with the response from the Office Review, the next step is for the appellant to appeal the President for Committee Review. The President or designee, generally a Technical Manager for the program, shall appoint an Appeals Committee. No individual may consider an appeal if that person was involved in the initial registration assessment or has any other conflict of interest.
      i. The Appeals Committee shall be at least one person and shall be an odd number of members. The appellant has the right to agree to the composition of the Appeals Committee and may challenge its composition.
         1. Person(s) assigned should have appropriate scheme competence.
      ii. The Committee has 7 days to review and respond with their decision
      iii. Information provided to the Committee will be objective and include the original NCR, the appellant response and evidence, and office review conclusion.
      iv. If the committee is more than one person, each committee member should provide their decision in writing using the Appendix to the Technical Manager or designee. The designee will then review for alignment among the committee members. If they are not aligned, the committee will meet to discuss and finalize the decision.
      v. The Technical Manager or designee shall notify the appellant of the decision within 7 days of receipt of the decision from the committee.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Top Management and the BOG have management and compliance responsibility for the appeals process.

5.0 RECORDS AND REFERENCES

A. Document 5 - Addresses short notice audits/special audits.
B. Document 7 - Control of Records, will define the general requirements of records.
C. Work Instruction 405 - EAGLE Issues references the Issues/Complaint Program.
D. Attachment A - Appeal Form

ATTACHMENT A

APPEAL FORM

A. APPELLANT INFORMATION AND REQUEST FOR REVIEW	
Name:	
Company Name:	
Standard:	
Telephone Number:	
NCR#:	
Decision Being Appealed: *Nature of the nonconformance.*	
Client Appeal Response/Summary: *Detailed position as to why your situation is conforming, including your position summary.*	
Evidence provided to support position: *Please provide summary that explains the supporting evidence you have provided. Include reference to documents, work instructions, SOPs, records, etc.*	
B. REVIEW BY OFFICE *(OFFICE USE ONLY)*	
Date Received:	
Office Review Summary: *Summarize the decision, and reason.*	
☐ Approved and Withdrawn ☐ Downgraded Classification ☐ Denied ☐ OTHER (for decisions not related to NCRs)	
Reviewer Name:	
Review Date:	
APPEAL COMMITTEE DECISION (if needed): *Summarize the decision and reason.*	
☐ Approved and Withdrawn ☐ Downgraded Classification ☐ Denied ☐ OTHER (for decisions not related to NCRs)	