

Australian Standard™

**Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for
complaints handling in organizations
(ISO 10002:2004, MOD)**



This Australian Standard® was prepared by Committee OB-009, Complaints Handling. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 24 February 2006.

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The following are represented on Committee OB-009:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Australian Law Reform Commission
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission
- Banking and Financial Services Ombudsman
- Consumers' Federation of Australia
- Independent Chairman
- Insurance Brokers Disputes
- Insurance Council of Australia

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Standards Australia wishes to acknowledge the participation of the expert individuals that contributed to the development of this Standard through their representation on the Committee and through public comment period.

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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee OB-009, Complaints Handling to supersede AS 4269—1995, *Complaints handling*.

The objective of this Standard is to provide guidance on complaints handling related to products within an organization, including planning, design, operation, maintenance and improvement.

This Standard is an adoption with national modifications and has been reproduced from ISO 10002:2004, *Quality management—Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations*, and has been varied as indicated to take account of Australian conditions.

Variations to ISO 10002:2004 are indicated at the appropriate places throughout this Standard. Strikethrough (~~example~~) identifies ISO text, tables and figures which, for the purposes of this Australian Standard, are deleted. Where text, tables or figures are added, each is set in its proper place and identified by shading (example). Added figures are not themselves shaded, but are identified by a shaded border.

Committee OB-009 Complaints Handling, the Australian mirror committee, required that Clause 4.3 *Accessibility* was modified to ensure that it carried the same general requirements as Clause 3.6 in AS 4269—1995, *Complaints handling*. The Committee believed that ISO 10002:2004, *Quality management—Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* should stipulate the characteristics of an accessible complaints handling system rather than only requiring that information be accessible about the complaints handling system.

The terms ‘normative’ and ‘informative’ are used to define the application of the annex to which they apply. A normative annex is an integral part of a standard, whereas an informative annex is only for information and guidance.

As this Standard is reproduced from an international standard, the following applies:

- (a) Its number appears on the cover and title page while the international standard number appears only on the cover.
- (b) In the source text ‘this International Standard’ should read ‘this Australian Standard’.
- (c) A full point substitutes for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 General

This International Standard provides guidance for the design and implementation of an effective and efficient complaints-handling process for all types of commercial or non-commercial activities, including those related to electronic commerce. It is intended to benefit an organization and its customers, complainants and other interested parties.

The information obtained through the complaints-handling process can lead to improvements in products and processes and, where the complaints are properly handled, can improve the reputation of the organization, regardless of size, location and sector. In a global marketplace, the value of an International Standard becomes more evident since it provides confidence in the consistent treatment of complaints.

An effective and efficient complaints-handling process reflects the needs of both the organizations supplying products and those who are the recipients of those products.

NOTE Throughout the text of this International Standard, wherever the term "product" is used, it can also mean "service".

The handling of complaints through a process as described in this International Standard can enhance customer satisfaction. Encouraging customer feedback, including complaints if customers are not satisfied, can offer opportunities to maintain or enhance customer loyalty and approval, and improve domestic and international competitiveness.

Implementation of the process described in this International Standard can

- provide a complainant with access to an open and responsive complaints-handling process,
- enhance the ability of the organization to resolve complaints in a consistent, systematic and responsive manner, to the satisfaction of the complainant and the organization,
- enhance the ability of an organization to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints, and improve the organization's operations,
- help an organization create a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints, and encourage personnel to improve their skills in working with customers, and
- provide a basis for continual review and analysis of the complaints-handling process, the resolution of complaints, and process improvements made

Organizations may wish to use the complaints-handling process in conjunction with customer satisfaction codes of conduct and external dispute resolution processes.

0.2 Relationship with ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 9004:2000

This International Standard is compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 and supports the objectives of these two standards through the effective and efficient application of a complaints-handling process. It can also be used independently of them.

ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used for internal application by organizations, or for certification, or for contractual purposes. The process for complaints handling described in this International Standard can be used as an element of a quality management system.

This International Standard is not intended for certification or for contractual purposes.

ISO 9004 provides guidance on continual improvement of performance. The use of ISO 10002 can further enhance performance in the area of complaints handling and increase the satisfaction of customers and other interested parties. It can also facilitate the continual improvement of the quality of products based on feedback from customers and other interested parties.

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Any table, figure or text of the International Standard that is struck through is not part of this Standard. Any Australian table, figure or text that is added is part of this Standard and is identified by shading.

1 Scope

This International Standard provides guidance on the process of complaints handling related to products within an organization, including planning, design, operation, maintenance and improvement. The complaints-handling process described is suitable for use as one of the processes of an overall quality management system.

This International Standard is not applicable to disputes referred for resolution outside the organization or for employment-related disputes.

It is also intended for use by organizations of all sizes and in all sectors. Annex A provides guidance specifically for small businesses.

This International Standard addresses the following aspects of complaints handling:

- a) enhancing customer satisfaction by creating a customer-focused environment that is open to feedback (including complaints), resolving any complaints received, and enhancing the organization's ability to improve its product and customer service;
- b) top management involvement and commitment through adequate acquisition and deployment of resources, including personnel training;
- c) recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants;
- d) providing complainants with an open, effective and easy-to-use complaints process;
- e) analysing and evaluating complaints in order to improve the product and customer service quality;
- f) auditing of the complaints-handling process;
- g) reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process.

This International Standard is not intended to change any rights or obligations provided by applicable statutory or regulatory requirements.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

~~ISO 9000:2000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*~~

AS/NZS ISO 9000, *Quality management systems—Fundamentals and vocabulary*



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