

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

Processing complaints and disputes is an integral part of bluesign's clients relations and assurance of customer satisfaction.

The process is open for companies, individuals or other stakeholders who want to raise a complaint concerning certified products, bluesign services, misuse of bluesign trademarks or others. It is also applicable in the case of an appeal against bluesign decision.

Furthermore, this process is applicable for concerns, complaints or appeals on the bluesign conformity assessment schemes and on bluesign® CRITERIA.

Complaints are handled within a reasonable timescale and as transparently as possible, whilst fully respecting principles and requirements of confidentiality and impartiality. They will not result in any discriminatory actions.

bluesign involvement in complaints concerning certified products is limited to review and evaluate their compliance with the bluesign® CRITERIA. The bluesign SYSTEM PARTNER, not bluesign, has the responsibility of fulfilling the certification requirements. Such complaints should in the first instance be addressed with the system partner to allow them to resolve with the complainant directly.

Complaint process



Receipt

A complaint/appeal shall be submitted in writing and supported by evidence such as documents, test reports, links or pictures to bluesign System Integrity Team (SystemIntegrity@bluesign.com)

Receipt of a submitted complaint will be acknowledged by bluesign.

Data collection

Data needed for proper handling depends on the characteristics of the complaint.

For complaints about certified products (chemicals, textiles, accessories or consumer products) it is indispensable to provide information for proper identification of the questioned product (e.g.

purchase order and/or lot numbers) together with product/processing details like recipes or bill of materials.

Potential misuse of the bluesign marks need to be substantiated with photos, screenshots, links.

Processing

bluesign System Integrity Team is responsible for managing complaints and appeals.

Root Cause Analysis needs the expertise of the relevant functions. bluesign experts collect and clarify the necessary data, might initiate testing and provide a final report for internal use.

In case of potential misuse of bluesign marks which can not be disproved with suitable evidence, bluesign reserves the right for legal actions if the misuser is not willing to take appropriate action such as signing a bluesign® system partner agreement or stopping the use of the marks.

The Root Cause Analysis might lead to further investigations with other parties of the supply chain.

Some details relating to the outcome may be protected by the confidentiality clauses of the bluesign® system partner agreements and may not be shared with the complainant or other affected parties.

Bluesign will keep the complainant updated on the status of the investigations.

Target is to complete the investigations within 2 weeks. Complexity of the supply chain, reply from affected parties, availability of test results etc. might lead to delays. Therefore, complainant should receive after 2 weeks at least a status report.

Decision

Final decision for resolving an assessment/certification related complaint/appeal is with the Certification Steering Committee which has the responsibility and authority for the overall process.

Decisions on complaints concerning services which are not assessment/certification related is with the Management Team.

Members with potential bias e.g. due to direct involvement in the affected assessment/certification process, are excluded from the decision-making process.

Conclusion

As a result of the root cause analysis and the final decision, it might be necessary to take corrective and/or preventive actions in bluesign and/or at bluesign system partners.

Complaint statistics and reporting is part of the Management Review, for ensuring that sufficient and targeted actions are taken as well as for reviewing their effectiveness.

All complaints will be reported to the Impartiality Advisory Committee for collecting independent advice during the biannual meetings.

Effectiveness of corrective actions at a system partner are reviewed latest during next re-assessment.