



**CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
ACCREDITATION BOARD**

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COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED CBs & CERTIFIED OPERATORS

ACCREDITATION POLICY

INTENT

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all complaints against accredited CBs and certified operators are handled fairly and consistently, and that corrective action is taken as necessary.

SCOPE

Complaints may come from the public, from businesses or from organizations. The scope of this policy applies only to complaints regarding accredited CBs and/or certified operators. Complaints against the COABC, the Accreditation Board, personnel or non-certified operators shall be handled by the COABC office.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the AB Director to amend this policy as needed. This policy is approved by the COABC BOD.

RELATED PROCEDURE/DOCUMENTS

- AB-PRO-800 Complaints Against CBs & Operators
- For complaints against the COABC and/or personnel see 'Complaints Against COABC' policy

POLICY

1. DIRECTING A COMPLAINT

- 1) Complaints regarding an accredited CB or an operator certified by an accredited CB should initially be directed to the CB concerned.
- 2) A complaint should be directed to the AB Director only when the complaint is not satisfactorily handled by the CB or referral to the CB is not considered appropriate.
- 3) Complaints regarding COR certified operators of CBs accredited by other CVBs should be directed to the CFIA unless the complaint is related to the BCCOP.

2. RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT

- 1) On receipt of a written complaint against an accredited CB or one of its operators, the AB Director or person appointed by the AB Director shall:
 - a) Decide on the validity of the complaint,
 - b) Where appropriate, ensure that the CB concerned first addresses the complaint,
 - c) Record the complaint and actions taken,
 - d) Assess the effectiveness of actions taken,
 - e) Respond to the complainant.

3. DETERMINATION OF THE VALIDITY OF THE COMPLAINT

- 1) To be considered valid, the complaint must be received in writing and be accompanied by documentation of evidence.
- 2) Complaints must relate to the requirements for accreditation and issues related to the integrity of the BC Certified Organic Program or Canada Organic Regime.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1) Details of complaints are confidential to staff, the Accreditation Board and the parties concerned.
- 2) The identity of the complainant shall remain confidential unless disclosure is necessary or obvious during the investigation of the complaint.

Parties involved in the complaint shall not publicly comment while the complaint is open.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) All parties involved in complaint investigations shall adhere to the COABC Code of Conduct policy. All communication must be conducted in a professional tone.