QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Complaint Handling Procedure

DOCUMENT NUMBER	REVISION	CLASSIFICATION
QA-SOP-001	Rev 1 · 2026-06-21	Controlled — internal + customer-facing
OWNER	**APPROVER**	**ALIGNS TO**
Quality Assurance Manager	Chief Operating Officer	ISO/IEC 17025:2017 §7.9, §8.7, §4.2

1.0 PURPOSE

This procedure defines Field Calibrations, Inc. (FCI)'s process for receiving, evaluating, and responding to complaints from customers and other interested parties. It satisfies ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Clause 7.9 (Complaints) and aligns with Clause 8.7 (Nonconforming Work), Clause 4.1 (Impartiality), and Clause 4.2 (Confidentiality).

2.0 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all complaints, expressions of dissatisfaction, and reports of non-conforming work received by FCI from any source — including but not limited to customers, suppliers, accreditation bodies, regulatory authorities, or members of the public. It applies to complaints about calibration results, certificates, decision rules, measurement uncertainty, turnaround time, customer service, billing, and conduct of FCI personnel.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Complaint** — An expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization to FCI relating to the activities or results of FCI, where a response is expected (ISO/IEC 17000 §6.5).
- **Non-conforming work** — Calibration or laboratory activity that does not conform to FCI's procedures, the customer's stated requirements, or the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 (ref. Clause 8.7).
- **Complaint reference number** — A unique identifier in the form **CMP-YYYY-NNNN** assigned to each complaint at receipt.
- **Independent reviewer** — A qualified FCI employee who was not personally involved in the activity or decision being complained about.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Quality Assurance Manager (QAM)	Owns this procedure. Receives and logs every complaint, assigns the complaint reference number, appoints the independent reviewer, decides on actions per §6, and authorizes formal close-out communications to the complainant. Holds final responsibility for ensuring the reviewer was not involved in the original activity.
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Independent escalation authority for complaints in which the QAM is conflicted, complaints alleging impartiality concerns, or complaints that may affect FCI's scope of accreditation. Final approver of this procedure.

Laboratory Manager	Supports investigation by providing technical context, calibration records, and access to personnel. Implements corrective actions arising from complaints. May not investigate complaints concerning his/her own personnel actions or technical decisions.
All FCI personnel	Any FCI employee who receives a complaint by any channel (phone, email, in person, mail) shall forward it to the QAM within one business day. No FCI employee may dismiss, downgrade, or suppress a complaint.

5.0 HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT

Complaints may be submitted by any of the following channels. Use of the online complaint form is preferred because it captures the data the QAM needs to begin investigation immediately.

- **Online form:** fieldcal.com/complaints
- **Email:** quality@fieldcal.com (monitored by the Quality Assurance Manager)
- **Phone:** (480) 756-8828 — ask for the Quality Assurance Manager
- **Mail:** Field Calibrations, Inc., Attn: Quality Assurance Manager, Phoenix, AZ
- Complainants who wish to remain anonymous may submit by mail; however, anonymous complaints can be investigated only to the extent that the information provided allows.

6.0 COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

6.1 Receipt and acknowledgment

The QAM (or, in the QAM's absence, the COO) assigns a complaint reference number (CMP-YYYY-NNNN) at receipt and logs the complaint in the QMS complaint register. A formal acknowledgement of receipt is sent to the complainant within **one (1) business day**, citing the complaint reference number, the name and title of the QMS owner, and the expected close-out timeline.

6.2 Validation and classification

Within **three (3) business days** of receipt, the QAM determines whether the complaint relates to activities for which FCI is responsible. If yes, the complaint is classified as:

- **Class A — Technical / non-conforming work:** Suspected error in a calibration, certificate, decision rule, or measurement uncertainty. Triggers Clause 8.7 nonconforming-work procedure (QA-SOP-002).
- **Class B — Service / process:** Turnaround, communication, billing, or conduct. Investigated through routine corrective action.
- **Class C — Impartiality:** Allegation that FCI's impartiality has been compromised. Investigated by the COO directly per §4.1 of ISO 17025.
- **Class D — Out of scope:** Complaint does not relate to FCI activities. The complainant is notified and, where possible, redirected.

6.3 Investigation

The QAM appoints an **independent reviewer** — a qualified FCI employee who was not personally involved in the activity being complained about. The reviewer:

- Gathers all relevant records: calibration data, MET/TEAM entries, work orders, communications, environmental logs, training records of involved personnel, and reference-standard calibration history.
- Interviews personnel as appropriate. Personnel under investigation shall be informed in writing.
- For Class A complaints, performs or authorizes a re-measurement, second-party check, or proficiency-testing comparison as appropriate to verify or refute the alleged non-conformance.
- Documents findings in the complaint record within **ten (10) business days** of complaint receipt. Extensions require QAM approval and written notice to the complainant.

6.4 Decision and action

Based on the reviewer's findings, the QAM decides on actions. Decisions may include (but are not limited to) any combination of the following:

- Recall and re-issue of one or more calibration certificates.
- Notification of other customers whose work may have been affected by the same root cause (per Clause 7.8.2.1 and 8.7).
- Opening of a formal corrective action (per QA-SOP-003), including root-cause analysis.
- Suspension of personnel competency authorization pending re-training and re-qualification.
- Withdrawal of a measurement decision or interpretation.
- Adjustment of FCI scope of accreditation in coordination with IAS, where the complaint reveals a systemic limitation.
- Compensation, credit, or other commercial remedy at COO discretion.
- Confirmation that no non-conformance occurred, supported by the investigation record.
- **The person making the final decision on the response shall not have been involved in the original activity** (ISO/IEC 17025:2017 §7.9.7).

6.5 Close-out and notification

Whenever possible, FCI provides formal written notification to the complainant of the end of the complaint handling, including findings, actions taken, and any agreed remedy (ISO/IEC 17025:2017 §7.9.4). Close-out communications are issued by the QAM on FCI letterhead and reference the complaint number.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with FCI's decision, escalation is available to (a) the Chief Operating Officer, and beyond that to (b) International Accreditation Service (IAS), our accreditation body, at iasonline.org/complaints.

6.6 Records and retention

All complaint records are retained for a minimum of **ten (10) years** in accordance with FCI's records retention schedule (QA-SOP-004). Records include the original complaint, acknowledgement, investigation file, decision, close-out communication, and any corrective action documentation. Access is restricted to QMS personnel except where disclosure is required by law or by the accreditation body.

7.0 IMPARTIALITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Impartiality Statement (ISO/IEC 17025 §4.1)

Complaints are investigated by personnel who were not involved in the original activity. The Quality Assurance Manager reports independently to the Chief Operating Officer, outside the laboratory production chain of command. No FCI employee receives any incentive, financial or otherwise, that would discourage the impartial investigation of a complaint.

Confidentiality Statement (ISO/IEC 17025 §4.2)

All information obtained during the handling of a complaint — including the complainant's identity, the substance of the complaint, and any technical records reviewed — is treated as confidential. Information is disclosed only to FCI personnel with a need to know, to the complainant, to the accreditation body (IAS) when required, or where disclosure is compelled by law. When disclosure is compelled, the complainant is notified in advance unless prohibited by the authority requiring disclosure.

8.0 RELATED PROCEDURES AND REFERENCES

- ISO/IEC 17025:2017 — General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories, §7.9, §8.7, §4.1, §4.2
- ISO/IEC 17000 — Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles (definition of 'complaint')
- IAS Accreditation Criteria for Calibration Laboratories (AC207)
- QA-SOP-002 — Control of Nonconforming Work
- QA-SOP-003 — Corrective Action and Root Cause Analysis
- QA-SOP-004 — Records Retention Schedule

9.0 REVISION HISTORY

Rev	Date	Author	Description
1	2026-06-21	Quality Assurance Manager	Initial issue.

PREPARED BY (QA MANAGER)

Signature

Printed name

Date

APPROVED BY (COO)

Signature

Printed name

Date