

Complaint Handling Policy

We take complaints seriously. This policy explains how to complain about our service or about building work on a project where we are the relevant building surveyor, what we will do about it, and how long it should take.

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Code HQ Pty Ltd

Registered Building Surveyor (Body Corporate) CBS-U 71338
1/27 High Street, Glen Iris VIC 3146
(03) 9555 9511 | codehq.com.au

About this policy

This policy applies to every complaint we receive, whether it concerns our service, the conduct of our staff, or building work on a project for which Code HQ is appointed as the relevant building surveyor (RBS).

It gives effect to Section 8 of the Building Surveyors Code of Conduct and follows the minimum expectations in the Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) publication *Managing Complaints: A Guide for Building Surveyors and Industry*, published 7 August 2026. In developing it we considered publicly available guidance on complaints handling, including the Australian Standard on customer satisfaction and complaints handling in organisations.

We publish this policy on our website and will provide a copy to any applicant, client or relevant party on request.

Our commitment

We accept complaints from anyone with a legitimate interest, not only from the person who engaged us. We respond to every complaint, including those that turn out to fall outside our role. We assess complaints on the evidence, we explain our decisions in writing, and we tell you where to take the matter if you disagree with us. Our staff are trained to receive and manage complaints, and we keep the records and systems needed to track them.

What we treat as a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with:

- the building surveying services we provide;
- the conduct of any person at Code HQ; or
- building work on a project for which we are appointed as RBS, where the concern is that the work does not comply with the building permit, the Building Act 1993, the Building Regulations 2018 or the National Construction Code.

Complaints may come from an applicant, an owner, an adjoining owner, an owners corporation, a member of the public, a council or another practitioner.

Someone else can make and manage a complaint for you. We will ask for your written authority before we discuss your personal information with a representative.

What we can and cannot help with

Our powers come from the Building Act 1993 and are limited to the building work for which we have been appointed. We are not a general adjudicator of building disputes. Knowing this early saves everyone time.

Matters we may be able to assist with

- Building work on a project for which we are the relevant building surveyor that has not been carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents, or that is otherwise contrary to the building permit, the Building Act 1993 or the Building Regulations 2018.
- A building or building work that is a danger to life, safety, health or property.

- Protection work matters.
- Siting or overlooking, where those requirements were assessed under Part 5 of the Building Regulations 2018.
- The conduct or service of any person at Code HQ.

Where siting or overlooking requirements were imposed by a planning permit rather than the Building Regulations, take the matter to the planning department of the responsible council.

Matters outside our role

Concern	Where to take it
Building site is unsafe or dangerous	Responsible council or WorkSafe Victoria
Building work encroaching on a road, footpath or other public space	Responsible council
Smoke, fumes or smells from a building site	Environment Protection Authority Victoria
Noise from a building site	Responsible council
Building work is not finished, or the standard is not good enough	BPC dispute resolution services
Building work is taking too long	BPC dispute resolution services
Dispute with the builder about contracts or payments	BPC dispute resolution services
Builder has breached the Australian Consumer Law	Consumer Affairs Victoria
Building work on a property where we are not the appointed building surveyor, including work carried out without any building permit	Responsible council (municipal building surveyor)
Plumbing work	BPC
Conduct of a registered building practitioner other than us	BPC

If you are not sure who should deal with your concern, the BPC's [find the right help](#) tool will point you to the right body.

Disputes between an owner and an adjoining owner

We are not an arbiter of disputes between an owner and an adjoining owner about protection work. Where the parties disagree, we will refer both to Part 10 of the Building Act 1993, which sets out appeal rights and the ability to have a dispute determined by the Building Appeals Board.

Defective building work

Defective building work, in the sense used in the Domestic Building Contracts Act 1995, is a matter between the owner and the builder. We do not investigate or resolve those disputes. Where the same work also fails to comply with the building permit, the Act or the Regulations, that part of the concern falls within our role and we will deal with it.

How to make a complaint

- **Online.** Complete the complaint form at codehq.com.au/complaint-handling
- **Email.** complaints@codehq.com.au
- **Telephone.** (03) 9555 9511
- **Post.** Code HQ Pty Ltd, 1/27 High Street, Glen Iris VIC 3146
- **In person.** By appointment at our Glen Iris office.

The online form is the quickest route because it captures what we need in one step. You do not have to use it. If you complain by phone or in person, we will make a written record and send it to you so you can confirm we have understood you correctly.

Tell us if you need help lodging a complaint. We can complete the form with you over the phone, arrange an interpreter, or make other reasonable adjustments where a communication barrier exists.

What to tell us

- Your full name and contact details.
- How you prefer us to contact you, and any assistance you need.
- The property address the complaint relates to.
- The building permit number, if you know it.
- What has happened and why you are dissatisfied.
- The outcome you are seeking.
- Whether you have raised the matter before, with us or anyone else.
- Copies of any documents, photographs or correspondence that support your complaint.

We rely on what you give us together with the records already on our file. We may come back to you for clarification.

How we handle your complaint

1. Acknowledgement

We acknowledge every complaint in writing within five business days. Where a complaint raises a risk to life or safety, we respond immediately.

2. Initial assessment

We assess every complaint on receipt for priority, complexity and risk. We then tell you what we will and will not be considering, who is handling it, what we are likely to need from you, the expected timeframe, and the outcomes realistically available. If any part of the complaint falls outside our role, we say so at this point rather than at the end.

3. Investigation

What this involves depends on the complaint. It may include reviewing the permit file, approved plans, inspection records and correspondence, and contacting the owner, builder, designer, consultant or council. We talk to the people on all sides of the complaint and verify information where possible.

We arrange a site inspection where the concern cannot reasonably be assessed from documents, photographs or other available information, and wherever an inspection is necessary to determine whether work is non-compliant.

4. Our response

We give you our findings in writing. A response from us will identify the legislative or regulatory provisions we applied, explain how the work does or does not meet those requirements, and set out any action we have taken or propose to take. Where it helps you follow the reasoning, we include supporting material such as extracts, sketches, diagrams or photographs, subject to the privacy limits below. Where part of the complaint sits outside our role, we say so and tell you where to take it.

5. Action

Where we find non-compliance, we use our professional judgement to select the pathway most likely to achieve compliance. That may mean directing the builder to rectify the work, or using our powers under the Building Act 1993 to serve a building notice and, if necessary, make a building order.

Where we find a fault in our own service, we fix it. That may mean correcting a document, changing an internal procedure, or providing further training to our staff.

6. Closing the complaint

We tell you in writing when the complaint is finalised, what the outcome was, and what avenues remain open to you if you disagree.

Timeframes

Stage	Timeframe
Acknowledgement	Within 5 business days
Matters involving a risk to life or safety	Immediate response
Straightforward matters resolved	10 to 15 business days
More complex matters	Indicative timeframe given after our initial assessment

We keep you informed as the complaint progresses and update you when we take an action or reach a decision. If we cannot meet a timeframe we have given you, we will tell you and explain why. You can ask us for an update at any time by phone or email.

Being fair and impartial

Our role as RBS is a statutory one. We are appointed by the owner, but we are not the owner's advocate and we are not the builder's advocate. We decide questions of compliance on the evidence and against the legislation.

- We assess every complaint on relevant information and evidence.
- We treat all parties politely, courteously and professionally.
- We base our decisions on professional judgement.
- We identify and manage any real or perceived conflict of interest, and we do not allow commercial relationships to influence a compliance decision.
- We are transparent about the information we have relied on, and we use neutral, factual language.

Complaints being investigated by the BPC or another authority

Where the BPC, a council or another statutory body is investigating the same matter, we cooperate fully and provide the documents and information sought.

We may pause our internal complaint process where continuing it would duplicate the external investigation. If we do, we will tell you in writing and explain why. Pausing our internal process does not pause our statutory obligations. Where the Act requires us to act, or where the matter involves a risk to life, safety, health or property, we act regardless of any external investigation on foot.

Privacy and access to documents

We handle your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy and applicable privacy law. In practice:

- We collect only the information we need to assess the complaint.
- We use it only for complaint handling and our statutory functions.
- We store it securely and limit access to the people handling the complaint.
- We disclose it only where necessary, permitted or required by law.

Investigating a complaint will often mean putting the substance of it to the builder, the owner, a consultant or a council, and we may need to identify you to do that. If that concerns you, raise it when you lodge the complaint and we will discuss what is possible.

Access to plans and permit documents

Under section 92 of the Building Act 1993, an adjoining owner who has been given notice under the protection work provisions may ask to inspect the plans, drawings and specifications of the proposed building work that are in our possession or control. We make those available for inspection without charge.

A right to inspect is not a right to receive copies. We generally cannot provide copies of plans or permit documents to a third party without the owner's consent. Where we cannot release a document, we will explain our assessment another way, using a sketch, a diagram or a written explanation we prepare, so you can still follow how we reached our conclusion.

Standards of behaviour

What you can expect from us. Courtesy, plain language, a response within the timeframes above, and honest reasons for our decisions, including when the answer is not the one you wanted.

What we ask of you. That you treat our staff with the same courtesy, and that you give us a reasonable opportunity to work through the matter before escalating it.

We consider the substance of every complaint on its merits. The conduct of a complainant does not change our view of whether building work complies. We may, however, limit how we engage with a complainant where conduct becomes unreasonable. Unreasonable conduct includes:

- abusive, aggressive or threatening behaviour towards our staff;
- contact so frequent or repetitive that it prevents us from managing the complaint effectively;
- refusal to accept a reasonable explanation or outcome;
- demands or expectations that fall outside our role, after that role has been explained.

Where we limit engagement, we will tell you in writing what the limits are, why we have imposed them, and how you can escalate the matter to the BPC.

Where we have assessed an alleged non-compliance and found the work compliant, a single clear and well-reasoned response explaining how we reached that view is generally the end of our involvement. If new information comes to light, send it to us and we will consider it.

If you are not satisfied

Tell us. If you think we have misunderstood something or missed evidence, write to us and we will look at it again.

You can also take the matter elsewhere:

- **Building and Plumbing Commission.** You can complain to the BPC about the conduct of a registered building practitioner, including us. The BPC also runs [dispute resolution services](#) for domestic building disputes about quality, delay, payment and incomplete work.
- **Building Appeals Board.** Part 10 of the Building Act 1993 gives rights of appeal and determination for a range of building matters, including protection work disputes and appeals against a building notice or building order. Where those rights apply, we will tell you.
- **Consumer Affairs Victoria.** For a builder's conduct under the Australian Consumer Law.

Nothing in this policy limits your right to obtain legal advice or to pursue any other remedy available to you.

Records we keep

We record every complaint on a central register, including your name, contact details and communication preferences, a description of the complaint, the outcome you are seeking, the actions we took, the outcome and the reasons for it, any remedy or follow-up action, and the date the complaint was finalised.

Reviewing this policy

We review the complaints we have received at least once a year to see what caused them, whether our process handled them well, and what we can change to reduce the chance of the same complaint arriving again. We review this policy at the same time, and sooner if the Code of Conduct, the Building Act 1993, the Building Regulations 2018 or BPC guidance changes in a way that affects it.