

SOP Template: Complaint Categorization and Escalation Pathways

This SOP details the **complaint categorization and escalation pathways**, outlining the process for identifying, classifying, and prioritizing complaints based on their nature and urgency. It provides clear guidelines for escalating issues to the appropriate departments or management levels to ensure timely resolution. The objective is to enhance customer satisfaction and operational efficiency by establishing a structured approach for handling complaints, preventing escalation bottlenecks, and promoting accountability at every stage of the complaint management process.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized procedure for categorizing and escalating complaints to facilitate prompt and effective resolution, ensuring customer satisfaction and organizational improvement.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and departments involved in receiving, processing, and resolving customer complaints.

3. Definitions

- **Complaint:** Any formal expression of dissatisfaction or concern raised by a customer, client, or stakeholder regarding a product, service, or process.
- **Escalation:** The process of transferring a complaint to a higher authority or specialized department for resolution.
- **Category:** The classification assigned to a complaint based on its nature and severity.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Frontline Staff:** Receive and document complaints, perform initial categorization.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Review escalated complaints, assign investigation, and ensure resolution.
- **Quality/Compliance Team:** Regularly review complaint records to ensure compliance with SOP.

5. Procedure

1. **Complaint Receipt**
 - Accept complaints via all official channels (e.g., phone, email, web form, in person).
 - Assign a unique case/reference number to each complaint.
2. **Complaint Categorization**
 - Assess and classify complaints based on the following criteria:

Category	Description	Examples
Low	Minor issues with no serious consequences	General inquiries, minor service delays
Medium	Issues with moderate impact, require prompt attention	Incorrect billing, recurring service failures
High	Critical issues with significant impact, urgent action required	Product safety concerns, legal issues

3. Prioritization

- Assign priority based on urgency, potential harm, and impact on customer.

4. Escalation Pathways

Category	Escalation Level	Response Time	Responsible Party
Low	Handled by frontline staff	Within 3 business days	Customer Service
Medium	Escalate to Supervisor/Manager	Within 1 business day	Department Supervisor
High	Immediate escalation to Senior Management/Compliance	Within 4 hours	Senior Management/Compliance Team

5. Documentation

- Record all actions, communication, and outcomes in the complaint tracking system.

6. Resolution & Feedback

- Communicate resolution to complainant.
- Collect feedback and close complaint upon satisfaction.

6. Monitoring and Review

- Quality/Compliance Team conducts regular audits of complaint logs and escalation records.
- Monthly/quarterly reports to management on trends, bottlenecks, and resolution timeliness.
- Continual improvement of SOP as required.

7. References

- Complaint Handling Policy
- Customer Service Guidelines
- Regulatory/Compliance Requirements