

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

## Supplier Communication and Discrepancy Resolution Protocol

### 1. Purpose

This SOP defines the **supplier communication and discrepancy resolution protocol**, establishing clear procedures for effective communication with suppliers, timely identification and reporting of discrepancies, and systematic resolution of issues related to orders, deliveries, and product quality. It aims to enhance supplier relationships, ensure accuracy in procurement processes, and maintain supply chain integrity through consistent documentation and follow-up actions.

### 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in procurement, inventory, and quality assurance functions who interact with suppliers or manage supplier-related transactions.

### 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Supplier	An external party providing goods or services to the organization.
Discrepancy	Any difference or non-conformance identified related to orders, deliveries, quantity, price, or product quality.
Resolution	The process of addressing, correcting, and documenting discrepancies.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Procurement Staff:** Initiate communication, report and document discrepancies, follow up with suppliers.
- **Quality Assurance:** Assess and validate product quality discrepancies, propose corrective actions.
- **Supply Chain/Management:** Approve major resolutions, escalate unresolved issues, ensure SOP compliance.

### 5. Procedure

#### 5.1 Supplier Communication

1. Use designated communication channels (e.g., email, supplier portal, phone) for all supplier interactions.
2. Clearly specify the subject, order/reference number, and detailed message content in all correspondence.
3. Maintain a log of all communications with suppliers for traceability.

#### 5.2 Discrepancy Identification & Reporting

1. Inspect delivered products/orders upon receipt against purchase orders and specifications.
2. Identify and document discrepancies relating to quantity, quality, pricing, damaged goods, or incorrect items.
3. Report discrepancies within **24 hours** of detection via the designated reporting form or system.
4. Notify the supplier with clear evidence and description of the discrepancy (photos, packing slips, test results, etc.).

#### 5.3 Discrepancy Resolution

1. Coordinate with the supplier to agree on corrective actions (e.g., replacement, credit note, return).
2. Record all agreements and action items, including deadlines and responsible parties.
3. Monitor implementation of corrective actions and verify satisfactory completion.
4. Escalate unresolved issues to management after **5 business days** or as per contractual terms.

#### 5.4 Documentation

- Maintain all records of communication, reports, and resolutions for a minimum of **2 years**.
- Update supplier performance records as appropriate based on outcomes.

## 6. Review & Improvement

- Review this SOP annually or after any significant supplier issue.
- Update protocol and training as needed for continuous improvement.

## 7. References & Appendices

- Supplier Communication Log Template (see Appendix A)
- Discrepancy Report Form (see Appendix B)
- Supplier Code of Conduct

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### Document Control

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