

Safety and Right Society (SRS)
Complaints and Response Policy

ABBREVIATIONS

SRS- Safety and Rights Society

CRP- Complaints and Response Policy

CRM- Complaints Response Mechanism

HRDM- Human Resource Development Management

BKMEA- Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association

BGMEA- Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

CHT- Complaint Handling Team

ED- Executive Director

EC- Executive Committee

AMO- Accountability Monitoring Officer

CIT- Complaints Investigation Team

1. INTRODUCTION

To improve accountability, SRS is committed to implement a Complaints Response Policy (CRP) in its programs to enable especially right holder and other stakeholders to raise complaints and give feedback on its work. This policy also enables SRS staff to report on incidents.

A CRP describes all steps and processes for SRS to ensure that an effective complaints handling system is in place, so that all stakeholders have an appropriate means of lodging a complaint, that subsequent complaints can be addressed in a professional and effective way, from receipt through to the investigation and follow-up stage.

The benefit for SRS in receiving complaints is primarily to get input to programs and projects, which will improve the quality of our work, increase the likelihood for success in our long-term and humanitarian work, and reduce the potential for inefficient or misuse of the resources entrusted to us.

2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Maintain the quality and continuous improvement in SRS's work in Bangladesh;
- Enable right holders and other stakeholders to raise a concern and complain on SRS work and quality relationship with them;
- Protect SRS by increasing confidence of staff to report incidents;
- Provide SRS procedure for handling, responding and resolving complaints and staff incident report.

3. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy gives the overall frames for SRS CRM, which includes means for external individuals as well as staff to file complaints. SRS's staff can also report incidents through the CRP. All complaints are reported in the same system.

This CRP should be seen as one system of the whole organization; it includes the whole process from receiving, handling and investigating complaints.

3.1 What is a complaint, and what is it not?

SRS recognize complaint

“An expression of dissatisfaction by the stakeholders about the standards of services provided by SRS and its staff.”

It distinguishes the term ‘complaint’ from ‘feedback’. Feedback is any positive or negative informal statement of opinion about someone or something – an opinion shared for information but not with the intention of lodging a formal complaint.

3.2 Complaints addressed by this policy

SRS will accept complaints related to the following examples:

- Misbehavior or misconduct by a SRS staff member with reference to SRS's Code of Conduct (need to develop or Adopt)
- Violation of SRS's policies and commitments by staff
- Issue related to protection and security of right holders
- Misbehavior or misconduct peer staff member
- Misuse of funds/fraud by SRS staff and peer staff
- Bribe given or taken by any staffs.

3.3 Complaints not addressed by this policy

SRS will not respond to the following complaints:

- Complain related to employee contract of SRS staff terms and condition;
- Complaints that are already the subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or legal or official authorities in Bangladesh;
- Offensive complaints using inappropriate or abuse language.

3.4 Anonymous and Malicious Complaint

If a person lodging a complaint chooses to remain anonymous, SRS will only be able to receive the complaint, but will not be able to respond or guarantee an investigation.

Complaints will always be treated with confidentiality. Name and contact details will not be disclosed to any person outside the investigation.

If a person lodging complaint that is malicious, any investigation underway must be stopped immediately and disciplinary actions will be taken if SRS staff's makes the malicious complaint.

3.5 Risk Analysis, Ensure Confidentiality and Safe Environment

SRS recognize that there are risks linked to the investigation of complaints and it is therefore very important to always assess what the risks are prior to an investigation and address the risks in an appropriate way.

Confidentiality is critical in the handling of complaints in order to protect the privacy and safety of the complainant, the subject of complaint and other witnesses. Access to and dissemination of information regarding complain will be restricted only to a limited number of authorized staff for the purpose of concluding a necessary investigation. Any breach of confidentiality shall lead to disciplinary action according to HRDM regulations.

SRS shall only allow disclosure when:

- It is required by law;
- It is needed to obtain specialist help for the survivor or advice on the evidence.

SRS seeks to provide a safe environment through which individuals or groups can voice a concern, without fear of reprisal or unfair treatment.

3.6 Who can complain and how?

A complaint can be raised by

- Worker (Right holders) specially construction and garments sector;
- Construction and Garments Trade unions;
- Developer Companies and associations, BKMEA and BGMEA
- Peer organizations(BRAC and BLAST)
- SRS's and Peer Organization staff
- National Trade Union Federation

SRS will not accept a complaint more than **three months after the alleged incident**, except in exceptional circumstances and then only in cases of serious complaints, where new 'evidence' has come to light.

Complaints can be made through any of the following ways:

- In person to SRS office
- Complain should be sent to the email address complaint@safetyandrights.org
- Postal Complaints can be sent to CHT at the SRS's official address.
- Complaint through over telephone (+88029119903) and Mobile (+88 01193200207)
- Through SRS's website where a complaints form is available.
- Office will maintain a complaint box and which key will be lying with the designated official from the management.

It is important that the person handling the complaint ensures that the named contact for complaints is informed and that the Complaint Record Form (Appendix 1) is completed.

If complaints are made in other languages they have to be translated by SRS staff. In case other languages are used, SRS will be solving this with translators on a case to case basis. SRS will as far as possible limit the number of people handling complaints for confidentiality reasons.

4. COMPLAINTS AND INCIDENT HANDLING PROCEDURES

In case a staff member receives information informally, that could be subject for a complaint; SRS staff is encouraged to proactively ask if the person that is sharing the information would like to make a formal complaint and if needed assist the complainant to make the complaint.

4.1 Types of complaints: Operational and Serious Complaints and incidents

When dealing with complaints, SRS distinguishes between "operational complaints and incidents" and "serious complaints and incidents".

Operational complaints and incidents- Operational complaints refer to complaints on

program and project activities and staff incidents. It may be any of the following:

- The quality of the service provided by SRS staff and peer staff;
- Legal support not provided to the worker by SRS or its peer organization staff;
- Issues of commitments not met;
- Incidence conducted by employee who incurs loss the stakeholders.

Operational complaints can often be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction through two-way communication between the complainant and the person who received the complaint at project level. It is however recognized that not all issues can be resolved in this way and some cases may need to be reported.

Serious complaints and incidents- A serious complaint is primarily related to breach of Staff's Code of Conduct. A serious complaint can be any of the following:

- Allegations of crime, fraud and corruption;
- Allegations of harassment (physical, psychological);
- Behavior of a SRS or its peer employee;
- Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse;
- A complaint on an issue posing serious reputational risk to SRS.

Serious complaints should be formally investigated with high respect to confidentiality. Complain Handling Team (CHT) will decide about the external investigation. CHT consists of **2 persons** from the organization. ED of the organization will not member of the CHT because of the conflict of interest. Also Accountability Monitoring Officer (AMO) will not be the member of same reason.

4.2 Responsibilities in Handling Complaints and Incidents

All SRS Staff have a Responsibility- All SRS's employees are required to report allegations, or suspicions of breaches related to SRS's Code of conduct. Proven deliberate non-disclosure will lead to disciplinary action. The obligation to disclose is included in SRS's Code of Conduct.

Executive Director or Executive Committee- Executive director will make decision based on the complain investigation recommendation. If the complaint raised against the ED then Executive Committee will make decision. They are responsible for

- Ensuring mainstream within the organization as well as program and project;
- Ensuring that a system to handle and respond to complaints in a safe and effective;
- Ensuring that the guidelines for complaints handling is followed;
- Ensuring that CRP is operational and effective for improving performance.

Accountability Monitoring Officer- Responsible for

- Overseeing the roll- out of CRMs;
- Ensuring that complaints are documented are complete and secure;
- Informing stakeholders about their right to complain;

- Ensuring that all complaints are documented and files are complete and secure;
- Synthesis report of different types of complaints received and the status of their resolution shall be reported annually;
- Learning documentation and propose for the continual improvements.

Complains Handling Team – Comprised **2 key persons** from the organization (Programme Officer and Legal Officer). ED and AMO will not be the member of the CHT. They are responsible for

- Ensuring that SRS's CRP is relevant and functional and that resources (staff, financial and technical) are allocated to ensure the system is maintained;
- Risk analysis and take risk mitigation measures;
- Ensuring qualified investigations of serious complaints;
- Communicating with the complainant and accused.

Complaints Investigation Team- Comprised **1 or 2 key persons** from the organization. CHT will appoint the CIT based on the relevant experiences. They are responsible for

- Planning for the investigation for the serious complain;
- Gather evidence for proceed investigation;
- Responsible for fair investigation and reporting including recommended action.

4.3 Steps in processing complaints

The flowchart in Annex 2 outlines the main steps taken at different levels in the handling of complaints. These are also described here.

a. Acknowledging the Complaint

The complainant shall receive confirmation of receipt of the complaint. By sending an acknowledgement, SRS shows that the allegation is taken seriously and handled according to procedures. Acknowledgement will be provided within **one week** after the receiving the complaint.

b. Registering Complaints

All complaints, whether verbal or written, should be recorded on the Complaints Record Form (Appendix 1).

c. Risks analysis and Protection

Risks should be addressed, and any security concerns should be referred to management. Investigation of serious complaints can also involve a risk for the staff or person that conducts the investigation. CHT is responsible to minimize these risks as far as possible. They also discuss with the ED or EC about the risk and mitigation steps. Within **one week** from receiving the complain CRT will analyze risk and take protection measures.

d. Determining the need for an investigation

In general, only serious complaint goes through an investigation process. Serious complaints

are always referred to Complain Handling Team (CHT) who then decides if an allegation needs to be investigated. Operational complain will not go through an investigation and it will solve through two-way communications.

e. The investigation process

If a serious complaint warrants further investigation, responsible Complain Handling Team (CHT) appoints an Investigation Team that involves **1 or 2 key persons** from the organization (Never involve the person who is subject for accusations). Executive Director or Executive Committee will make decisions for action on a complaint based on the investigation recommendations. The Complain Investigation Team (CIT) shall have contextual knowledge and will, if possible, be gender balanced. Any serious complain need to complete investigation process **within one months** after the receiving complaint.

Key steps of Investigation and Reporting

- Appointing the investigation team
- Planning the investigation
- Gathering evidence
- Validating evidence
- Reporting on findings
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Deliver the report

f. Communicating Investigation Outcome and appeal process

The outcome of the investigation shall be communicated to the complainant immediately after a decision is made. Any decision will be followed by immediate action.

If the Complainant or the Subject of the Complaint is not satisfied on the resolution of the complaint, he/she may lodge an appeal within **one week** upon receipt of the decision. If this is the case, the reasons given and any other new evidences to make a decision whether or not to conduct a new investigation shall be analysed. The appeal shall be considered only once.

4.4 Action Time Allotment

SRS will always strive to take action and solve complaints in a timely manner. However, the time it takes for each complaint to be solved will depend on the complexity and character of the complaint. Serious complain should have to solve **within two months** and operational complain should have to solve **within one month**.

4.5 Learning and continual development

A synthesis report of the types of complaints received and the status of their resolution shall be reported annually. The annual reports will focus on learning points and how SRS aims at improving the way of working. This policy will be formally reviewed regularly. Critical lessons learnt and suggestions for improvement should be considered as appropriate and relevant when there is a need to update the system.

Annex 1: Complaint Record Form

This is an example which can be adapted as appropriate.

All complaints should be recorded and logged. These records will be used to ensure complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively and to monitor any trends. It will provide information on the number and types of complaints SRS is receiving.

Complaint received date:	
Personal Details of Complainant:	
Nature of Complaint: <i>Brief outline of the complaint</i>	
Detail of Complaint: <i>a detailed description of the complaint the person has made</i>	
Who dealt with it: <i>name of person who is or has responded to the complaint</i>	
How it was dealt with: <i>action taken to handle the complaint</i>	
Outcome: <i>outline of what has happened as a result of the complaint</i>	
Follow up required: <i>any action required as a result of the Complaint. This may include a change to SRS's procedures and policies</i>	

Annex 2: Flowchart for handling complaints of SRS

