



Complaint Management Policy

**Effective from
01/07/04**



PREFACE

The ACF continually tries to provide a righteous environment for all members. If, in the unfortunate event that there has been a digression from the optimum, participants have a right to seek correction of the event.

This policy provides a framework for the handling of complaints in a fair, confidential and constructive manner. Whilst no organisation likes to receive complaints, we view it as an opportunity to correct what might have gone astray.

Lynne Hayward
President

CONTENTS

PART I – INTRODUCTION	1
1. What is the purpose of this Policy?.....	1
2. Who does this Policy apply to?	1
3. What is the status of this Policy?	1
4. What do words in this Policy mean?.....	2
PART II - POSITION STATEMENT	2
5. Responsibilities under the Policy	2
PART III – OPERATING PROCEDURES	2
6. Principles of Operation - Effective Complaints Management.....	2
7. Standards for Complaint Management	3
8. Operational Procedures.....	5
ATTACHMENT A - POLICY DEFINITIONS	7

PART I – INTRODUCTION

This part sets out the purpose of this Policy, who it applies to, when it commences, what words mean and who has responsibilities under the Policy.

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY?

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for the management of complaints within the ACF.
- 1.2 This Policy sets out the procedures to be followed regarding complaint management practices to ensure good practice and consistency in responding to complaints.

2. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

- 2.1 This Policy applies to the following organisations and individuals:
 - (a) persons appointed or elected to boards of directors, executives and/or committees (including sub-committees) of ACF, Member States and Affiliated Clubs;
 - (b) officials appointed or elected by ACF, Member States and Affiliated Clubs which represent such organisations;
 - (c) coaches (including assistant coaches) who:
 - (i) are appointed and/or employed by ACF, Member States and Affiliated Clubs (whether paid or unpaid); or
 - (ii) have an agreement (whether or not in writing) with ACF, a Member State or an Affiliated Club to coach at a facility owned/hired or managed by such organisation;
 - (d) participants who enter any competition, activity or events (including camps, training sessions etc) which are held or sanctioned by ACF, a Member State or an Affiliated Club;
 - (e) Member States;
 - (f) Affiliated Clubs; and
 - (g) any other person or organisation, who or which is, a member of, or affiliated to, ACF, a Member State or an Affiliated Club (including life members).

3. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THIS POLICY?

- 3.1 This Policy is issued by the ACF Council under rule 19(3) of the ACF Constitution.
- 3.2 This Policy comes into force on 1 July 2004.
- 3.3 This Policy may be changed from time to time by the ACF Council.

4. WHAT DO WORDS IN THIS POLICY MEAN?

- 4.1 In this Policy, words appearing with a capital shall have the meaning set out in Attachment A and Attachment A will form part of this Policy.

PART II - POSITION STATEMENT

It is the ACF and its affiliated bodies' belief that all parties affected by calisthenics have the right to raise concerns and make complaints. The ACF recognises complaints as providing valuable feedback on performance quality and the effectiveness of its programs, policies and rules.

Complaints will be handled in a fair, confidential and responsive manner, free from repercussion or prejudice.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY

- 5.1 ACF and Member States must:

- (a) adopt and comply with this Policy; and
- (b) publish, distribute and promote this Policy (and any amendments made to it from time to time) to their members in the manner required by ACF and make this Policy available for inspection, or provide a copy.

- 5.2 Affiliated Clubs must:

- (a) adopt and comply with this Policy;
- (b) publish, distribute and promote this Policy (and any amendments made to it from time to time) to their members in the manner required by ACF and make this Policy available for inspection, or provide a copy; and
- (c) make such amendments to their constitution, rules or by laws in order for this Policy to be enforceable, as required by ACF.

PART III – OPERATING PROCEDURES

6. PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION - EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 An effective complaints system must be:

- (a) backed by a strong commitment to the complaints system amongst all levels of the ACF and its Affiliated Bodies;
- (b) fair, and seen to be fair, by members of the ACF and its Affiliated Bodies;
- (c) easily accessible and well publicised for all people, including those with special needs;
- (d) responsive to members by providing a full, impartial, speedy investigation of their concerns and appropriate responses where warranted;

- (e) effective - able to address the individual person's complaint and use the information collected through this process to improve performance overall - and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is meeting needs; and
- (f) open and accountable, so members can judge for themselves whether the complaint system is working effectively.

6.2 Goals of effective complaints management:

- (a) Resolution of member dissatisfaction.
- (b) Improvement of processes, systems, rules and skills related to the delivery and management of calisthenic programs within Australia.

7. STANDARDS FOR COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

7.1 Defining Complaints:

- (a) A complaint is any dissatisfaction expressed by an interested party about a specific ACF program or activity or behaviour/actions of a person. The complainant (interested party) defines the actual complaint.
- (b) An "interested party" may be the person affected, a friend, an advocate, an organisation etc.
- (c) When the complaint is lodged by someone other than a member, it should be established whether the complainant has appropriate authority to lodge the complaint on behalf of someone else.
- (d) The ACF should ascertain the person's outcome expectations when each complaint is lodged.

7.2 The right to complain:

- (a) Any person or organisation participating in ACF activities or affected by its decisions, has the right to complain if dissatisfied.
- (b) Complaints may also be made by an interested party on behalf of another person. It should be established that an "interested party" has the authority to make such a complaint and issues relating to confidentiality need to be clarified.

7.3 Documentation of Complaints:

- (a) The ACF must ensure that principles of natural justice underpin relationships with members.
- (b) The ACF is bound to give members a clear explanation of decision making processes and the reasons for its decisions.
- (c) Thorough documentation will ensure the possibility of thorough review and scrutiny.

- (d) The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act should be used as a guide in releasing information to third parties

7.4 Advice of decisions to affected persons:

- (a) Persons or organisations affected by ACF decisions are entitled to written advice giving reasons for decisions.
- (b) Significant decisions should be put in writing when advice is provided to members.
- (c) The ACF must also advise such persons or organisations of their rights of review or appeal in writing, and how they can commence this process within 7 days of a decision being made.

7.5 Investigation Procedures:

- (a) To ensure objectivity, the investigation of a complaint should not directly involve a person whose actions are subject to the complaint.
- (b) To ensure objectivity and independence, the investigation may need to be performed by persons outside the state or geographical area.
- (c) If complainant's allegations are made about a particular member's actions, the investigation must be conducted by a person in a more senior position.

7.6 Member support:

- (a) ACF delegates are responsible for ensuring that members, the subject of a complaint, receive appropriate information and support.
- (b) Such members are entitled to provide a written report outlining their perspective on the complaint issues.
- (c) Members, subject of complaints, must be advised of investigation progress (not details) and the final outcome.
- (d) Some complaints may initially focus on member actions but often eventually reveal systemic or procedural difficulties needing attention.

7.7 The use of advocates and interpreters:

- (a) Complainants must be informed of their right to have an advocate present when dealing with members of the ACF.
- (b) Persons, unable to effectively represent themselves, can be represented by either a formal or informal advocate.
- (c) Interpreters must be made available for complainants who cannot speak or understand English or for hearing impaired or deaf members.

8. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

8.1 Identification of the complaint:

- (a) The complaint will be defined by the complainant.
- (b) Members receiving the complaint will need to identify and clarify all the complaint issues, including outcomes expected by the complainant.
- (c) The complainant must put the complaint and related issues in writing if this has not been done and members should assist complainants to do so where appropriate.

8.2 Complaint documentation and information dissemination:

- (a) Each written complaint received is to be held by the secretary of the ACF on a complaints file.
- (b) A complaint acknowledgment letter, giving the name of the complaint coordinator, and the target completion date, is to be sent to the complainant within seven working days of the receipt of the complaint.
- (c) The ACF is to maintain accurate records on every complaint investigated, detailing the processes involved in the complaints management and resolution.

8.3 Investigating the complaint:

- (a) The person appointed to investigate the complaint (complaint coordinator) is to develop a complaint investigation plan for the approval of the ACF Executive Committee.
- (b) The plan should cover matters such as:
 - (i) summary of complainant's issues;
 - (ii) identification of persons to be interviewed/consulted;
 - (iii) list of files/documents to be reviewed; and
 - (iv) expected completion date of report.
- (c) Following the investigation, the complaint coordinator is to provide a written report summarising the findings and recommending any necessary action to the ACF Executive Committee.
- (d) The reports recommendations should focus on options necessary to resolve the complaint and, if relevant, to preclude recurrence of a similar problem.
- (e) Unless complaints have been resolved earlier, a meeting should be convened by the president of the ACF with the complainant within four weeks of the complaint receipt to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Complaint Coordinator.

- (f) Any necessary extension of time for completion of the report is to be negotiated with the complainant by the president of the ACF.
- (g) Any further meeting considered necessary for mediation or complaint resolution should be convened with minimum delay by the president of the ACF.
- (h) The final review of the complaint should ascertain whether any further action is necessary either at a state level or at other levels of the ACF.
- (i) Such action should include suggested changes in policy, procedures or practices, or the introduction of relevant training/educational courses.

ATTACHMENT A - POLICY DEFINITIONS

“ACF” means the Australian Calisthenic Federation Inc, the national governing body for calisthenics in Australia.

“Affiliated Bodies” is any accredited Calisthenic State and Territories parent body.

“ACF Constitution” means the constitution of ACF as amended from time to time.

“Affiliated Club” means a club (whether incorporated, unincorporated or otherwise) which is a member of a Member State.

“ACF Executive Committee” has the same meaning as in the ACF Constitution.

“Member State” has the same meaning as in the ACF Constitution.

“Policy” and **“this Policy”** means this Complaint Management Policy.