

Standard Operating Procedure for Complaints – SOP 106

The following are the procedures and requirements for dealing with complaints of a CMEC Accredited Laboratory. CMEC shall in a timely manner:

- a) decide on the validity of the complaint,
- b) acknowledge the receipt of the complaint, and provide the complainant with the progress reports and the outcome,
- c) ensure, where appropriate, that a complaint concerning an accredited laboratory is first addressed by the laboratory,
- d) take appropriate actions and assesses their effectiveness,
- e) record all complaints and actions taken,
- f) respond to the complainant, and
- g) ensure that the decision to be communicated to the complainant is not made, reviewed, or approved by an individual involved in the activities in question,
- h) give formal notice of the end of the complaint handling process to the complainant,
- i) ensure that the investigation and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

CMEC owns the rights to the CMEC Laboratory Accreditation program and may at its discretion suspend or revoke said accreditation.

COMPLAINT LEVELS

Individual Complaints

CMEC may receive complaints from individuals on a laboratory's performance. These complaints must be in writing and contain some proof of violation of Accreditation standards. A single complaint is normally not sufficient to formally investigate the laboratory. However, each complaint shall be reviewed, and a decision made by the President as to the proper course of action.

Organizational Complaints

Statewide organizations such as a Concrete Products Associations, Road Builders Associations, or similar groups may lodge a formal complaint to CMEC on a laboratory's performance. Such a complaint should come from the organization itself and not its individual members. Complaints from organizations will be considered at a higher level than an individual complaint. Proof of the violations should be included with the documentation. Each organizational based complaint shall be reviewed and considered by the President of CMEC for a proper course of action.

DOT Complaints

State Departments of Transportation may lodge a formal complaint to CMEC on a laboratory's performance. Such a complaint should come from the agency itself and not its individual employee. Complaints from DOTs will be considered at a higher level than an individual complaint. Proof of the violations shall be included with the documentation. Each DOT based

complaint shall be reviewed and considered by the President of CMEC for a proper course of action.

CMEC Complaints

CMEC, at its discretion, may officially document a laboratory's violations. These complaints may come from examiners or assessors. The President will review each complaint and determine the proper course of action.

COURSE OF ACTION

CMEC, upon acceptance of legitimate complaints may, at their discretion, perform any of the following:

Letter to Laboratory

Upon receipt of a complaint, the President shall notify the laboratory of the violation. The laboratory must respond to CMEC on its findings and corrective action.

On-site Assessment

CMEC may send an assessor to the laboratory for an unannounced verification. Such an assessor may reveal that the laboratory is in compliance with the CMEC Accreditation procedure. In such a case, the cost associated with the verification shall fall upon CMEC. If such an assessment reveals (or confirms) the violations in question, the cost of the verification will fall upon the laboratory. The laboratory's accreditation shall be suspended until such a time that a mandatory re-assessment, at the expense of the laboratory, is performed and proves to correct the issue.

Revocation of Accreditation

CMEC may revoke a laboratory's accreditation if that laboratory is found in violation of CMEC procedures. The laboratory may re-apply for accreditation after a mandatory 90 day suspension and payment of fees for the mandatory re-assessment. The laboratory will remain on a "temporarily accredited" list for one year, during which time CMEC may perform random unannounced assessment. After the one year probation period, the laboratory may participate normally in the CMEC Accreditation Program.