



# Complaint Mechanism

## OEKO-TEX®

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**OEKO-TEX®**  
**International Association for Research and Testing in**  
**the Field of Textile and Leather Ecology**  
Internationale Gemeinschaft für Forschung und Prüfung  
auf dem Gebiet der Textil- und Lederökologie

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# 1. Introduction

The OEKO-TEX® Complaint Mechanism is established to inform the OEKO-TEX® Secretariat about any compliance breaches of our company or our standards. OEKO-TEX® subscribes to the highest standards and we believe in our responsibility towards all of our stakeholders. All stakeholders are encouraged to report any form of misconduct. You can reach OEKO-TEX® from anywhere in the world (secure, external internet server).

# 2. Overview

The OEKO-TEX® complaint mechanism is established for three reasons:

1. To ensure compliance with the OEKO-TEX® Standards
2. To ensure compliance with the OEKO-TEX® Code of Conduct
3. To ensure compliance with the OEKO-TEX® Terms of Use

The OEKO-TEX® complaint mechanism is therefore a means of taking responsibility if such a violation has occurred. In the event of a complaint, the goal of the complaint mechanism is to ensure that the appropriate action can be taken and access to remedy can be provided.

The complaint mechanism is tied to the OEKO-TEX® Certificate Withdrawal Process, which means that if a compliance breach of an OEKO-TEX® customer against the OEKO-TEX® Standards cannot be resolved within reasonable time (30 days, see section 1.8. OEKO-TEX® Terms of Use), the certificate will be withdrawn.

# 3. Guiding principles

The Guiding Principles of the OEKO-TEX® Complaint Mechanism are derived from the effectiveness criteria for non-state based, non-judicial complaint mechanisms which were drafted in the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and further developed in the OECD Guidelines.

- OEKO-TEX® commits to the principles specified in the OEKO-TEX® Code of Conduct.
- OEKO-TEX® has zero tolerance to any form of abuse of power.
- OEKO-TEX® considers trust in the complaint mechanism of utmost importance.
- OEKO-TEX® makes this complaint mechanism publicly accessible and is diligently working to remove obstacles that would prevent a complaint from being made.
- OEKO-TEX® will carry out and enforce a complaint equally and fair and within reasonable time. Complainants will be informed at every stage of the process.
- OEKO-TEX® guarantees confidentiality of all persons involved in the complaint. The possibility to stay anonymous during the complaint procedure is crucial.
- OEKO-TEX® guarantees transparency regarding the outcome of the complaint.
- OEKO-TEX® commits to view this complaint mechanism as subject to continuous learning and will revise it accordingly.



## 4. Definition of a Complaint

OEKO-TEX® takes complaints very seriously and will carefully look into a complaint. Therefore, we must differentiate what falls under the category of a complaint. In the following, the different forms of possible complaints shall be defined.

A complaint **can** involve:

- Failure to comply with any OEKO-TEX® Standard
- Failure to comply with the OEKO-TEX® Code of Conduct
- Failure to comply with the OEKO-TEX® Terms of Use

If a concern does not fall into one of these categories, OEKO-TEX® will not treat it as a complaint.

**A complaint must be sent to the e-mail address: [complaint@oekotex.com](mailto:complaint@oekotex.com)**

A complaint **cannot** involve:

- Misuse of OEKO-TEX® labels by third parties
- Dissatisfaction regarding the quality of a certified product
- An inquiry about a customer, testing institute or service
- A request for information
- A contractual dispute

Please note that this list is not conclusive.

**Please contact [info@oekotex.com](mailto:info@oekotex.com) for all inquiries that do not fall within the definition of a complaint.**

Complaints can also be lodged on: <https://www.oeko-tex.com/en/contact/complaint-form>

## 5. Against whom can a complaint be lodged?

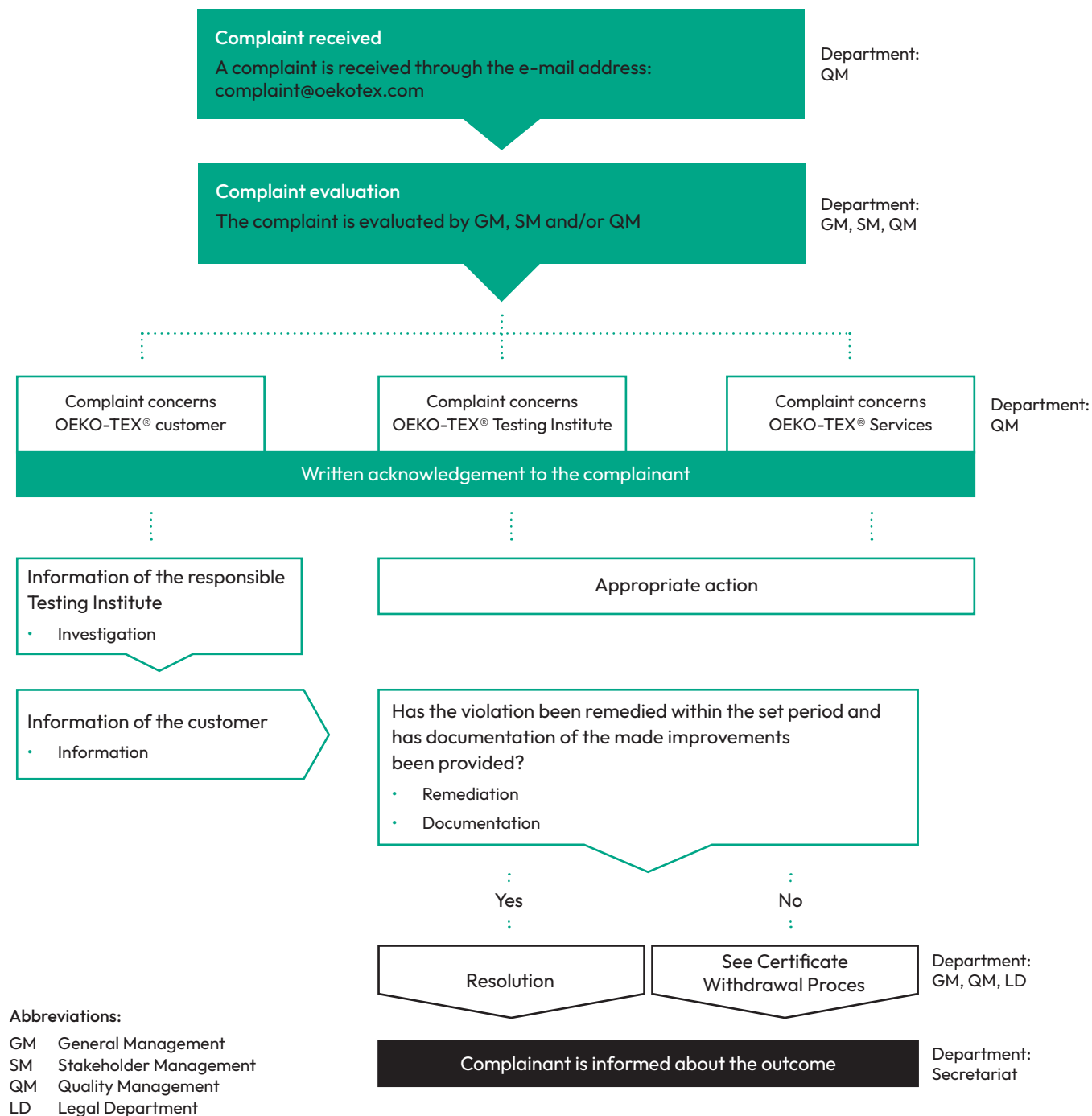
A complaint may be lodged against an OEKO-TEX® customer, an OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute or OEKO-TEX® Services in general.

An OEKO-TEX® customer is a company that has been licenced by OEKO-TEX® to use an OEKO-TEX® trademark.

An OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute is an institute approved by OEKO-TEX Service GmbH which is authorised to provide tests, audits, and other services in connection with OEKO-TEX® products.

OEKO-TEX® Services refers to the company OEKO-TEX Service GmbH.

## 6. Complaint Procedure





## 6.1 Complaint Received

The complaint is received through the e-mail address [complaint@oekotex.com](mailto:complaint@oekotex.com) and registered by the department Quality Management.

If the complainant wants to remain anonymous during the procedure, this will be noted and respected.

## 6.2 Complaint Evaluation

The complaint is evaluated by the departments: General Management, Stakeholder Management and/or Quality Management.

When the requirements of a complaint are met, a written acknowledgement to the complainant is issued by the department Quality Management that the complaint has been accepted and will be pursued.

In the case that the requirements of a complaint are not met, the complainant will be informed with a statement of the reason.

## 6.3 Whom does the complaint concern?

### 6.3.1 Complaint concerns OEKO-TEX® customer

#### **Information of the Responsible OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute**

In the event that the complaint concerns an OEKO-TEX® customer, the responsible OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute(s), who issued the certificate(s) around which the complaint revolve(s), will be informed by the department Quality Management.

#### **Investigation of the Complaint**

The responsible OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute will then investigate the complaint to evaluate if the complaint is well founded. This can entail bilateral meetings (face to face / virtual) as well as written communication with the complainant and/or the OEKO-TEX® customer. In the case of OEKO-TEX® STeP certified facilities it can also entail an unannounced audit.

It is important to preserve the anonymity of the complainant towards the OEKO-TEX® customer at this stage.

The investigation of the complaint shall not take longer than 1 month.



### Information of the OEKO-TEX® customer

If the complaint is not substantiated, the complaint will be suspended, and the complainant will be informed.

If the complaint is well founded, the responsible OEKO-TEX® Institute will inform the OEKO-TEX® customer and set a timeframe of 1 month to remedy the violation.

In this case, the OEKO-TEX® customer shall take measures to ensure that the violation cannot occur in the future, by:

- Ceasing specific activities that caused the violation
- Implementing processes to prevent the violation in the future
- Furthermore, the OEKO-TEX® customer may agree to take remedial action towards the complainant. Remediation can take the form of the following:
  - Apology
  - Rehabilitation
  - Restitution
  - Compensation (financial or other)
  - Punitive actions against the violator

### Closing of the Complaint

If the violation could be remedied within the set timeframe, the complaint will be closed and documented.

If the violation could not be remedied within the set timeframe, the certificate withdrawal process will be initiated. Since the OEKO-TEX® customer already had time to remedy the situation, the deadlines in the certificate withdrawal process can be ignored.

The complainant will be informed about the outcome of the complaint.



### 6.3.2 Complaint concerns an OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute

If the complaint concerns an OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute, the OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute will be informed by the department Quality Management.

The OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute will then handle the complaint according to their own complaint procedure.

The OEKO-TEX® Testing Institute will inform the department Quality Management of the outcome of the complaint procedure.

The department Quality Management will then inform the complainant of the outcome.

### 6.3.3 Complaint concerns OEKO-TEX® Services

#### Investigation of the Complaint

The department Quality Management will investigate the complaint with the optional help of the department Stakeholder Management and the General Management to evaluate if the complaint is well founded. This can entail bilateral meetings with the complainant.

The investigation of the complaint shall not take longer than 1 month.

#### Remediation

If the complaint is not substantiated, the complaint will be suspended, and the complainant will be informed.

If the complaint is well founded, the Quality Management will initiate the appropriate action by:

- Ceasing specific activities that caused the violation
- Implementing processes to prevent the violation in the future

Furthermore, the Quality Management may take remedial action towards the complainant. Remediation can take the form of the following:

- Apology
- Rehabilitation
- Restitution
- Compensation (financial or other)
- Punitive actions against the violator

This process to remedy the violation must not take longer than 1 month.

#### Closing of the Complaint

After remediation of the violation, the complaint will be closed and documented. The complainant shall be informed about the outcome of the complaint.