

# Australian Dispatch Company Pty Ltd

Trading As

131008 Hobart

## Complaints Handling Policy Version: 1.3

10th December 2018



# Australian Dispatch Company

# Complaints Handling Policy

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Organisational Commitment

The Board of Directors and the Operations Manager are committed to an effective and efficient complaints-handling process. Complaints and feedback regarding the services provided by the company and its affiliated Responsible Operators and Taxi Drivers is used to continually improve the services that we provide.

### 1.2 Objective of the Complaints Handling Policy

Australian Dispatch Company (ADC) is a customer-centric organisation that endeavours to provide excellent customer service. ADC is committed to providing a responsive process to facilitate the effective management of customers' concerns and requirements.

Specifically, the purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a complainant with access to an open and responsive complaints-handling process
- Enhance the ability of ADC to resolve complaints in a consistent, systematic and responsive manner
- Enhance the ability of ADC to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints, and improve service outcomes
- Provide a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints
- Provide a basis for continual improvement of the complaints-handling process

Source: AS ISO 10002:2006

The objective of this policy is to provide a framework to assist ADC to resolve customer complaints in an efficient, effective and professional manner. To align with current best practice, ADC has adopted the Australian Standard™ *ISO 10002:2006 Customer Satisfaction Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations* to assist with the preparation of this policy.

### 1.3 Background

The structure of the taxi industry differs from most other business sectors as it comprises distinctly separate businesses operating through an affiliation partnership to provide taxi services to the travelling public within an environment regulated by the Tasmanian State Government. Responsible Operators and Taxi Drivers are independent businesses that also must obtain and hold Operator Accreditation and Driver Authorisation respectively. In addition to their requirements under legislation, drivers and operators must also abide by the policies, procedures and rules of ADC.

### 1.4 Definition of complaint and complainant

This complaint-handling policy is intended to address complaints made by complainants to ADC about the company's services, products, employees, Affiliated Taxi Drivers and Affiliated Responsible Operators.

The Australian Standard™ *ISO 10002:2006* defines complaint and complainant as:

Complaint:

*An expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products or services, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.*

Complainant:

*A person, organisation or representative that makes a complaint.*

Any person or organisation including its affiliates (the complainant), who is for any reason dissatisfied with a product or service provided by ADC and/or its affiliates, may contact ADC to make a complaint. Complaints may be provided orally or in writing. Some complaints may not include sufficient information, detail or contact information to enable a successful investigation and/or response to be completed by ADC. These complaints may consist of undefined, incomplete or unsubstantiated negative feedback only. Whilst this feedback is used to continually improve the service provided by ADC and its affiliates, feedback of this nature may not require a resolution or formal follow-up. Consequently, this policy does not apply in such cases.

## 1.5 Unreasonable complainant conduct

All complainants are entitled to a fair share of the organisation's time and resources. ADC has the right to decide how to deal with a complaint, including how and by whom the investigation is conducted, the allocation of time and resources, the assistance the complainant needs to provide and how the complaint will be resolved.

Rude and aggressive conduct, obstinacy in communicating with complaints-handling staff, exaggeration or dishonesty in explaining a complaint, unreasonable persistence with a complaint that has been investigated or closed, and demands that are unrealistic or disproportionate all constitute unreasonable complainant conduct.

ADC is committed to treating all complainants fairly and with respect. We will show impartiality and professionalism when facing challenging behaviour, however we will not tolerate conduct that is violent, threatening, aggressive or abusive. Complaints-handling staff will follow the company's *Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Procedure* in these situations and notify a complainant that their conduct is unreasonable. If the behaviour continues, access to the complaints-handling process may be restricted or terminated.

## 2. Principles of effective complaints handling

To ensure the effectiveness of the complaint-handling process, ADC has adopted the following Australian Standard™ *ISO 10002:2006* guiding principles:

Principle	ADC's Commitment
Visibility	Information regarding the complaints process, including our Complaints Handling Policy are available on our website and internally.
Accessibility	Complaints may be made over the phone, by email, via our website, by mail or in person. Detailed information is provided about how complaints are made and resolved.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>ADC's Commitment</b>
Responsiveness	Acknowledgement of the receipt of a complaint occurs immediately. We endeavour to investigate and resolve urgent complaints within 4 business days and non-urgent or routine complaints within 10 business days. Due to operational constraints, from time to time, the investigation process for some complaints may exceed these timeframes, in these instances, complainants will be notified and provided with progress updates.
Objectivity	Each complaint is addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner throughout the complaints-handling process.
Charges	Access to our complaints-handling process is free of charge.
Confidentiality	Personally identifiable information is actively protected from disclosure, information is only used where needed to address the complaint unless the complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.  Similarly, personally identifiable information of ADC personnel and affiliates is also actively protected from disclosure in the course of an investigation and resolution of a complaint.
Customer-focused approach	ADC is a customer focused organisation and we are open to feedback, including complaints.  The Board of Directors and the Operations Manager are committed to an efficient and fair resolution of complaints.
Accountability	All personnel and affiliates are accountable for their work performance and accept responsibility for effective complaints-handling and reporting.
Continual Improvement	The complaints-handling policy and process are formally reviewed annually in addition to ad hoc periodic reviews as a result of feedback about the complaints-handling process.

### **3. Complaints Handling Process**

#### **3.1 How to make a complaint**

Complaints may be made over the phone, by email, through the contact form on our website, by mail or in person at our Office. For any complaints made by phone, a telephone operator may be required to direct the complainant to another submission method, subject to the severity of the complaint.

#### **3.2 Handling Process**

##### **3.2.1 Complaint Submission**

Acknowledgement of the receipt of a complaint will occur as soon as practical. In the case of a complaint made orally, this will occur at the time the complaint is made. Sufficient information will need to be obtained to facilitate the investigation of a complaint. This is best done upon initial complaint submission. The form provided on our website details the information required.

We may need to obtain further information or clarification from a complainant as required. We endeavour to investigate and resolve urgent complaints within 4 business days and non-urgent or routine complaints within 10 business days (urgent complaints are defined as those that affect the safety and/or security of passengers, the public, drivers and/or employees; non-urgent complaints are all other complaints).

Due to operational constraints, from time to time, the investigation process for some complaints may exceed these time frames. In these instances, complainants will be notified and regular progress updates will be provided where possible. The most current status of a complaint will be provided to a complainant upon request.

If a complainant requires assistance to complete a complaint submission, they may contact the Chief Operations Officer.

### 3.2.2 Complaint Assessment

Each complaint is assessed initially based on its severity, safety concerns, complexity, and impact. Complaints-handling resource allocation is prioritised on a daily basis to ensure the timely resolution of all complaints. Some (or all) elements of a complaint may be allocated to different personnel to conduct the investigation.

### 3.2.3 Complaint Investigation

The priority of investigation is allocated commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and severity of the complaint. Complaint investigations are planned and follow specific systematic procedures. All investigations are approached impartially and the facts and contentions in support of a complaint are weighed objectively.

Complaints are conducted in private to ensure confidentiality. We actively protect the personal information gathered as part of an investigation.

Investigations are conducted within the following parameters:

- Investigative findings must be based upon evidence that is relevant and logically capable of supporting the finding - not on guesswork, assumptions, preconceptions or suspicion
- Where evidence is inconclusive, evenly balanced or scant, it may not be possible to resolve a disputed matter
- Rules of evidence that apply in court do not apply to administrative investigations – an investigator may use any reliable information obtained from any source
- Written records of oral evidence will be kept
- Investigators may ask complainants for all reasonable assistance throughout the investigation
- To accord natural justice, complainants will be provided with an opportunity to comment on contrary information or claims prior to the dismissal of a complaint

### 3.2.4 Complaint Response

Upon the completion of a complaint investigation, the complainant will be provided with a response outlining the findings of the investigation and the resolution of the complaint. Details regarding the action taken to resolve or rectify the issue that caused the complaint will be included in the response.

However, where a complaint deals with individual employees and/or affiliated persons, considerable care will be given to the release of information regarding the actions taken against the individual to improve their work performance. This reticence to release private performance management information may result in the belief by a complainant that their complaint has not been investigated thoroughly, actioned appropriately, or that the organisation is attempting to deliberately obscure the results of the investigation. Whilst this inability to provide complete

transparency is regrettable, we take our obligation to protect the right to privacy and protection of reputation of our employees and affiliates seriously.

Personal information released has a high risk of further dissemination into the public realm and therefore creates an unacceptable risk to the employee's or affiliate's privacy, reputation, and safety.

ADC is committed to both handling all complaints appropriately and the protection of personal information. The protection of an individual's personal information is not used as an excuse to avoid dealing with a complaint.

### 3.2.5 Complaint Closure

If the complainant accepts the findings as presented in the complaint response or initiates no further contact with ADC within 21 days following the date of the complaint response, the complaint will be closed.

### 3.2.6 Internal Review of Complaint Response

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision provided in the complaint response, they may request an internal review of the decision.

Requests for an Internal Review must be made in writing within 21 days of the complaint response date. The request must specify the elements of the complaint response that the complainant would like reviewed and the reason why they disagree with the investigator's decision. Internal reviews are conducted by an officer that has not previously been involved in the complaint. We endeavour to conduct internal reviews within 10 business days of receipt of the request. The result of the internal review will be provided to the complainant by way of an Internal Review Response.

### 3.2.7 External Review of Complaint Response

If, upon receipt of the Internal Review Response, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may choose to refer their complaint to the Taxi Industry Regulator.

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## 4. Australian Dispatch Company Contacts

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