

THE MAPPING COMPANY

Complaints Handling Procedure

Document Owner: Managing Director / Operations Manager Applies To: All employees, surveyors, subcontractors, and consultants Effective Date: Jan 2026 Review Date: Jan 2027

1. Purpose

This procedure establishes a consistent, fair, and timely process for receiving, recording, investigating, resolving, and learning from complaints relating to the company's land surveying services.

The procedure is intended to ensure that complaints are treated professionally, investigated objectively, and resolved wherever reasonably possible while protecting the interests of clients, employees, contractors, and the company.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints concerning any service provided by the company, including:

Boundary and cadastral surveys

Topographical and site surveys

Setting-out and measurement work

GPS/GNSS, total station, or other surveying work Survey plans, drawings, reports, and deliverables

Survey accuracy or alleged errors Delays, missed appointments, or communication failures Fees, invoices, or disputed charges Professional conduct or customer service Damage to property or other concerns arising during site work Complaints may be received from clients, members of the public, contractors, adjoining landowners, professional advisers, or other affected parties.

3. Definitions

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about the company's service, work, conduct, personnel, or failure to meet an agreed requirement, whether or not it is ultimately found to be justified.

Complainant: The person or organisation making the complaint.

Complaint Officer: The person appointed by management to coordinate the complaint and ensure that it is handled in accordance with this procedure.

Corrective Action: Action taken to correct an identified problem and prevent it from recurring.

4. Principles

All complaints will be handled according to the following principles:

Accessibility: Complaints should be easy to submit and may normally be made verbally or in writing.

Fairness: Complaints will be assessed objectively and without unreasonable bias.

Confidentiality: Information will only be shared with people who need it to investigate or resolve the complaint.

Timeliness: Complaints will be acknowledged and investigated within reasonable timescales.

Professionalism: Staff will remain courteous and professional, including where a complaint is found to be unfounded.

Evidence-based decisions: Findings will be based on relevant records, measurements, instructions, correspondence, agreements, and other available evidence.

No retaliation: A person making a genuine complaint will not be disadvantaged for raising a concern.

Continuous improvement: Significant complaints and recurring issues will be reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 All Employees

Employees must:

Treat complaints seriously and courteously.

Listen to the complainant and avoid becoming defensive.

Record complaints promptly.

Pass complaints to the appropriate manager or Complaint Officer.

Preserve relevant survey records, drawings, correspondence, photographs, field notes, and other evidence.

Cooperate fully with investigations.

Employees must not admit liability, alter survey records, delete relevant information, or make commitments regarding compensation without appropriate management authority.

5.2 Complaint Officer / Manager

The Complaint Officer is responsible for:

Registering and acknowledging complaints.

Assessing the seriousness and priority of each complaint.

Appointing an appropriate investigator.

Ensuring conflicts of interest are identified and managed.

Coordinating the investigation.

Communicating with the complainant.

Recording findings and agreed actions.

Escalating significant or potentially high-risk complaints to senior management.

Ensuring corrective and preventive actions are implemented.

5.3 Managing Director / Senior Management Senior management is responsible for complaints involving:

Potential professional negligence or significant technical errors Actual or potential legal claims

Significant financial exposure Allegations of serious misconduct Threats to safety Regulatory or

professional-body concerns Repeated or systemic service failures Complaints that cannot be resolved

at operational level 6. Receiving a Complaint Complaints may be received by telephone, email, letter, in person, through the company's website, or by any other reasonable communication method.

The person receiving the complaint should obtain, where possible:

The complainant's name and contact details.

The project or job reference.

The date and location of the relevant work.

A clear description of the complaint.

The outcome the complainant is seeking.

Relevant photographs, documents, plans, or other evidence.

Any deadlines or circumstances that may affect the urgency of the matter.

If a complaint is made verbally, the employee receiving it should make a written record as soon as practicable.

7. Complaint Registration

Every substantive complaint should be entered into the Complaints Register.

The register should include:

Complaint reference number

Date received

Complainant

Project/job reference

Nature of complaint

Person responsible for investigation

Priority/severity
Actions taken
Investigation findings
Response date
Corrective actions
Closure date
Lessons learned, where applicable

8. Initial Assessment

The Complaint Officer will conduct an initial assessment to determine the seriousness and appropriate response.

Complaints may be categorised as:

Low: Minor service or communication issue that can be resolved quickly.

Medium: Complaint requiring investigation, such as disputed deliverables, delays, workmanship concerns, or potentially material service failures.

High/Critical: Complaint involving an alleged significant surveying error, professional negligence, safety issue, substantial financial loss, legal claim, regulatory concern, serious misconduct, or another matter presenting significant risk to the company or a third party.

High or critical complaints must be escalated to senior management promptly.

9. Acknowledgement

The complainant should normally receive an acknowledgement within [2–5] working days.

The acknowledgement should:

Confirm that the complaint has been received.

Provide the complaint reference number.

Identify the person handling the matter, where appropriate.

Explain the next steps.

Request any additional information required.

Provide an expected timeframe for the investigation.

If the investigation is expected to take longer than originally anticipated, the complainant should be informed and given a revised timeframe.

10. Investigation

The investigator should establish the facts as objectively as possible.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the investigation may include reviewing:

Original client instructions and scope of work
Quotations, contracts, and agreed specifications
Field notes and survey observations
Survey control and reference information
GNSS, total station, laser scanner, or other instrument records
Calibration and equipment records
Survey calculations and processing files
CAD drawings and final deliverables
Photographs and site records
Emails, letters, and telephone records
Previous revisions or amendments
Relevant standards, specifications, regulations, or contractual requirements
Statements from employees, contractors, or other relevant parties
Where the complaint concerns the accuracy of a survey, the company should consider whether an independent check, re-survey, calculation review, or other technical verification is appropriate.

The investigator should distinguish between:

What was requested by the client;
What the company agreed to provide;
What work was actually undertaken;
What information was available at the time; What the evidence demonstrates; and Whether the complaint is substantiated.

11. Technical Survey Complaints

Technical complaints require particular care because a disagreement about a boundary, measurement, level, coordinate, or survey interpretation may involve matters outside the company's control.

Where appropriate, the company should:

- Review the original survey brief and limitations.
- Confirm the coordinate reference system, datum, units, and survey control used.
- Verify calculations and data processing.
- Check instrument and equipment records.
- Review field observations and site photographs.
- Determine whether a remeasurement or independent technical review is required.
- Clearly distinguish measurement facts from legal or professional opinions.
- Avoid making conclusions outside the company's professional competence.
- Where a complaint concerns a property boundary or other matter requiring a legal determination, the company should explain the limits of its role and recommend appropriate legal or specialist advice where necessary.

12. Response and Resolution

Once the investigation is complete, the company should provide a clear written response where appropriate.

The response should state:

- The complaint that was investigated.
- The relevant facts established.
- The outcome of the investigation.
- Whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- Any corrective action being taken.
- Any further information or action required from the complainant.
- The available escalation or review process.
- Where an error or service failure is identified, appropriate remedies may include:
 - Correction or reissue of a document or drawing.
 - Re-performance of survey work where appropriate.
 - Additional explanation or clarification.
 - Refund or fee adjustment where authorised.
 - Corrective action to prevent recurrence.
 - Other reasonable remedies approved by management.
- Any admission of liability, settlement, compensation, or legal commitment must be approved by an authorised member of senior management.

13. Escalation and Review

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by a manager who was not directly responsible for the original decision, where practicable.

The review should consider:

Whether the original investigation was fair and sufficiently thorough.
Whether relevant evidence was considered.
Whether the conclusions were reasonable.
Whether additional information has become available.
Whether further technical review is appropriate.
The company should provide the outcome of the review in writing.
Nothing in this procedure prevents a complainant from pursuing any rights or remedies available to them under applicable law, contract, professional requirements, or regulatory processes.

14. Complaints Involving Legal or Regulatory Matters If a complaint indicates a potential legal claim, professional negligence, regulatory breach, serious professional misconduct, or significant financial exposure, the matter must be escalated to senior management immediately.

The company should consider obtaining appropriate professional, legal, insurance, or regulatory advice.

Relevant records must be preserved and should not be altered or destroyed.

15. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaint information must be handled in accordance with applicable privacy and data-protection requirements.

Information relating to a complaint should only be disclosed to people who have a legitimate need to know.

Employees must take reasonable steps to protect:

Client information
Property and land information
Survey coordinates and technical data
Personal information
Commercially sensitive information
Legal or insurance correspondence

16. Complaint Closure

A complaint may be closed when:
The investigation is complete.
The outcome has been communicated.
Agreed corrective actions have been completed or appropriately assigned.
Any escalation or review has been completed.
No further reasonable action is required.
The Complaints Register should be updated with the closure date and final outcome.

17. Corrective and Preventive Action

Where a complaint identifies a genuine failure, management should consider whether corrective or preventive action is required.

Actions may include:

Additional staff training.
Changes to survey checking procedures.
Additional independent checks.
Improvements to field procedures.

Equipment maintenance or calibration.
Changes to document-control procedures.
Improvements to client communication.
Changes to project review or approval processes.
Updates to templates, checklists, or standard operating procedures.
Repeated complaints of a similar nature should be reviewed for evidence of a systemic problem.

18. Records and Monitoring

Complaint records should be retained in accordance with the company's document-retention requirements and applicable legal or professional obligations.

Management should periodically review complaint data, including:

Number of complaints received.
Complaint categories.
Response and resolution times.
Repeat complaints.
Complaints relating to particular services or processes.
Root causes.
Corrective actions.
Customer satisfaction following resolution.
Trends should be discussed during appropriate management or quality-review meetings.

19. Service Standards

Unless a different timeframe is required by contract, law, regulation, or professional requirements, the company will aim to:

Activity Target

Record complaint Same working day where practicable
Acknowledge complaint Within 2–5 working days
Initial assessment Within 5 working days
Provide investigation update At reasonable intervals for ongoing matters
Complete investigation Within 10–20 working days where reasonably practicable
Communicate final outcome Promptly following completion of investigation
Escalate serious matters Immediately or as soon as practicable

These are target times rather than guarantees. Complex technical investigations may require additional time.

20. Unreasonable or Abusive Complaints

The company will make reasonable efforts to address legitimate complaints. However, management may establish reasonable communication limits where a complainant engages in threatening, abusive, discriminatory, or excessively repetitive behaviour.

Any such restrictions should be proportionate, documented, and approved by management.

The company must not use this provision to avoid properly investigating a legitimate complaint.

21. Complaint Process Summary

Complaint received → Complaint recorded → Initial assessment → Acknowledgement → Investigation → Technical/legal review where required → Decision → Corrective action → Response to complainant → Review/escalation if required → Closure → Lessons learned

22. Complaints Register — Minimum Fields

Field Information	Complaint No.	Unique reference	Date received	Date
Complainant Name/company	Contact details	Email/telephone	Project/job	Reference
Complaint category	Technical/service/fee/conduct/etc.			
Description	Summary			

Priority Low/Medium/High/Critical

Investigator Name

Evidence reviewed Documents/data

Findings Summary

Outcome Upheld/partially upheld/not upheld Corrective action. Action required Response date. Date

Review requested Yes/No Closure date. Date Lessons learned Summary

23. Document Control

Approved By: P J L Rose

Position: Director

Signature: 

Date: 03.01.2026

Next Review Date: Jan 2027

This procedure should be reviewed periodically and whenever there are significant changes to the company's services, contractual obligations, applicable legislation, professional requirements, or quality-management arrangements.