



## RFM Procedure 9: Alaska RFM Complaints and Appeals Process

Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM)  
Certification Program  
17065



## Procedure 9: Alaska RFM Complaints and Appeals Process

Complaints about the RFM Program will be categorized and managed according to type:

### Type 1) Complaints about Products with a Certified RFM Seal

Complaints about the general Integrity of Products packaged by seafood businesses with a Certified RFM Seal will be dealt with by the relevant businesses.

The responsibility for complying with the requirements of a Certification Program as defined in the Standards for the RFM Program, and for complying with statutory requirements, rests absolutely with Chain of Custody Clients (CoC). Therefore, any complaint about a product integrity or possible infringements of the law shall be dealt with by the CoC Client. Complaints of this nature, coming directly to the Certification Body or ASMI, will be referred to the CoC Client concerned for appropriate action to be taken.

Complaints of this nature are not logged by ASMI or the Certification Body.

### Type 2) Complaints about misuse of the RFM Certified Seal

Complaints concerning the misuse of the RFM Certified Seal will be managed by the Sustainability Director. Details of the complaint and products will be recorded including the product, the species, the associated organization, the region. The ASMI RFM Team will complete a trace-back to the relevant organization and certification body and direct the certification body to conduct an investigation and report on the extent of the issue.

A breach in the terms of the use of the RFM Certified Seal may lead to cessation of use or a potential product recall. The ASMI RFM Team will inform the ASMI Sustainability Director when the complaint has been closed out and the corrective actions that arise as a result of the complaint.

### Type 3) Complaints about Certification Program Operations and Certification Body Decisions

Complaints concerning the operation of the RFM Program and/or Certification Body decisions will be facilitated by the ASMI Sustainability Director or designated RFM Team member, who will be responsible for acknowledgement and investigation of the complaint. The ASMI Sustainability Director will also be responsible for seeking and managing resolution of the complaint.

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### Type 3) Complaints about Certification Program Operations and Certification Body Decisions (continued)

If a client or applicant or external party, wishes to complain against any decision of a Certification Body, under these Rules, the client or applicant or other party shall, within 14 days of being officially informed of the decision, give notice to the relevant Certification Body and the ASMI Sustainability Director (in writing) of their wish to appeal the decision and give the grounds for doing so.

The Certification Body will instigate its own Complaints Review Process and inform the Complainant and ASMI. If the Complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome they have the right to raise the issue with the Alaska RFM Conformance Criteria Committee (CCC) Appeals Panel.

The ASMI Sustainability Director will refer the matter to the Chairman of the (CCC) who shall appoint an Appeals Panel to hear the appeal. The Panel shall be comprised of three members, none of who shall have any commercial interest in the subject of appeal. A meeting (or teleconference) of the Panel shall be held within 30 days of the receipt of the notice of appeal. The Sustainability Director will assist with the facilitation of information. The Appeals Panel will follow procedures outlined in their Terms of Reference.

The Appellant, the Certification Body, and their associated Accreditation Board will be informed in writing of the Appeals Panel decision. The Certification Body will be required to review its certification decision if the Appeals Panel finds in favor of the Appellant and submit its findings to its Accreditation Board and to ASMI.

### **RFM Complaint Records**

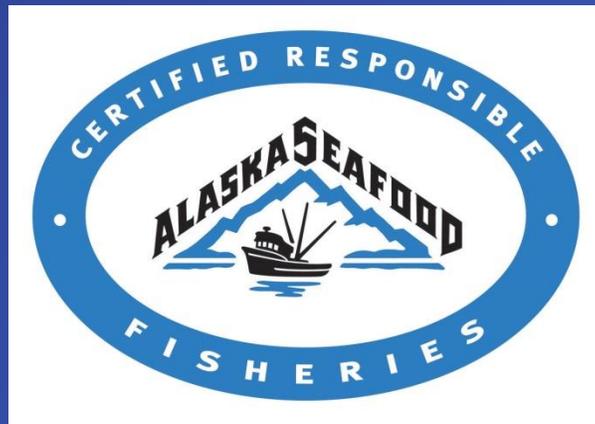
**Type 2 and Type 3** complaints will be flagged to the ASMI Sustainability Director and the Executive Director and these managers will be kept informed of any corrective actions until the complaint has been resolved.

A complaints register will be maintained and will be made available for internal and third party system audits.

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## AMENDMENT LOG

DATE	VERSION	AMENDMENT	AUTHORIZED BY



**Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute**

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