Fair Rubber Association (FReV)

Allegations, Complaints & Appeals Policy

Document Title: Allegations, Complaints & Appeals Policy
Document ID: FR-POL-ASR-Allegations-01
Version: 1.0
Approval Body: Board of the Fair Rubber e.V.
Approval Date: 14 August 2026
Effective Date: 1 September 2026
Confidentiality Level: Public

Amendment History

Version	Date	Description	Approved By
1.0	14/08/2026	Initial adoption	Board

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1. Purpose

This Policy establishes the principles and governance framework for receiving, handling, investigating, and resolving allegations, complaints & appeals related to the Fair Rubber system.

The objectives of this Policy are to:

a) safeguard the credibility, integrity, and reputation of Fair Rubber e.V. and the Fair Rubber system;
b) provide accessible, fair, and predictable mechanisms for raising concerns;
c) ensure due process, proportionality, accountability and equal handling of allegations, complaints & appeals;
d) support continuous improvement of the Fair Rubber system.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to allegations, complaints & appeals concerning:

a) members and supporting members of Fair Rubber e.V.;
b) certification bodies approved by Fair Rubber;
c) supplier partners operating under the Fair Rubber Standard;
d) misuse of the Fair Rubber logo or claims;
e) actions or omissions that may harm the credibility, integrity, or objectives of the Fair Rubber system.

This Policy does not replace statutory legal remedies but operates as a non-judicial grievance mechanism within the Fair Rubber governance framework.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

Allegation: A substantiated or plausible claim that a requirement of the Fair Rubber system, an applicable agreement, or a Fair Rubber policy or standard has been breached, or that conduct may harm the credibility or integrity of the Fair Rubber system. An allegation can be made by any person or institution from within or outside of the Fair Rubber system. It can be raised anonymously or openly.

Appeal: An appeal is a formal request by a person or organization affected by a certification or membership decision of Fair Rubber to have that decision reconsidered. It can be raised by any party that is certified by Fair Rubber or that has or has had a member status.

Board: The governing body of Fair Rubber e.V. as defined in § 8 of the Constitution.

Certification Body: A certification body approved by Fair Rubber to conduct conformity assessments against the Fair Rubber Standard.

Certification Assistant: The person at FRA responsible for the auditing and certification processes.

Complaint: formal expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization presented as a complaint to Fair Rubber, relating to the activities of the Fair Rubber Certification Scheme, where a response is expected.

Complainant: Any natural or legal person submitting an allegation/complaint/appeal.

Respondent: The person or entity against whom an allegation is raised.

Secretariat: The operational management body of Fair Rubber e.V., acting under delegation from the Board.

4. Policy Commitments

Fair Rubber e.V. commits to maintaining a system for allegations, complaints & appeals that is:

a) legitimate and trusted;
b) accessible to relevant stakeholders;
c) predictable and timely at a governance level;
d) equitable and respectful of rights;
e) transparent while safeguarding confidentiality;
f) oriented towards prevention, remedy, and system improvement.

Fair Rubber encourages the submission of allegations, complaints & appeals in good faith and does not tolerate retaliation against individuals or entities raising bona fide concerns.

5. Principles Governing the Handling of Complaints, Appeals and/or Allegations

All allegations, complaints & appeals shall be governed by the following principles:

a) Good faith: Allegations, complaints and appeals shall be assessed on their substance, irrespective of the identity of the complainant;
b) Non-retaliation: Individuals or entities raising allegations, complaints & appeals in good faith shall not be disadvantaged as a result;
c) Confidentiality: Information shall be handled responsibly and disclosed only where necessary for legitimate governance purposes;
d) Due process: Parties affected by allegations, complaints or appeals shall be treated fairly and impartially;
e) Proportionality: Measures taken shall be commensurate with the nature, severity, and systemic relevance of the issue;
f) Independence: Allegations, complaints and/or appeals governance shall be free from undue influence or conflicts of interest

6. Governance Roles and Responsibilities

The Secretariat is responsible for:

a) administering the allegations, complaints and appeals;
b) ensuring allegations, complaints and appeals are handled in accordance with approved procedures;
c) decision-making and escalation if needed
d) maintaining appropriate records and documentation.

The Board is responsible for:

a) oversight of the allegations, complaints and appeals system;
b) decision-making in cases with significant governance, reputation, or systemic implications;
c) approving sanctions or escalated measures where required under other Fair Rubber policies.

Certification bodies, members, and other system actors are required to cooperate with allegations, complaints and appeals handling in accordance with applicable Fair Rubber policies and agreements.

7. Transparency and Confidentiality

Fair Rubber shall ensure an appropriate level of transparency regarding the existence and functioning of the mechanism related to allegations, complaints & appeals.

Confidential information shall be protected and used solely for legitimate governance, oversight, and system integrity purposes.

8. Review and Oversight

This Policy shall be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if required by legal, regulatory, or system developments.

Any amendment to this Policy requires approval by the Board and shall be documented and communicated in accordance with Fair Rubber governance procedures.

End of Policy Document