

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Customer Advocate Process is to ensure unresolved complaints are addressed with impartiality, integrity, and efficiency. This document extends the dispute resolution process described in QA09P-NAT bringing in a 3rd party, Customer Advocate. The Customer Advocate's core objective is to assist the existing complaint processes, ensuring escalated complaints are responded to within specified timeframes and that each response is thorough, fair, and aligned with Supagas' guiding principles.

Acting as a mediator between Supagas and the customer, the Customer Advocate is responsible for facilitating the resolution of escalated complaints while upholding standards of customer satisfaction and fairness.

In addition to direct complaint resolution, the Customer Advocate also plays a crucial role in influencing Supagas' systems, processes, and decision-making. The Advocate represents customer interests in company meetings, advocates for improvements in complaint handling and customer service systems and provides essential information for Supagas' compliance reporting.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to escalated customer complaints within Supagas. It guides Customer Advocates in conducting impartial reviews, working collaboratively across departments, and advocating for customer-centric improvements in Supagas' practices.

Guiding Principles

1. **Impartiality:** All cases are approached without bias to ensure customers receive a fair review.
2. **Transparency:** Clear and consistent communication is maintained with customers throughout the process.
3. **Timeliness:** Swift actions and responses are prioritized to minimize disruption to customers.
4. **Continuous Improvement:** Insights from escalated cases are used to improve Supagas' complaint handling and customer service practices.

3. Procedure

Step-by-Step Customer Advocate Procedure

1. Escalation to the Customer Advocate

- **Internal Escalation:** When a complaint cannot be resolved to the customer's satisfaction at the initial resolution stage, the complaint can be escalated to the Customer Advocate for further investigation and mediation.
- **Customer Initiated Escalation:** If the customer remains dissatisfied with the initial outcome, they may directly contact the Customer Advocate at customeradvocacy@supagas.com.au.

2. Complaint Acknowledgment and Case Assignment

- **Receipt and Logging:** Upon receiving an escalated complaint, the Customer Advocate acknowledges receipt, providing the customer with an overview of the review process.
- **Case Assignment:** All relevant information is compiled to provide a comprehensive case history, including previous resolutions attempted.

3. Review and Investigation

- **Objective Review:** The Customer Advocate reviews all documentation, communications, and case notes associated with the complaint, ensuring a thorough understanding of the issue and previous attempts at resolution.
- **Further Investigation:**
 - If necessary, the Advocate may consult with the department(s) involved, gather additional information, or review pertinent records (e.g., delivery logs, billing history, service interactions).

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- Safety, billing, service quality, and other relevant compliance standards are reviewed to ensure Supagas policies and industry regulations are followed.
- **Analysis of Findings:** The Advocate assesses whether prior resolutions were adequate and if they adhered to Supagas' commitment to fair and customer-centric practices.

4. Mediation and Resolution Proposal

- **Resolution Proposal:** Based on the findings, the Customer Advocate in conjunction with the relevant department, drafts a resolution proposal, which may include corrective actions (e.g., refund, credit, service adjustment, apology, or policy change).
- **Customer Communication:**
 - The Advocate presents the proposed resolution to the customer
 - The customer is encouraged to ask questions or seek clarifications to promote understanding and acceptance of the resolution.

5. Feedback and Finalization

- **Customer Feedback:** If the customer is satisfied with the resolution, the complaint is finalized, documented, and marked as resolved in the complaint management system.
- **Further Escalation Options:** Should the customer remain dissatisfied, the Advocate provides guidance on further options, including relevant external dispute resolution contacts such as the state ombudsman.

6. System and Process Improvement Advocacy

- **Internal Influence:** The Customer Advocate actively participates in company meetings, advocating for process or system improvements based on insights from escalated complaints. The Advocate collaborates with other departments to ensure the customer perspective is considered in decision-making.
- **Process Enhancement:** The Advocate identifies recurring issues and provides actionable recommendations for improving the complaint handling and customer service systems, aiming to prevent similar complaints in the future.

7. Data Reporting and Compliance Support

- **Reporting:** Insights from escalated complaints are compiled in a report for senior management to address systemic issues, adjust policies, and enhance customer service practices.
- **Training and Policy Updates:** Based on recurring complaint themes, the Customer Advocate collaborates with customer service and operational teams to update training modules, service protocols, and company policies, ensuring continuous service improvement.

External Escalation Contacts

If internal resolution processes are exhausted, customers may contact the appropriate ombudsman or consumer protection agency in their state for further assistance.

- **WA:** Energy and Water Ombudsman - 1800 754 004
- **VIC:** Energy and Water Ombudsman - 1800 500 509
- **NSW:** Energy and Water Ombudsman - 1800 246 545
- **QLD:** Energy and Water Ombudsman - 1800 662 837
- **SA:** Energy and Water Ombudsman - 1800 665 565
- **ACT:** Civil and Administrative Tribunal - +61 2 6207 1740
- **TAS:** Energy Ombudsman - 1800 001 170

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Compliance and Monitoring

The Customer Advocate Process is reviewed as part of Supagas' Policy Review Process to ensure compliance with industry standards and regulatory requirements. Supagas is committed to upholding a culture where customer advocacy is integral to achieving operational excellence and customer trust.

4. Audit and Review

This controlled document is subject to audit as required by the Supagas internal audit plan or as requested by the National HSEQ Manager. Changes and review must follow IMS-12-NAT Management of Controlled Documents

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