

I Submitted A Complaint: Why is this Organization Still Accredited?

An overview of PJLA's Complaint Process

Presented by: Tracy Szerszen, President -PJLA



About the Presenter

- Tracy Szerszen is the President of Perry Johnson Laboratory Accreditation (PJLA), a private third-party accreditation body located in Troy, Michigan, for the past 16 years. Tracy is the managing director of all accreditation schemes and business operations for PJLA's headquarters office in the United States as well as the branch offices located in Japan, Mexico and Italy. Prior to this appointment she served as the Audit Logistics Manager for PJLA's related body Perry Johnson Registrars, a quality and environmental management certification body. In support of her vast knowledge of quality management system and accreditation regulations, she serves on several international association's committees and boards such as the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) as well as national associations engaged in environmental, food safety, cannabis and medical science such as: The NELAC Institute, AOAC and the American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL) and is currently the chair of the TNI NEFAP Executive Committee. Tracy has over 23 years of experience in quality management system and accreditation criteria. She holds a General Science and Business Administration degree as well as several ISO 9000 and ISO 17025 series training certifications.



Webinar Housekeeping

- This webinar will be recorded
- All PJLA webinars are made available on our website & YouTube channel

<https://www.pjlab.com/training/pjla-webinars/past-webinars>

- All attendees are muted
- Please utilize the question tool bar to submit questions to be answered at the end of presentation



Presentation Overview

Information Needed to Investigate a Complaint

Obligations of the Accreditation Body

Obligations of Accredited Organizations



Definition – ISO/IEC 17011

ISO/IEC 17011: 2017 Section 3.20 complaint

- expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal (3.21), by any person or organization, to an accreditation body (3.2), relating to the activities of that accreditation body or of an accredited conformity assessment body (3.4), where a response is expected

Types of Complaints

Complaints regarding PJLA accredited organizations (labs, inspection bodies etc.)

- Inaccurate reporting
- Inaccurate use of PJLA accreditation symbol, claim of accredited work
- Unethical behavior
- Poor practices

Complaints about PJLA services

- Processes, delays
- Assessor



Accreditation Body – Obligations



Accreditation Bodies – Shall have a process for documenting, investigating, and responding to complaints



PJLA utilizes SOP-9 found on our website <https://www.pjlab.com/resources/pjla-documents>



Request that the complaining party resolves the issue with the organization (i.e. lab) prior to coming to PJLA, if possible



Ensure impartiality isn't compromised when investigating complaints

Assignment of staff, assessors, technical committee board not related to the customer or PJLA process



Correct and Move Forward

- The goal of the complaint process is to investigate issues that may arise outside of our routine assessments
- Organizations need the opportunity to address issues and move forward
- Many issues that come from complaints are unintentional requiring corrective action, training, etc.



Information Needed



Complaining Party - Name, Email, Associated Company; They also may request to be anonymous



Details of the complaint; Evidence, if available



PJLA has strict confidentiality agreements with our customers; response and related information related to actions taken by us may be limited

Evaluation of Information

- Does the complaint relate to the scope of PJLA services or PJLA's accredited organization?
- Do we have appropriate and relevant information to investigate ?
- Where did it come from? Regulatory, another organization in the industry, etc.



What We Won't Investigate



Non-ISO related matters



Anything related to pricing, cost issue, etc.



Personal Internal Issues, unless they impact the validity of the conformity assessment result (i.e., test result)



Rumors, articles - social media, magazines, etc.



If the organization is meeting the requirements

Complaint Validity

- Once it is determined by PJLA that a complaint is valid, an investigation begins, and the organization is contacted
- The complaining party will be notified of the start of the investigation and anticipated completion timeframe (typically 30-60 days depending on the issue)
- Complaint is logged into PJLA internal system



Complaint Investigation

- PJLA team determines what is needed from the organization
 - Data
 - Copy of certificates
 - Contracts with customers
 - General response or discussions
 - Corrective Action as necessary
 - Immediate on-site investigation



Obligations of Organizations Under Investigation

Organizations are expected to participate with any valid complaint PJLA receives within specific timelines

- Corrective action plans
- Provide data or other information needed to evaluate the issue
- Notify clients of any report revisions as necessary
- Stop testing, calibrating etc. on certain parameters
- Allow PJLA to investigate on site as necessary

This is included in all agreements between PJLA and its customers



Failure to Participate in an Investigation

- Organizations that fail to participate will have ramifications, such as:
 - Required on-site investigation
 - Suspension of Accreditation or partial scope
 - Withdrawal of Accreditation - Termination of Contract



Complaint Closure

- Complaining Party will receive a response from PJLA and possibly the organization, depending on the type of issue
- If the complaining party wants to remain anonymous, then a limited response regarding the actions taken will be provided
 - This does not mean we will handle the complaint differently regarding an investigation
 - Again, we are obligated to protect our client's information
 - This is why we recommend to go to the organization first



How Do I Report a Concern?

- Some interested parties do not want to form an official complaint but have concerns about accuracy of results, poor practices, etc.
- Send the information to us; we will still evaluate it and decide on the next steps
- We may decide to issue a nonconformance or follow up at the next site visit



Summary

- Complaints rarely result in the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.
- Most organizations participate in investigations, provide sufficient corrective action and learn from mistakes.
- We encourage interested parties to reach out to us about issues in the industry. We only view a snapshot of information while on site and may not be aware.
- We encourage the industry to work together whenever possible. Remember, accredited organizations also have a complaint process for a reason. Use it.



How to Contact Us for a Complaint

- Any complaint regarding an accredited organization or an issue with PJLA's process can be sent via email at pjlabs@pjlabs.com or call 248-519-2603.



Contact Info



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Time for Questions and Answers



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Tuesday, June 13, 2023 – 1:00pm EST
Understanding the Types of Reference Materials, Their Differences, and Their Uses- Matt Sica, Testing Program Manager

Tuesday, June 27, 2023 – 1:00pm EST
A Review of the Revised PJLA Policy PL-4 “Scopes of Accreditation”-Matt Sica and Michael Kramer-Technical Program Managers



Thank You!



Perry Johnson Laboratory Accreditation, Inc.