

Dealing with Complaints and Problem Behavior**Procedure 05.02**

Approval By: EMG ExCom

Date: 01/14/16

1.0 Purpose

This procedure is not intended to be a handbook for handling complaints. It is intended to provide an overview of the process and to provide a starting place for the handling of outing-related complaints and problems. Sierra Club National addresses the process in considerable detail with several documents that can be found online. It is essential for the person managing the complaint process to be familiar with all related Sierra Club policies and methods.

2.0 Types of Complaints

2.1 Outing-related complaints can vary from the minor to very serious matters.

2.2 Complaints can be about participants or about leaders

2.3 Problems can arise prior to an actual outing, having to do with screening, travel, equipment requirements, etc.

2.4 There can be problems during the outing related to behaviors, physical capabilities or expectations of participants, personal conflict, injuries, etc.

2.5 While complaints should be voiced to the Outings Committee, that may not always happen.

Occasionally, complaints may be sent directly to National or to others entities. If that happens, that information will be forwarded to the local Outings Committee Chair for handling.

3.0 Responsible Persons

3.1 Complaints are initially managed by the Outings Committee Chair.

3.2 Depending on the specific issue, the Chair may, or may not, involve the body of the Outings Committee in handling the problem.

3.4 For complaints of a seriousness nature, it may be advisable to consult the Eastern Missouri Group Executive Committee or even National.

3.5 From Sierra Club policy: “If there is an indication of potential legal action, immediately contact the

Dealing with Complaints and Problem Behavior**Procedure 05.02**

Director of Outdoor Activities for additional support and direction.”

3.6 From Sierra Club policy: “Sexual harassment claims must be reported to the National office via an Incident Report.”

4.0 Basic Steps for Complaint Resolution**4.1 A formal complaint is received.**

The person originating the complaint should submit it in writing.

4.2 Gather the facts.

Typically, this involves contacting the author of the complaint, the leader, and possibly other outing participants. An Incident Report Form, while not intended for complaint handling, may be a useful tool for gathering some of the appropriate complaint information.

4.3 Investigate the complaint.

Some items to consider: Was there a real problem or only a perceived problem. What was the cause and who, if anyone, was at fault.

Even though some complaints may only be valid in the mind of the author, they should still be addressed.

4.4 Identify what action steps should be taken to address the situation.**4.5 Determine if additional support is needed.**

Additional support may come from Eastern Missouri Group Executive Committee or National.

4.6 Written notification.

Generally, it is advisable to send written notifications of the final outcome to the parties involved.

4.7 Address any appeal to the final decision.**5.0 Resources****5.1 Outing Chairs – Complaint Resolution**

http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/GCO/Chair/complaint_procedure.asp

This document contains links to several related policies and procedures.

Dealing with Complaints and Problem Behavior

Procedure 05.02

5.2 LOSC Processes – Complaints Received by National (LOSC = Local Outings Support Committee)

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/committees/gcoc/ComplaintsProcess.asp>

5.3 Incident Report Form

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/conservation/program-safety/incidents/incident-reporting.aspx>

This link will take you to a page where you can download an Incident Report Form to help with fact gathering.

5.4 SR. 5.10.2: Termination or Suspension of Member Privileges

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/administration/policies/personnel/termination.pdf>

This policy applies to the Sierra Club National Board of Directors and, as such, is not directly applicable to the local organization. However, it may provide some useful insight into reasons and methods for dealing with member termination or suspension.

5.5 Problem Behaviors

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Common/Incidents/problem.asp>

This document adds more detail to the handling of problem behaviors. It contains a section on problems with leaders and a section on problems with participants. In particular, it adds detail to the appeals process.

Revision History

05.01 03/12/15 Original Issue

05.02 09/22/15 Adds 5.4 and 5.5