

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE HERTOGHS ADVOCATEN

Hertoghs advocaten (hereinafter: Hertoghs) attaches great value to the quality of its practice. We do everything within our power to serve our clients in the best possible way. Nevertheless, it may happen that a client has a complaint about an attorney, one of our employees or how we run our practice. This complaint will be dealt with according to the following procedure.

1. Terms

Complaint

Any expression of dissatisfaction with the practice of the attorney, the firm or the co-workers of the firm.

Complainant

The client reporting the complaint.

Complaints Officer

A partner of our firm who will handle the complaint. This is always a different person than the one against whom the complaint is directed.

Complaint registration form

An internal form used to record the complaint and the way it is dealt with.

Complaints Coordinator

The Office Manager who coordinates the complaints procedure.

Attorney concerned

The attorney about whom is complained or the attorney in charge, if the complaint is about an employee who is not an attorney.

2. Purposes

The purpose of the complaints procedure is:

- a. to resolve complaints within a reasonable period of time and in a constructive manner;
- b. to determine the cause or causes of the complaint or complaints;
- c. to maintain and improve existing relationships;
- d. to improve our practice and service.

3. Information provision of the client

In our General Conditions we refer to the existence of a complaints procedure which can also be consulted via the website.

4. Conditions

- a. Complaints may be submitted up to three months after the Complainant became aware, or could have reasonably been able to become aware, of the fact about which the complaint is made;
- b. Complaints about which a disciplinary complaint is pending or has been pending will not be handled.

5. The internal complaints procedure

- a. The attorney concerned will be informed of a complaint as soon as possible;
- b. The Complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint;
- c. If a complaint is submitted by a third party acting or appearing to be acting on behalf of the Complainant, the third party will be asked whether he agrees to have the attorney in question verify this with the Complainant, or the third party will be informed that Hertoghs has a complaints procedure and the Complainant will be requested to contact the attorney in question or the Complaints Officer;

- d. The attorney concerned will try to reach a solution with the Complainant;
- e. If this solution cannot be reached and the complaint is upheld by the Complainant, the Complaints Coordinator will determine who will act as Complaints Officer;
- f. Subsequently, the Complaints Officer and the attorney will discuss the complaint;
- g. The Complaints Officer will inform the Complainant that he will handle the complaint from now on and will give further information about the procedure.
- h. The Complaints Officer will decide on the complaint and will discuss this with the Complainant.
- i. If a complaint could not be resolved after the Complaints Officer has dealt with it, the Complainant or Hertoghs may submit it to a body which will issue a binding decision. The Complaints Officer will propose the most suitable solution to the Complainant.

6. The record

- a. A complaint is recorded by the person to whom the complaint has been submitted;
- b. This complaint will be sent to the attorney concerned as soon as possible and also to the Complaints Coordinator;
- c. If the attorney concerned is able to reach a solution with the Complainant, he will draw up a memo and/or a letter to the Complainant in which is described how the complaint has been resolved. The attorney concerned will hand this memo to the Complaints Coordinator;
- d. Complaints that are dealt with by the Complaints Officer will be recorded in a complaint registration form;
- e. On the form is recorded how the complaint is being handled;
- f. If the Complaints Officer has come to a solution with the Complainant, he will confirm this in writing to the Complainant. If a solution could not be reached, the Complaints Officer will inform the Complainant;
- g. If the complaint has been resolved, the complaint form will be signed by the attorney concerned and the Complaints Officer;
- h. The Complaints Coordinator will receive the documents relating to the complaint which will be will filed.

7. Responsibilities

- a. The Complaints Coordinator is responsible for the appointment of a Complaints Officer;
- b. The attorney concerned and, if necessary, the Complaints Officer are responsible to deal with the complaint and will record it and, if necessary, fill in the complaint registration form;
- c. The Complaints Officer will inform the attorney concerned about the way the complaint is dealt with;
- d. The complaint must be dealt with within four weeks, or the Complainant must receive a status report on the complaint and the follow-up;

8. Unforeseen cases

In cases which are not provided for by this complaints procedure, the Complaints Officer will decide.