



Dispute Resolution / Disciplinary Action

General Policy

All disputes, complaints, or allegations within the Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC) program Training Network are to be managed in a clear, respectful, impartial, and organized fashion, consistent with the ethics, values, policies, and procedures of the Life Rescue Training Inc. (LRTI), the Training Site (TS) and the American Heart Association (AHA). It is optimal that such disputes, complaints, or allegations be resolved at the lowest level of the network.

In particular, when an Instructor of the TS, an Instructor applying for affiliation, or staff does not comply with the position description requirements, breaches any LRTI, TS, AHA or ECC conflict of interest statement, or fails to meet the standards of the ECC Leadership Code of Conduct, disciplinary action may be warranted. It is essential that before such disciplinary action is taken, the proper procedure is followed so that (1) a fair investigation has been conducted by the TS to which the individual reports as indicated in the position description and (2) opportunity for appeals to higher levels of authority within the LRTI structure has been provided. All appeals will go to the Director of Continuing Education at LRTI and must contain the following information:

- a. The name and address of the person making the complaint ("Complainant"). The Training Site LRTI will not permit the individual(s) making the complaint to remain anonymous.
- b. The name and address of the person and/or organization against which the complaint is made ("Respondent").
- c. A detailed written description of the dispute, complaint, or problem (eg, who, what, when, where, why). For TS-related issues, the complaint should contain information on the attempts of the TS to resolve the matter. The TS Coordinator must sign the statement.
- d. Reference to the appropriate rule, standard, and/or guidelines related to the matter.
- e. Copies of all related correspondence, records, and other documentation.

Procedure

Disputes Involving Training Centers or Instructors

It is the responsibility of the TS to manage and resolve any disputes, complaints, or problems that arise from a course offered by an Instructor employed by or aligned with the TS or from other TS activities or business.

The American Heart Association is not responsible for the day-to-day operations of the TS or its business practices and will not become involved in the resolution of any disputes, complaints, or problems arising from courses taught by the TS unless one or more of the following is involved:

- Course content/curriculum
- Instructor qualifications
- American Heart Association administrative policies and procedures
- American Heart Association ECC science issues
- American Heart Association Training Center Agreement and program guidelines

If, after diligent efforts, the TS is unable to affect a resolution, the TS must turn over the dispute, complaint, or problem to the American Heart Association according to the procedure below. However, this does not diminish the responsibility of the TS for its employees or Instructors teaching courses offered through or processed by the TS.

Complaints regarding the issues listed above may be submitted to the TS in writing by

- A student who attended the course in which the problem arose
 - An Instructor, Course Director, TS Faculty member, or TS with information about the problem
 - An AHA volunteer or staff member with information about the problem
1. If, after diligent efforts, the TS is unable to resolve the dispute/complaint by 30 calendar days after being made aware of the problem, the TS must send a description of the dispute/complaint to the Regional ECC Office (a TS may be either a complainant or a respondent). All complaints must contain the following information:
 - f. The name and address of the person making the complaint ("Complainant"). The American Heart Association will not permit the individual(s) making the complaint to remain anonymous.
 - g. The name and address of the person and/or organization against which the complaint is made ("Respondent").
 - h. A detailed written description of the dispute, complaint, or problem (eg, who, what, when, where, why). For TS-related issues, the complaint should contain information on the attempts of the TS to resolve the matter. The TS Coordinator must sign the statement.
 - i. Reference to the appropriate rule, standard, and/or guidelines related to the matter.
 - e. Copies of all related correspondence, records, and other documentation.
 2. AHA staff will notify the Regional ECC Committee Chair about the need to set up a Review Committee. The Regional ECC Committee Chair, with the assistance of AHA staff, will appoint a Review Committee of at least three persons with appropriate qualifications to review the written complaint and/or appeal, obtain additional information as appropriate, and render a recommendation to the Regional ECC Committee regarding the dispute. Due attention must be taken to avoid conflicts of interest on the part of any member of the Review Committee. If so desired, the Regional ECC Committee may itself be the Review Committee and render a decision about the dispute/appeal directly. Hereafter the committee assigned to address the grievance will be referred to as the "Review Committee."
 3. The Review Committee will refer to the current program guidelines for all administrative, educational, and science issues. The Review Committee may consult with the National Subcommittee on ECC Program Administration, national science committees, or legal counsel as appropriate on any issue not already addressed in the program guidelines.

4. Within 10 business days after receipt of notification of the dispute, AHA staff and the Regional ECC Committee will issue a written notice to the TS, Complainant, and Respondent that the matter has been referred to the American Heart Association for review. The Review Committee will invite the Respondent to provide a response to the complaint in writing to the Review Committee within 30 days by registered or certified mail receipt of notice.
5. Once the response to the complaint is received, the Review Committee will determine the nature, significance, and corrective action (if any) that must be taken by the individual or TS against whom the complaint has been made or whether the complaint should be dismissed. The Review Committee will research national and/or regional written policies that pertain to the grievance. Copies of written policies will be attached to the notification of dispute and all related correspondence and sent with its recommendation to the Regional ECC Committee.
6. After reviewing the recommendation of the Review Committee, the Regional ECC Committee will issue the decision regarding the matter within 60 days after notice to the parties that a Review Committee has been established. The decision of the responsible Regional ECC Committee may include one or more of the following as appropriate:
 - a. Reprimand or letter of counseling to Respondent and/or TS, including a statement of the corrective procedure/action.
 - b. Agreement by the Respondent and/or TS to take specified corrective procedure/action.
 - c. A probationary period that applies to the Respondent and/or TS, including monitoring of course(s).
 - d. Termination of the TS Agreement.
 - e. Termination of Instructor status.
 - f. Request for additional information.
 - g. Dismissal of complaint.
7. If the Regional ECC Committee dismisses the grievance, a letter announcing the decision will be sent to the Complainant, Respondent, and TS. Notice will be given in the letter that the decision to dismiss the grievance may be appealed by sending an appeal in writing to the PROAD Committee within 10 days of receipt of the notification, with a copy sent to the Regional ECC Chair.
8. If the grievance is not dismissed, the Regional ECC will either
 - a. Schedule a hearing within 30 days after the date of the decision, inviting the parties to appear and provide further information or
 - b. Issue a decision and inform the parties of their right to request a hearing and further consideration of the matter.

Disputes Regarding ECC Leadership

Complaints against ECC leadership in the Training Network must be submitted in writing to the appropriate committee or entity that has authority over that individual. The Regional ECC Committee is responsible for the Regional Faculty, Regional ECC Committee and Subcommittee Chairs and members, and Area Task Force Chairs and members. The PROAD Committee is responsible for National Faculty and Regional ECC Committee Chairs.

It is the responsibility of either PROAD or the Regional ECC Committee (whichever is appropriate) to manage and resolve any disputes, complaints, or problems that arise from an issue involving ECC leadership. Complaints about ECC leadership may be submitted to the responsible committee in writing by

- A student who attended the course in which the problem arose
 - An Instructor, Course Director, TS Faculty member, or TS with information about the problem
 - An American Heart Association volunteer or staff member with information about the problem
1. All complaints must contain the following information:
 - a. The name and address of the person making the complaint ("Complainant"). The American Heart Association will not permit the individual(s) making the complaint to remain anonymous.
 - b. The name and address of the person and/or organization against which the complaint is made ("Respondent").
 - c. A detailed written description of the dispute, complaint, or problem (eg, who, what, when, where, why).
 - d. Reference to the appropriate rule, standard, and/or guidelines related to the matter.
 - e. Copies of all related correspondence, records, and other documentation.
 2. The appropriate committee chair, with the assistance of AHA staff, will appoint a Review Committee of at least three persons with appropriate qualifications to review the written complaint and/or appeal, obtain additional information as appropriate, and render a recommendation to the responsible committee regarding the dispute. Due attention must be taken to avoid conflicts of interest on the part of any member of the Review Committee. If so desired, the responsible committee may itself be the Review Committee and render a decision about the dispute/appeal directly. Hereafter the committee assigned to address the grievance will be referred to as the "Review Committee."
 3. The Review Committee will refer to the current program guidelines or *Program Administration Manual* for all administrative, educational, and science issues. The Review Committee may consult with the National Subcommittee on ECC Program Administration, national science committees, or legal counsel as appropriate on any issue not already addressed in the program guidelines.
 4. Within 10 business days after receipt of notification of the dispute, AHA staff and the Review Committee will issue a written notice to the TS, Complainant, and Respondent that the matter has been referred to the American Heart Association for review. The Review Committee will invite the Respondent to provide a response to the complaint in writing to the Review Committee within 30 days by registered or certified mail receipt of notice.
 5. Once the response to the complaint is received, the Review Committee will determine the nature, significance, and corrective action (if any) that must be taken by the individual or TS against whom the complaint has been made or whether the complaint should be dismissed. The Review Committee will research national and/or regional written policies that pertain to the grievance. Copies of written policies will be attached to the notification of dispute and all related correspondence and sent with its recommendation to the responsible committee.
 6. On the basis of the recommendation of the Review Committee, the responsible committee will issue the decision regarding the matter within 60 days after notice to the parties that a Review Committee has been established. The decision of the responsible committee may include one or more of the following as appropriate:

- a. Reprimand or letter of counseling to Respondent, including a statement of the corrective procedure/action
 - b. Agreement by the Respondent to take specified corrective procedure/action
 - c. A probationary period that applies to the Respondent, including monitoring of course(s)
 - d. Revocation of National Faculty, Regional Faculty, committee chair/membership, Instructor status, or other leadership status
 - e. Request for additional information
 - f. Dismissal of complaint
7. If the responsible committee dismisses the grievance, a letter announcing the decision will be sent to the Complainant and Respondent. Notice will be given in the letter that the decision to dismiss the grievance may be appealed by sending an appeal in writing to the PROAD Committee within 10 days of receipt of the notification, with a copy sent to the Regional ECC Committee Chair.
8. If the grievance is not dismissed, the responsible committee will either
- a. Schedule a hearing within 30 days after the date of the decision, inviting the parties to appear and provide further information or
 - b. Issue a decision and inform the parties of their right to request a hearing and further consideration of the matter.

The final review committee for all leadership and Training Center disciplinary actions is the ECC Program Administration Subcommittee.