

Complaints procedure

Article 1. Definitions

MARK Advocaten is a cost-sharing partnership. In this partnership the lawyers affiliated with the firm (whether by means of a practice with legal personality or otherwise) each individually operate a law practice at their own risk and for their own account. Engagements with clients are individually entered into between the lawyer engaged and the client.

Client: a person who engages one or more individual members of the partnership to provide legal assistance, which engagement is accepted by the lawyer concerned.

Complainant: the client or client's representative who expresses a complaint.

Complaint: any spoken or written expression of dissatisfaction by or on behalf of a client with the services provided by one or more lawyers of MARK Advocaten that should be reasonably be considered a complaint.

Complaints process: the process followed for handling complaints.

Complaints procedure: this document, i.e. the written description of the complaints process that is followed by MARK Advocaten.

Complaints officer: the person, not being the lawyer against whom the complaint was made, charged with the handling of the complaint by MARK Advocaten. The complaints officer is a lawyer and may be a person external to MARK Advocaten. The complaints officer at MARK Advocaten is mr. C.M. van den Reek. In case of complaints directed against mr. Van den Reek, mr. J.M. van Gool will act as the complaints officer.

Complaint registration form: an internal form used to conduct the procedure set out in the complaints procedure.

Article 2 Purposes

The purpose of this complaints procedure is to:

1. set out a procedure to deal constructively with complaints submitted by clients, within a reasonable period of time;
2. set out a procedure for establishing the causes of a client's complaint;
3. retain and improve existing business relationships by means of proper complaints handling;
4. train staff to focus on clients when responding to complaints;
5. improve the quality of the services provided by means of complaints handling and analysis.

Article 3 Information to the client

1. Before concluding an engagement contract the lawyer will point out to the client that the firm has a complaints procedure in place and that it applies to the services.
2. The lawyer will point out that there is the possibility to submit unresolved complaints to the Dean of the Netherlands Bar in the Zeeland-West-Brabant district.

Article 4 Internal complaints procedure

1. If a complainant approaches MARK Advocaten in any way about a complaint against one or more lawyers of MARK Advocaten, the complaint will be passed on to the complaints officer and the lawyer/lawyers will be notified of that fact.
2. The lawyer/lawyers concerned will try to work out a solution together with the complainant, with or

without consultation of the complaints officer.

3. If the complainant wishes, the complaints officer will be consulted immediately.
4. The complaints officer handles the complaint within four weeks of receipt of the complaint or will notify the complainant of any extension of this deadline, stating the reasons for extension and mentioning the time when a decision about the complaint will be made.
5. The confidentiality that applies to lawyers must be guaranteed under any circumstances. The complainant does not owe any fee for the costs of handling the complaint.
6. The client will be informed of the decision about the complaint by the complaints officer concerned in writing.
7. If the complaint is resolved satisfactorily, the complainant, the complaints officer and the person against whom a complaint was made will sign the decision on the admissibility of the complaint.
8. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily the client will be informed of the possibility to submit the complaint to the Dean of the Netherlands Bar in the Zeeland-West-Brabant district. In case of a complaint about the amount of a bill, client will be informed of the possibility to submit a bill for evaluation to the civil court of the Zeeland-West-Brabant court of Breda.

Article 5 Registration and classification of the complaint

1. All complaints are registered according to the complaint registration form of which a model has been attached below.
2. MARK Advocaten registers and classifies the complaint.
3. Complaints are classified:
 - a. by way of submission, e.g. oral or in writing;
 - b. by the nature of the complaint in the following categories:
 - I. complaints about the working method of/treatment by one of the lawyers;
 - II. complaints about substantive legal aspects of services;
 - III. complaints about financial aspects of services;
 - IV. complaints about the operation of the practice in general.
4. A complaint may be classified in several categories;
5. If the complaint has been handled satisfactorily this will be recorded in the complaint registration form.

Article 6 Responsibilities

1. The lawyer concerned and the complaints officer, if involved, are responsible for handling and resolution of the complaint in a timely manner.
2. The lawyer concerned is responsible for completion of the complaint registration form in full.
3. If the complaints officer has been involved by the lawyer concerned, this complaints officer will keep the lawyer and client informed of further handling of the complaint.
4. The lawyer or complaints officer, if involved, will see to a written response to the complainant.
5. MARK Advocaten will keep the complaints file.
6. The lawyer/lawyers concerned and the complaints officer will also make recommendations about the prevention of new complaints and improvement of procedures.

Article 7 Analysis of complaints

1. MARK Advocaten will draw up an annual report on the handling of complaints, if any, in the month of January.
7. MARK Advocaten will produce an annual analysis on the basis of the report in the month of January.

Article 8 Preventative action

1. On the basis of the annual analysis MARK Advocaten will decide on preventative measures to be taken for improvement of services.