

Allegations Policy

1. Purpose of this Document

Fairtrade Canada is committed to the adherence to the Fairtrade Standards and policies and is part of our role as a licensing body to ensure our customers are meeting their requirements under the standards. This policy defines what an allegation is, and our approach to investigating any claims.

2. What is an Allegation?

An allegation is defined as a statement of fact or facts by a third party against a customer holding a Fairtrade Certificate and / or a Fairtrade License contract claiming that this customer is non-compliant with applicable Fairtrade Standards, is damaging Fairtrade's reputation, is misusing a FAIRTRADE Mark, or is in breach of Fairtrade Policies or other contractual arrangements, including Licensing and Certification contracts.

An allegation can be made by any party, which may include a member of the public, a Fairtrade customer, an NGO, or a labour union.

3. Submitting an Allegation

Allegations can be submitted:

- By email to info@fairtrade.ca or license@fairtrade.ca or any Fairtrade Canada staff
- By telephone +1 613 563 3351 extension 240

If you need assistance to document the allegation, please contact Fairtrade Canada on +1 563 3351 x 240 and the Licensing staff can assist with documenting the allegation.

All submitted allegations will be treated with the strictest of confidence, to ensure the identities of the parties are protected.

3.1 What information is required when making an allegation?

When making an allegation, providing as much of the following information as possible will make it easier for us to investigate matters:

- Your name, position and contact details
- The name of the organization and FLO ID (if known)
- Which Fairtrade criteria is your allegation relating to?
- Describe the issues you are alleging
- Attach any documentation to support your claim

We will acknowledge in writing all allegations within 10 days of receipt, unless the allegiant declines to provide contact details or where the nature of the allegation is such that it is not possible to acknowledge in writing.

Your allegation will be assigned to a relevant staff member for investigation. Any person with a conflict of interest in relation to the allegation shall be excluded from the review and decision-making process.

3.2 Processing the Allegation

The staff member will make an initial assessment of the claim, to ensure its validity and determine the investigation process.

If the allegation concerns a purely certification related matter it will be transferred to FLOCERT, the certification body used by Fairtrade Canada.

The reasons an allegation may not be investigated further are; the organization is not Fairtrade certified or licensed, the allegation is not linked to a breach of the Fairtrade Standard, policies or the allegation has no link to the Fairtrade standards or policies.

Based on the nature of the allegation, the investigation may take the form including, analysis of the evidence provided, analysis of audit history, statement from the customer or analysis taken as part of an announced or unannounced audit.

The investigation is required to be completed within a 6-month time frame, however where the allegation is classed as high-risk action will be taken ensure the process does not take longer than 3 months.

3.3 Allegation Decision

If the result of the investigation, finds no evidence that the Fairtrade standards, policies or contract were breached, it will be dismissed.

Once we have investigated the allegation, we will provide you with a written response to the party making the allegation.

If you are dissatisfied with Fairtrade Canada's process in handling the allegation they may contact Fairtrade International, the owner of the Fairtrade Standards, for further review.

Fairtrade Canada will keep a record of all allegations made, and the results of the investigation.

3.4 Confidentiality of Allegations

The information received through the allegations procedure is handled as confidential information.

Specifically, where Fairtrade Canada received credible confidential allegation information from a third party, and this information, by its nature, cannot be provided to the operator, then Fairtrade Canada shall:

- Not disclose the confidential allegation to any party except those within Fairtrade Canada who have a need to know, or as required by law
- Not use the confidential allegation during an audit in any way that may allow the operator to identify the individual(s) or organisation(s) who provided the information
- Not use the confidential allegation as evidence of non-conformity unless the information can be verified as being correct by other means; and

- Use the confidential allegation to identify which areas of the client's operation should be investigated.