

**Soil Science Society of America's (SSSA)
Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS)
Certified Professional Soil Classifier (CPSC)
Complaint Investigation Procedures**

The SSSA CPSS/CPSC complaint investigation procedures outline the process that the Soils Certifying Board will use in conducting a review of a CPSS/CPSC. It is based upon the potential violation of the Soils Certifying Board's code of ethics. Anyone can file a complaint. The complaint and rebuttal must be written and include as much detail as possible including but not limited to pictures, video, lab reports and eye witness testimonials. The complaint investigation process is conducted by fellow CPSS/CPSC. They will not know the complainant or defendant personally.

The complaint review process does:

- include an evaluation of whether or not the defendant should have been qualified to be involved with the soil science work described in the complaint based on but not limited to the defendant's certification records, training, continuing education and work experiences.

The complaint review process does **not**:

- include an evaluation of the defendant's recommendation on a specific job or project site.
- determine fair pricing, how or how much the complainant should have been charged for the work done by the CPSS/CPSC.

Steps that will be followed:

1. Complaints for ethics violations are filed with the SSSA's Soils Certifying Board's Standards and Ethics Committee (SEC). Anyone may file a complaint. A complaint must be written and signed to be considered.
 - a. The SSSA will notify the certifying board chair of the complaint. The board chair will be an ex-officio member of the SEC and will participate in all the activities related to the complaint investigation.
 - b. The SSSA Director of Professional Development and Business Relations will notify the person who filed the complaint (complainant) that it has been received.

2. The SEC must decide in 120 days if the filed complaint has enough merit to warrant an investigation. The SEC will base their decision on what the complainant has provided as evidence with the written complaint. It is strongly advised that the complainant provide as much detail about the potential violation as possible including but not limited to witness' written testimony, lab results, pictures and/or video.
 - a. If yes, the SEC must establish the grounds for an investigation. They must decide which section of the Code of Ethics or other reason they will investigate. Go on to 3.
 - b. If no, they must notify complainant they found insufficient grounds to investigate. SSSA must also be notified.

3. Once the grounds are established for an investigation, the defendant and complainant are notified.
Note: All correspondence to the defendant and complainant will be handled through the SSSA Director of Professional Development and Business Relations.
4. The defendant will be provided a copy of the written complaint along with all supporting materials and be given 60 days to respond to the complaint and to provide rebuttal information in writing. Failure to respond within this time period shall be considered a waiver of the right to provide rebuttal information. During this period, the SEC will conduct an audit of the defendant's certification maintenance program.
5. The SEC upon review of the rebuttal information and the audit of the defendant's CEU maintenance program in 60 days must:
 - a. exonerate the defendant
 - b. write a letter of warning
 - c. suspend the defendant
 - d. revoke certification
 - e. extend the investigation
6. If b, c, or d, are selected, the defendant may request a hearing (personal appearance) by the full certification Board. The time and place will be set by SSSA.
 - a. To overrule the SEC, a two-thirds majority vote of the full certifying Board is required.
7. If 5e is selected, the committee may involve board members to assist the investigation which may be extended in 30 day increments. Funds may be requested from SSSA to assist the investigation.
 - a. Upon the completion of the investigation, a decision must be reached regarding 5a-d.