

For everyone

Complaints and disputes

How to complain, what we do about it, how long we take, and every other place in South Africa you can go.

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IN SHORT

- Complain to us in the app, or by email. We acknowledge within 2 business days.
- We investigate and we act on accounts. We are not a mediator and we cannot force anyone to pay.
- Section 6 lists every regulator, ombud and court in South Africa that can help, with contact details.
- Complaining to us never takes away your right to go to any of them.

A plain summary to orient you. The sections below are the agreement.

1. How to complain to us

Email the complaints desk



Report something unsafe, read first



Open the complaints form



(<https://toolbox.africa/legal/complaints>)

You can also raise it from the job itself in the app, which is the fastest route because the job, the quote, the invoice and the messages come with it.

Tell us: what job it concerns, what happened, what you have already tried, and what you would like done. Attach photographs, the quote, the invoice and proof of payment if the complaint is about work or money. A payment made in the app is already on the job, so you only need proof of a payment made some other way.

2. What happens then

1. Within 2 business days we acknowledge, give you a reference and tell you who is dealing with it.

2. **We put it to the other side** and give them a fair opportunity to respond, usually 10 business days. If the complaint alleges something serious, we may restrict their account while we look.
3. **We investigate.** We may ask both of you for more, look at the messages on the job, and, where workmanship is in dispute, appoint an independent expert.
4. **We decide and we tell you**, in writing, with reasons. We aim for 30 business days from the point we have everything, and we tell you in advance if it will take longer.
5. **We act on the account under Warnings, suspension and removal** (toolbox.africa/legal/sanctions), where the complaint is upheld.

If your complaint is about a safety incident, a threat, or anything involving a child or a vulnerable person, it goes to the front of the queue and is read the same day.

3. What we can do, and what we cannot

We can:

- Investigate, and require both sides to answer.
- Appoint an independent expert to assess workmanship.
- Warn, restrict, suspend or permanently remove an account, on either side.
- Consider a payment under **the ToolBox Guarantee** (toolbox.africa/legal/guarantee).
- Correct or remove a review that breaks the **Reviews policy** (toolbox.africa/legal/reviews).
- Report a matter to the SAPS or to a trade regulator, and support their investigation.

We cannot:

- Force a tradesperson to come back and finish or fix a job.
- Force a homeowner to pay.
- Reverse a payment. A payment made in the app goes through Paystack straight to the tradesperson, and never through a ToolBox account, so there is nothing for us to hold back or hand back. A card payment can still be disputed with your bank, as the next part explains.
- Decide who is legally right. Only a court, an ombud or an arbitrator can do that.

Payment disputes and chargebacks

When a homeowner pays through the app, Paystack processes the payment. If the homeowner's bank or card issuer disputes it (a chargeback), Paystack asks for evidence, and the card scheme's rules decide whether the payment stands. Neither we nor the tradesperson decides it.

- We flag the job and tell the tradesperson as soon as Paystack tells us.
- We give Paystack what the job holds: the accepted quote, the invoice, the messages on the job, and the proof the work was completed, such as the homeowner's confirmation and any photographs. We ask the tradesperson for anything else that would help.

- The tradesperson carries the chargeback. If it succeeds, the money is recovered from them, never from the Guarantee, as section 9 of the **Terms for tradespeople** (toolbox.africa/legal/pro-terms) explains.
- A chargeback decides only whether the payment stands, not whether the work was good. If your complaint is about the work, bring it to us as well, so that we can look at the account and, where it applies, the **Guarantee** (toolbox.africa/legal/guarantee).

We are not a mediation or dispute resolution service

We investigate to decide who belongs on this platform, and to decide a Guarantee claim. We are not neutral referees settling a contract dispute between you and the other party, and we do not have the power to make an award. Where the disagreement is genuinely about the contract, section 6 tells you who does have that power. We will hand you the evidence from the job to take with you.

4. If you are unhappy with how we handled it

Ask for it to be reviewed. Email complaints@toolbox.africa with your reference and say what you think we got wrong. A senior person who was not part of the original decision looks at it again and answers within 20 business days.

If you are still not satisfied, everything in section 6 remains open to you. We will not treat you differently for using it.

5. Complaints about us, not about a job

Complaints about ToolBox itself, our verification, our fees, our conduct or our app, go to the same desk and follow the same process. A complaint about how we handled your personal information can go to privacy@toolbox.africa, and from there to the Information Regulator. Section 6 has their details.

6. Where else you can go

You are never required to come to us first, and coming to us does not use up any of these. Pick the one that matches your problem.

The tradesperson's own regulator

If the complaint is about work that legally requires registration, the body that registered them can investigate and can withdraw that registration. This is often the most powerful route available to you, and it costs nothing.

Electrical work and Certificates of Compliance

WHO

Department of Employment and Labour, Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety, and the Electrical Contracting Board of South Africa.

FOR

Work by an unregistered person, a refusal to issue a CoC, a false CoC, or dangerous electrical work.

HOW

Report to your nearest Department of Employment and Labour office, or to the ECB.

Plumbing

WHO

The Plumbing Industry Registration Board, and IOPSA.

FOR

Defective plumbing by a PIRB-registered plumber, or a plumbing certificate issued wrongly.

HOW

PIRB runs a complaints process and can act against the registration.

Gas installations

WHO

SAQCC Gas.

FOR

A fixed gas installation done by an unregistered person, or a Certificate of Conformity that should not have been issued.

HOW

Report the registration number on the certificate to SAQCC Gas.

New homes and structural work

WHO

The National Home Builders Registration Council.

FOR

A builder who is not registered, a home that was not enrolled, or a major structural defect within five years.

HOW

NHBRC complaints, at any provincial office.

Security installations, alarms and guarding

WHO

The Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority.

FOR

Anyone providing a security service without PSIRA registration, or misconduct by a registered provider.

HOW

PSIRA takes complaints against registered and unregistered providers.

Pest control and pesticides

WHO

The Registrar of Act 36 of 1947 (the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act), at the Department of Agriculture.

FOR

Someone applying pesticides for payment without registration as a pest control operator, or a pesticide used in a way its label does not allow.

HOW

Report to the Registrar, with the operator's P-number if you have it. It is on their registration certificate.

Consumer bodies

Consumer Goods and Services Ombud

WHO

The consumer goods and services industry's ombud scheme, set up under the Consumer Protection Act.

FOR

A dispute with a supplier that you cannot resolve directly.

COST

Free to consumers.

HOW

cgso.org.za, or 0860 000 272.

National Consumer Commission

WHO

The statutory regulator under the Consumer Protection Act.

FOR

A supplier who will not cooperate, or conduct that breaches the CPA. The NCC can investigate and issue a compliance notice, and matters can go on to the National Consumer Tribunal.

HOW

thencc.gov.za, or 012 065 1940.

Provincial consumer affairs offices

WHO

Every province runs a consumer protection office.

FOR

Local complaints, often resolved faster than national ones. Useful where the tradesperson operates only in your province.

HOW

Search for your province's consumer affairs or economic development department.

The courts

Small Claims Court

FOR

Money claims up to the current limit, which was raised to R30 000 with effect from 1 August 2026. Check the current figure before you file, as it is increased from time to time.

COST

No fee, and no lawyers are allowed on either side. You present your own case to a Commissioner.

HOW

Your nearest Small Claims Court. Send a letter of demand first, then get a summons from the clerk. justice.gov.za lists every court.

Magistrate's Court

FOR

Claims above the Small Claims limit. The district court handles claims up to R200 000 and the regional court up to R400 000.

COST

Filing fees apply and you will usually want an attorney.

HOW

Your nearest Magistrate's Court.

Crime, fraud and safety

- **SAPS.** Report theft, fraud, assault, or a threat, at any station, and get the case number. Send it to us at safety@toolbox.africa and we will act on the account immediately.
- **Your bank.** If you were defrauded into paying the wrong account, phone your bank's fraud line the same day. Speed is the only thing that matters.
- **Their insurer.** If a tradesperson damaged your property or injured someone, their public liability insurance is the right route. Ask them for the policy details, or ask us and we will give you what we hold.

Personal information

Information Regulator (South Africa)

FOR

A complaint about how ToolBox, or a tradesperson, handled your personal information under POPIA, or a refused request under PAIA.

CONTACT

enquiries@inforegulator.org.za, 010 023 5200, or toll free 0800 017 160.

ADDRESS

JD House, 27 Stiemens Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001.

Free legal help

- **Legal Aid South Africa**, 0800 110 110, for people who qualify on means.
- **University law clinics**, at most South African universities, free civil advice.
- **Your local advice office**, listed by the National Alliance for the Development of Community Advice Offices.

7. Please also leave a review

If a job went badly and it is fairly described, a review helps the next homeowner more than anything else you can do. Keep it factual, keep it about your own experience, and follow the **Reviews and ratings policy** (toolbox.africa/legal/reviews). Threatening a review to get a discount is a breach of our rules, but leaving an honest bad one is your right and we will not remove it because a tradesperson asked us to.

If anything here is unclear, ask before you rely on it. We would rather explain a clause than argue about it later.