

Certification Appeals and Complaints

The American Jail Association (AJA) is committed to administering its certification programs in a fair, consistent, impartial, and professional manner. AJA provides processes through which certification candidates, certificants, and other interested parties may submit appeals or complaints related to AJA certification programs.

These procedures apply to the **Certified Jail Officer (CJO)** and **Certified Supervisor, (CJS) and Certified Jail Manager (CJM)** certification programs.

Certification Appeals

An appeal is a formal request for reconsideration of an adverse certification decision made by AJA or the appropriate certification governing body.

An appeal may relate to decisions involving:

- Eligibility for certification or recertification
- Denial of an application
- Examination administration or irregularities that may have materially affected a candidate's examination
- Denial of recertification
- Suspension or revocation of certification
- Other adverse certification decisions

Submitting an Appeal

Appeals must be submitted in writing and should clearly identify the decision being appealed, the reason the individual believes reconsideration is warranted, and any supporting documentation.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable certification program requirements, an appeal should be submitted within **30 calendar days** of notification of the decision being appealed.

Appeals should include:

- Name and contact information of the individual submitting the appeal
- Certification program involved

- Description of the decision being appealed
- Basis for the appeal
- Relevant supporting documentation
- Requested resolution, if applicable

Appeals may be submitted to:

American Jail Association

Attn: Certification Appeals

1135 Professional Court

Hagerstown, MD 21740

Email: pattyv@aja.org

Review of Appeals

AJA will acknowledge receipt of an appeal and forward it for review by the appropriate certification authority or designated review panel.

Individuals who participated directly in the decision being appealed, or who have an actual or perceived conflict of interest, should not participate in the determination of the appeal when practicable.

The appeal will be evaluated based on the applicable certification requirements, policies, documentation provided, and relevant circumstances.

The individual submitting the appeal will be notified in writing of the final determination.

Certification Complaints

AJA accepts complaints concerning the administration of its certification programs as well as complaints regarding individuals holding an AJA certification.

Submitting a complaint does not automatically result in disciplinary action. Complaints will be reviewed to determine whether further investigation or action is warranted.

Administrative or Program Complaints

Administrative complaints may concern the operation or administration of an AJA certification program, including matters such as:

- Certification procedures
- Application processing

- Examination administration
- Recertification administration
- Certification-related communications
- Application of published certification policies
- Other administrative aspects of the certification program

Whenever possible, individuals are encouraged to first attempt to resolve routine administrative matters directly with AJA certification staff.

If the matter cannot be resolved or the individual wishes to submit a formal complaint, the complaint should be submitted in writing.

Complaints Against Certified Persons

AJA also accepts complaints concerning individuals who currently hold an AJA certification.

Such complaints may involve allegations concerning:

- Misrepresentation or misuse of an AJA certification or credential
- Fraud or material misrepresentation in obtaining or maintaining certification
- Violation of applicable certification requirements
- Conduct that may constitute a violation of an applicable AJA certification code, standard, or professional requirement
- Other conduct that may warrant review of an individual's certification status

A complaint should be based on specific, documented information rather than speculation or general disagreement with the certificant.

Submitting a Complaint

Formal complaints should be submitted in writing and include sufficient information for AJA to understand and evaluate the matter.

Whenever possible, the complaint should include:

- Name and contact information of the complainant
- Name of the individual involved, if applicable
- Certification program involved
- Description of the complaint
- Relevant dates and circumstances
- Supporting documentation or other available evidence

Complaints may be submitted to:

American Jail Association

Attn: Certification Complaints

1135 Professional Court

Hagerstown, MD 21740

Email: pattyv@aja.org

Complaint Review and Investigation

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, AJA will conduct an initial review to determine whether the matter falls within the scope of the certification program and whether sufficient information has been provided to warrant further review.

AJA may request additional information from the complainant, certificant, candidate, or other relevant parties.

When a complaint involves a certified person and further investigation is warranted, the individual will generally be informed of the allegations and provided an appropriate opportunity to respond before a final determination is made.

Individuals responsible for reviewing a complaint should disclose potential conflicts of interest and, when appropriate, be recused from the review.

Confidentiality

AJA will make reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of appeals, complaints, investigations, and related information consistent with the need to conduct a fair and thorough review and comply with applicable legal or regulatory requirements.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when disclosure is necessary to investigate or resolve a matter.

Possible Outcomes

Depending upon the nature and findings of a review, an appeal or complaint may result in:

- No further action
- Administrative correction or other corrective action
- Reconsideration of a certification decision
- Additional review or investigation
- Written warning or other appropriate action
- Suspension or revocation of certification, when authorized under applicable certification policies
- Other action determined appropriate under AJA certification requirements

Any disciplinary action affecting certification status will be handled in accordance with applicable AJA certification policies and procedures.

Non-Retaliation

AJA prohibits retaliation within the administration of its certification programs against an individual for submitting a good-faith appeal or complaint or for participating in an associated review.

Knowingly submitting false or intentionally misleading information, however, may itself be subject to review.

Records

AJA will maintain appropriate records of formal appeals, complaints, reviews, decisions, and resulting actions in accordance with its certification program record-retention practices.

Questions

Questions regarding these procedures may be directed to:

American Jail Association – Certification Department

1135 Professional Court

Hagerstown, MD 21740

Email: pattyv@aja.org