

## **SIA Complaints Procedure**

Your purchase of a solar hot water system is covered by the Consumers Guarantees Act. For a good understanding of your rights visit the website <http://www.consumer-ministry.govt.nz/cgagoodsd.html>

In the unlikely event that you experience problems with your solar water-heating unit not performing to your expectations, it is suggested that you follow the procedure below.

1. You should first discuss your problem with the person from the company from whom you purchased your system. They are responsible for ensuring that the system is working properly.

Discuss your problem with them as soon as you become aware of it, as it may be something simple that can be quickly fixed. Sometimes there are little complexities in water supply systems in an existing or even new building that are not always obvious to the installer until your system has been installed.

To ensure that there is good communication between you and your supplier confirm your concern in writing. This will be a useful record if you have a continuing dispute. It also helps them to be clear on what the problem is. Date any communications in writing so that there is a clear sequential record.

2. Once you have raised the problem with the supplier ensure that they follow it up within a reasonable time period. However give them time to visit and fix the problem as they may have other scheduled jobs that depend on other tradespeople. If they haven't taken action on your concern within a reasonable time period contact them again to ensure that they have not forgotten your job.

If you have purchased your system from an accredited SIA member it is less likely that their product is the problem. It is more likely to relate to installation. Problems arising from inexperienced installers include:

- Not following the manufacturer's instructions or recommendations for installation.
- Installing parts such as valves back-to-front.
- Connecting to the wrong pipes.
- Not installing on the correct slopes or having the correct space or height between components.

Ask to see the installation manual yourself. Often when they have to explain it to you they notice something they have not done correctly.

3. If the problem persists follow up with further consultation with your supplier – and confirm your discussions in writing.

You may have purchased your system from an agent of a large company or your supplier may have engaged a local person to install your system. If the installer or the agent is not responding properly to your concerns, or is unable to fix the problem, then you should write to the Head Office of the principal supplier of

your system outlining your dissatisfaction. Attach copies of your correspondence to the installer / agent. The contact person for each SIA member is listed on the SIA website [www.solarindustries.org.nz](http://www.solarindustries.org.nz).

The principal supplier of your system will discuss your problem with the installer / agent and assist them to solve the problem.

4. If you still have a problem it is often cost effective to ask an alternative experienced installer in your area to give a second opinion. You may have to pay for that opinion but if there is a problem in the installation that they can identify you should be able to deduct the cost of inspection from your purchase price. If you are going to get a second opinion, and expect your installer to pay for the inspection if it identifies the problem, then advise your installer in writing prior to obtaining the opinion and ensure that they have adequate time to have completed their own remedial actions.

Remember that a good record of discussions helps to fix problems and ensures that all parties are fully informed. If you later have to resort to the Consumer Guarantees Act you will have protected your position by these records.

5. If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your problem then feel free to contact the Executive Officer of SIA. The SIA can not intervene in the relationship between you as purchaser, and the supplier, but it may be able to help facilitate resolution if discussion has broken down. It is also sometimes useful to have an independent person in the industry to discuss what is happening (or not happening). The Executive Officer is in regular contact with all SIA members, but as they are each independent businesses, they are the ones who have to ensure that their product meets the purpose for which you purchased it.
6. The ultimate forum for resolution of unresolved disputes is the Disputes Tribunal but with good will by all parties it is rare that this should be needed.