



INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS

CODE OF CONDUCT

**Prepared
by the
IFSAC
Ethics Committee**



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Acknowledgements

Many contributed to the development of this Code of Conduct. The Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipalities provided the Ethics Committee with the main template and we are grateful for their help. Members of IFSAC were asked numerous times for input and the members of the Committee were especially appreciative of all suggestions. Certainly, the IFSAC staff provided much help to each member of the committee.

What follows is a combination of existing rules, principles, normal practices, and expected norms of behavior. Each member of IFSAC represents fire and safety organizations which have their own well established standards of behavior. This provided us with framework to incorporate principles which apply to our work within IFSAC.

All of the members of the Committee extend our thanks to those who provided help over the last two and one-half years of development. Members of the Committee are:

Barbara Gagner, Committee Chair, State of Washington, Fire Protection Bureau
Larry Preston, IFSAC Parliamentarian, Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute
Bernie Mackinnon, Nova Scotia Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board
Terry Heyns, Lake Superior State University, Michigan
Randy Souther, Aims Community College, Colorado
Bernie Vrona, Hennepin Technical College, Minnesota
Rick Karasaki, Honolulu Fire Department, Hawaii
Brenda Popko, Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner, Emergency Services College
Doug Wood, Yavapai College (retired)
Geoff Burston, Justice Institute of British Columbia



International Fire Service Accreditation Congress – Ethical Conduct Policy

Date: _____

Approved: _____

Introduction

It is the policy of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) to establish a high standard of conduct and to hold all members and staff accountable to abide by the IFSAC Code of Conduct.

Objectives

- 1) Promote high standards of professional conduct.
- 2) Provide guidelines for identifying potential conflicts of interest and/or breaches of trust or confidence that impact and or affect IFSAC.
- 3) Help ensure that IFSAC members and staff do not place themselves, or permit themselves to be placed, in a position which would constitute a conflict of interest or breach of trust or confidence.

Definitions

Assembly - Means the Degree and Certificate Assembly

Council of Governors (COG) - The COG serves as a liaison between the two assemblies

IFSAC Assets – Includes all property and services of the IFSAC

Code – Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

All members and staff of IFSAC are required to abide by the following code:

Authority: Members of IFSAC and IFSAC committee members must not exceed their authority, breach the operating rules as defined in IFSAC bylaws, or ask others to do so.



- 1) ***Personal conduct:*** All members and staff of IFSAC will perform their duties with honesty and integrity in a manner that is helpful, respectful, and courteous and with due regard to equity, gender, age, disability and human dignity. Members of IFSAC will not behave in a manner that could result in a conflict of interest.
- 2) ***Professional conduct:*** IFSAC members are entrusted with upholding and adhering to the constitution, bylaws, and policies of the IFSAC.
- 3) ***Use of IFSAC property:*** Members will use and permit the use of IFSAC assets for the performance of IFSAC sanctioned duties or as approved. Members will safeguard and protect IFSAC assets. Members will not use IFSAC assets if the use could be offensive or inappropriate.
- 4) ***Obligations to membership:*** No member in authority shall grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any IFSAC member beyond that which is accorded to all members.
- 5) ***Disclosure of confidential and sensitive information:*** No IFSAC member shall, without proper authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the members or affairs of IFSAC; nor shall they use such information to advance the financial or personal interest of themselves or others.
- 7) ***Conflict of interest:*** No member of IFSAC shall engage in any business transaction or have a financial or personal interest, direct or indirect, which is incompatible with the proper discharge of their official duties or would impair, or reasonably give the perception of impairing, their independence of judgment or action in the performance of their duties.

Where an actual or perceived conflict of interest arises, IFSAC members are required to declare a conflict and take appropriate action to remove themselves from the conflict situation.

The following are situations which constitute general conflicts of interest:

- a) ***Incompatible employment:*** No IFSAC member shall engage in or accept private employment or render services for private interests when such employment or services are incompatible with the proper discharge of their official duties or would impair, or reasonably give the perception of impairing, their independence, judgment or action in the performance of their duties; or in which the individual has an advantage derived from their membership/employment with the IFSAC or puts the employee in competition with services provided by the IFSAC.
- b) ***Gifts and favors:*** No member of IFSAC shall show favoritism or bias toward any vendor, contractor, or others who do business with the IFSAC. Members of IFSAC are prohibited from accepting gifts or favors from any vendor, contractor or others doing business with the IFSAC that would tend to influence them in the



proper discharge of their official duties or where it may be perceived to be in exchange for special treatment. Members shall serve in a manner as to not receive undue personal gain from the performance of their official duties as IFSAC representatives.

- c) **Representing private interests before IFSAC's interest: Agency:** No member of IFSAC shall appear on behalf of private interests before any committee or structure of IFSAC without the consent of the Council of Governors.
 - i) No member or employee shall represent private interests in any action or proceeding against the interests of the IFSAC or in any litigation to which the IFSAC is party.
- d) **Contracts with IFSAC:** No member of the IFSAC shall have any interest, direct or indirect, in any legal IFSAC contract issued by them.
- 8) **Professional standards:** Institutions/entities shall demonstrate mutually, the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, and honesty, before, during, and after a site visit, to enhance both the degree and certificate level fire service programs internationally.
- 9) **Consultants:** Institutions/entities shall avoid any interest or activity which is in conflict with the conduct of the site team's official duties as IFSAC representatives, such as requesting them to serve as consultants prior to a site visit or discussing or accepting positions of employment with the entity prior to a final decision on accreditation.
- 10) **Information and assessment:** Institutions/entities shall present their self study information in a manner that allows the site team to determine that the institution is administering its program in a fair and equitable manner.
- 11) **Courtesy and respect:** Institutions/entities will treat each other with mutual respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness, recognizing that the improved service of an institution's/entity's degree/certificate program is more important than infliction of undue pressure and argument to achieve accreditation. Unresolved issues and differences in opinion shall be dealt with in a civil and courteous manner.
- 12) **Attitude and communication:** Institutions/entities shall approach the site visit process with a positive attitude and constructively support open channels of communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion when conducting/undergoing a site visit.
- 13) **IFSAC bylaws and criteria for accreditation:** Institutions/entities shall respect, support, study, and when necessary work to improve IFSAC by-laws and criteria for accreditation for improved quality and efficiency in the institution/entity and constituency it serves.



Reporting Breaches of this Code

Procedures

Preamble

Members of IFSAC and staff must act in accordance with the code. If there are questions about the appropriate application of the code to any situation, members and staff are to consult with the chair of the Ethics Committee.

Responsibilities

Members of IFSAC and staff are responsible for:

- 1) Signing a document acknowledging receipt of the Code.
- 2) Reading and complying with the Code.
- 3) Requesting clarification about any potential violation of the Code, including conflict of interest, and obtaining approval from the appropriate body.
- 4) Disclosure is important —
 - a. When a conflict of interest arises during an official discussion, the person in conflict shall immediately disclose the conflict to the body.
 - b. A member or staff shall, when practical, disclose in writing to the Ethics Committee any current personal, business, commercial, or financial interest which may result in a violation of the code, or a conflict of interest.
- 5) Reporting suspected violations of the Code to the Ethics Committee.
- 6) Cooperating with those performing an investigation.

Staff is responsible for:

- 1) Assisting members and staff in the administration, interpretation, and application of the Code.
- 2) Reporting any alleged violations of the Code to the chairperson of the Ethics Committee.

Ethics Committee is responsible for:

- 1) Ensuring that each member receives and acknowledges, in writing, receipt of a copy of the Code.



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- 2) Interpreting and clarifying the Code as needed.

The Council of Governors is responsible for:

Under development

Reporting a Violation

- 1) The identity of the complainant will be kept confidential, except as allowed for in criminal and civil law.
- 2) Retaliation will not be tolerated.
- 3) If retaliatory action occurs, the member should immediately report the action to the Ethics Committee chairperson.
- 4) Knowingly submitting a false report will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, in the case of an employee, and/or revocation of membership.