



Code of Ethics

for the Professional Practice of Occupational Hygiene

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Code of Ethics (The Code) guides and assists members of the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienist, Inc (AIOH or the Institute) on the minimum standard of ethics and professionalism required.

The Code provides the professional standard expected of AIOH members by workers, employers, clients, government, private organisations, PCBUs and members of the public. The Code also provides a benchmark and criteria for the AIOH Council which may use these to judge the behaviour of a member(s).

Nothing in the Code shall require a member to contravene any obligations under any relevant legislation or regulation.

The Code encourages members to speak up and report activity which may constitute actual or suspected behaviour that is not aligned with AIOH Strategic Plan.

Previous versions of this Code were revised to:

- better align with the specific requirements of Victorian code of ethics and minimum service standards for professional members of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Associations.
- incorporate feedback from AIOH members and members of the general public and.
- reinforce that AIOH members shall give *paramount consideration to worker health*.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this Code, unless the context makes it clear that another meaning is intended:

- **member** means any member holding a grade of membership as defined by the AIOH Rules and Statement of Purpose as well as those who are a Certified Occupational Hygienist®.
- **worker** means persons who are engaged in work which is the subject of the member advice.
- **employer** means the employer of the worker or persons in charge of a business of undertaking (PCBU).
- **general public** means the community at large.
- **as far as practicable** shall have the same meaning as so far as is practicable and so far as is reasonably practicable under state and territory Occupational Health and Safety, Work Health, and Safety Legislation.
- **consultant** means a member providing professional services on the basis of fee for service.
- **commentary** means any expression of opinion, any expression of interpretation, offering of comment or any remark which is given as made in a public forum, made in any advice given, through any form of media, at any professional gathering or in a private setting.
- **Council** means the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists, Inc, Council.
- **best scientific evidence** as would be determined by a peer group of professional members of the Institute.
- **best practice** means as published or recommended by the Institute, or as determined by a peer group of professional members of the Institute.
- **profession** means the occupation or business of providing advice in occupational hygiene.
- **client** shall mean;
 - (i) where the member is providing professional services as an employee to an employer for a salary, the employer of the member; and
 - (ii) where the member is providing professional services as a consultant for a fee, the person or business who has engaged the member to provide the professional services in return for a fee.

- (iii) where the member is providing professional advice or commentary in the field of occupational hygiene.

Throughout this Code the singular shall include the plural.

3.0 PURPOSE

The Code is intended to:

- 3.1 Clearly guide Institute members who may be subjected to contradictory pressures and enable them to act with integrity and objectivity.
- 3.2 Provide a benchmark for clients, employers, other professionals, and members of the general public against which to assess Institute members conduct.
- 3.3 Provide grounds for referring a member to the Institute's Council for alleged misconduct for which, following due process, the Council can warn, admonish, reprimand, suspend or expel a member and when deciding whether a member is fit to remain a member pursuant to clause 12.1 of the [Rules and Statement of Purposes](#) of the Institute.

4.0 SCOPE

The Code applies to paid and unpaid work (including voluntary contributions) provided or conduct of all members of AIOH.

5.0 SUMMARY

In providing advice to an employer, client or worker, members shall give paramount consideration to:

- 5.1 Their general obligation to act with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.
- 5.2 Their specific responsibility to protect workers health and safety and prevention of occupational injury and disease associated with exposure to physical, chemical, and biological hazards;
- 5.3 Their obligation to provide advice and commentary based on the best available facts and scientific methods within their areas of professional competence.
- 5.4 Their obligation to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.
- 5.5 requirement to maintaining confidentiality whilst disclosing only;
 - (i) when necessary to prevent occupational injury or disease; and
 - (ii) a duty to consider the reputation of other AIOH members and the Institute.

6.0 MEMBERS' SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The members primary responsibility is the health, safety and welfare of workers and others whose health and safety may be at risk or affected by the activities being undertaken by the worker, the employer or the client. This responsibility to worker health shall take precedence over responsibilities to commercial, sectional, or private interests. The member shall, therefore;

- 6.1 Advise workers, employers, clients and employees responsibly and competently so that healthy working conditions may be achieved and maintained as far as practicable.
- 6.2 Keep confidential, never use or share any information relating to employers or client's business operations or employees which is not common knowledge.
- 6.3 Advise the employer, client and public to prevent contraventions of any relevant legislation or professionally accepted standard and inform them if there are statutory duties to disclose findings to workers or their representatives.
- 6.4 Conduct all field investigations to best practice applying scientifically valid, approved or recognised standards of monitoring methodology, equipment and instrumentation, and standard analytical and calibration methods conducted by accredited testing laboratories, such as those prescribed by the regulator or other recognised occupational hygiene authorities.
- 6.5 Report findings clearly and factually to the client directly and to no other body without the permission of the client.
- 6.6 Where disclosure is to occur without permission, the member should notify the client and seek advice from the Institute if unsure.

7.0 INTEGRITY, HONESTY, OBJECTIVITY, IMPARTIALITY

Members shall:

- 7.1 Act with integrity and in a professional and responsible manner at all times.
- 7.2 Act impartially and objectively.
- 7.3 Act honestly and in accordance with legal obligations.
- 7.4 Ensure work done under their direction is competently performed and reliably reported.
- 7.5 Take an objective position in the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of environmental factors potentially adverse to health or safety.
- 7.6 Accurately and precisely report results or outcomes of monitoring and observations and conclusions as far as practicable.

8.0 COMPETENCE

Members shall:

- 8.1 Undertake adequate and appropriate training to maintain professional skills at a level necessary to provide competent advice.
- 8.2 Base advice or commentary on the best scientific evidence available at the time the advice was conceived.
- 8.3 Report clearly and factually and ensure that matters of opinion and judgment are founded on adequate knowledge and supporting evidence (if available) and are within the member's professional training, competence and experience.
- 8.4 Make public statements claiming professional knowledge in an area only if competent to do so and only if such statements do not amount to a breach of this Code.

9.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 9.1 In this section (9.0) conflicts of interest are defined as real, apparent or perceived conflicts of interest which could influence their reports, advice, commentary or decisions including financial, interests, personal, familial and relationships.
- 9.2 Members shall:
 - (i) Avoid conflicts of interest.
 - (ii) Declare any conflict of interests.
 - (iii) Report all real or potential conflict of interests to any parties that may be affected promptly and effectively.
 - (iv) Ensure details of any conflicts of interest are recorded and reported to the AIOH as appropriate.

10.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

Members shall:

- 10.1 Ensure that any information obtained is used solely for promoting occupational or public health and the conduct of occupational hygiene.
- 10.2 Respect the confidentiality of the information obtained during their work and only reveal such information to others with the consent of the people or organisations from whom the information was obtained or their legal representatives for the express purpose for which it was obtained.
- 10.3 Meet relevant federal and state privacy laws.

11.0 DISCLOSURE AND WHISTLEBLOWING

- 11.1 If a member becomes aware of an employer, organisation or PCBU breaching occupational health and safety legislation or standards likely to result in injury or disease, the member must respond promptly to the situation.
- 11.2 Before doing so, the member should seek advice from other hygiene professionals in the Institute and inform the employer or organisation of their ethical obligation to declare. In most cases, the member should be protected by 'whistle-blowers' legislation.
- 11.3 If there is no action on the part of the employer, organisation or PCBU and the only way of reducing the risk is to disclose their knowledge of the risk to a third party (e.g. WorkSafe, an employee health and safety representative or the workplace health and safety committee), the member should do so.
- 11.4 If a member becomes aware of another member's failure to comply with this Code, they may report the potential breach of this Code to the AIOH Secretary for confidential advice.

12.0 MAINTAINING STANDING AND REPUTATION OF THE PROFESSION

Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain, promote and improve the standing and reputation of the profession, in line with the AIOH Strategic Plan and the Code.

Specifically, members must uphold the occupational hygiene and environment profession and:

- 12.1 Provide commentary on occupational hygiene solely in their role as a member.
- 12.2 Avoid any conduct likely to discredit or misrepresent the profession, deceive the public, the Institute or government institutions.
- 12.3 Recognise and respect the expertise of other professionals, avoiding malicious, reckless damage to the professional reputation of another member.
- 12.4 Not make any commentary or take any action that could misrepresent the views of the AIOH.
- 12.5 Not engage in inappropriate use of media and social media.

13.0 RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS

Members shall when dealing with those using their service or advice:

- 13.1 Conduct themselves ethically.
- 13.2 Not offer or pay any financial or material inducement.
- 13.3 Advise them of any conflict of interest or any past, present or future actions that may compromise, or appear to compromise, the exercise of independent, professional judgment or conduct.
- 13.4 Provide proper and accurate representation of the member's capacities and competencies in all documents and statements as to the member's expertise or services to be provided.
- 13.5 Make responsible and proper undertakings and commitments to any employer and client regarding performance and outcomes of proposed or completed work.
- 13.6 Ensure that, as far as practicable, whenever risk of illness and injury is identified, it is clearly communicated to the persons who have the responsibility to control those risks.
- 13.7 Practise competently within the limits of their abilities and maintain their professional skills, competence and knowledge in the area(s) in which they work.
- 13.8 Not misrepresent their professional background falsify or misrepresent qualifications or allow any other person to do so on their behalf.
- 13.9 Give commentary or claim professional knowledge in an area of hygiene risks, general health risks or public interest only if competent to do so and only if based on sound personal investigation and adequate research of the risk.
- 13.10 Inform the client of any interest or employment such as might compromise the exercise of independent professional judgment or conduct.
- 13.11 Work for one client only on the same matter unless the consent of all relevant clients is obtained.

14.0 MANAGING COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

The Institute has implemented a procedure for managing complaints and disputes about professional conduct and breaches of this Code of Ethics. It may invoke disciplinary action by the AIOH Council up to and including expulsion from the Institute. Complaints, disputes and concerns for breaches of this Code of Ethics should be addressed to secretary@aioh.org.au