

Texas Recreation and Park Society

PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

The Texas Recreation and Park Society (TRAPS) has adopted a code of ethics to guide its membership, Board of Directors, committee members, and staff in their conduct when acting on behalf of TRAPS. The Code contains broad principles reflecting the types of behavior TRAPS expects towards constituents, employees, peers and the public. The Code is intended to provide a framework for ethical decision-making, as no Code can provide specific guidance for all situations. This policy is not intended as a stand-alone policy. It does not embody the totality of the TRAPS' ethical standards, nor does it answer every ethical question or issue that might arise. Rather, it is one element of a broader effort to create and maintain a quality organization that gives ethical conduct the highest priority. This Code will be reviewed periodically.

As TRAPS Member, Board member, council member, branch member, committee/task force member or staff member, I accept and agree to abide by this Code of Ethics, and pledge to conduct myself in a professional manner consistent with the following principles:

1. Recognize that TRAPS is an organization dedicated to advocate for and promote the parks and recreation profession as well as facilitate professional growth and development, and that each member has a responsibility to help reach these goals.
2. Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the general public, their peers and elected officials.
3. Work to instill public confidence in the parks and recreation field, its member agencies, professionals, and corporate and other affiliated partners, avoiding any action conducive to discrediting members of TRAPS.
4. Be mindful of representing one's individual agency/organization/company, as well as, TRAPS and not behave in any way that would harm the reputation of either.
5. Be respectful and courteous of TRAPS members, staff, volunteers, colleagues, corporate partners and other unaffiliated individuals present at all times; refrain from subjecting anyone to unwanted, offensive or potentially harmful behavior.
6. Avoid personal gain or profit from the performance of duties or responsibilities (e.g., not accept compensation or anything of value that is given to influence official action).

7. Not discriminate against or coerce a patron, citizen or colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, marital or family status, or sexual orientation.
8. Contribute to an organizational culture that respects the diverse, individual contributions of staff and leadership.
9. Adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, TRAPS bylaws/policies and the rules/policies of the member's agency/company.
10. Recognize that no code of conduct can anticipate every situation; therefore, common sense and good judgment should always be applied with regard to ethical and behavioral principles.

Compliance, Monitoring and Reporting:

Failure to abide by the Code of Ethics may result in one or more the following: informal reprimand, informal censure, removal of leadership position(s), and/or suspension or revocation of membership by the Board of Ethics. The nature and severity of the offense will be considered to determine the length of time for leadership probation. Continued violations of the Code of Ethics will be subject to review with possible exclusion from participation in TRAPS activities and/or expulsion from TRAPS.

All acts of "professional discipline" will be documented in writing and filed with the state office.

Filing a Complaint & Due Process

The process for reviewing complaints has been designed to ensure fairness and to allow for due process. Individuals accused of violating the Code of Ethics (respondents) are provided the opportunity to respond to the allegations against them and to seek further review of, and appeal, adverse decisions.

This right to due process is an important reason that the Board of Ethics will not accept anonymous complaints or agree to keep confidential and not disclose the identity of the individual filing the complaint (complainant) to the person complained against. The complainant may be biased and the respondent needs to know the identity of the complainant in order to present and support a claim of bias. Additionally, it is less likely that frivolous or malicious complaints will be filed if the complainant is known. Finally it is much easier for the Board of Ethics to determine the veracity and credibility of evidence submitted if the source of that evidence is known.

Complaints of code violations must be submitted in writing and mailed to the TRAPS Executive Director or President of the Society.

Report of Findings

The Board of Ethics will only consider the evidence provided by complainants and respondents to reach its decision. If the Board of Ethics determines that there was insufficient evidence to support a finding that a Code violation occurred, the respondent and the complainant will be notified of the board's determination as a Final Decision, and the matter will be considered closed. If the individual is found to be in violation, the Board of Ethics will specify which Rules of Ethics were violated and determine a sanction. For additional procedural information see "Practices and Procedures of the Board of Ethics".