

National Operating Policy #27

Subject: Code of Ethics – Complaints, Investigations and Discipline

Approved: June 2020 by the Board

Revised: June 2025

Objective and Rationale

All persons applying for membership or renewing membership in the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) must acknowledge the CIPHI Code of Ethics (Code) and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the fundamental principles and ethics in the Code. The objective of this National Operating Policy #27 (Policy) is to establish CIPHI's response to complaints of behavior that is non-compliant with the Code.

The Board has the authority to discipline a Member for violating the Code under By-Law #1 Section 2.06.

Definitions

Board means the CIPHI Board of Directors (Board)

CIPHI is the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors

Code is the CIPHI Code of Ethics

Ethics Committee is a standing committee established by the Board to assess and respond to ethics complaints and develop and administer a discipline process in accordance with the CIPHI By-Laws and policies

Expulsion of Member means that the Member is permanently excluded from membership in CIPHI

Member means a member of CIPHI

Suspension of membership means that a Member is terminated and excluded from holding membership in CIPHI until conditions of reinstatement attached to their suspension are met.

Termination of membership means that an existing membership is cancelled, and the person no longer holds a valid membership in CIPHI

Policy Scope

1.1 In Scope

Interests of the Public and CIPHI

The Code is intended to guide Members in their moral obligations related to their membership in CIPHI as a professional organization. Members are expected to follow the By-Laws, Standards of Practice and National operating Policies of CIPHI. As ambassadors of public health and of CIPHI, Members must conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the environment public health profession. Therefore:

- CIPHI will review Code complaints against a Member and take disciplinary action where appropriate in accordance with its By-Laws and policies when it involves actions, activities or relationships that could negatively impact the interests of CIPHI or could place CIPHI at a disadvantage or in disrepute.

Specific Operations

2.1

Complaint Intake Procedure

- A complaint regarding an alleged Code violation involving a Member must be submitted in writing on the form “Code of Ethics Compliance Complaint” available from the CIPHI National Office (the “Office”).
- The Office will send an e-mail confirmation of receipt to the complainant.
- The Office will forward complaint to the Lead of the Board Ethics Committee, or their delegate, within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the complaint.
- The Lead will review the complaint to determine whether the allegations, if proven, could be a violation of the Code (an “in-scope complaint”) or whether the allegations, even if proven, do not fall under the Code (an “out-of-scope complaint”).
- If it is an out-of-scope complaint, the complainant will be informed by the Lead and no further action will be taken.

2.2

Ethics Committee Investigation

- The Lead will make every effort to convene the Ethics Committee and complete the investigation of an in-scope complaint within 30 days of receipt from the Office.
- In the event the complaint causes a conflict of interest with a member of the Ethics Committee the member will be excused from the Ethics Committee for the duration of the investigation and may be replaced by another Board member appointed by the Chair.
- All persons involved in an investigation of an alleged Code violation are responsible for the protection of personal and sensitive information and the fair handling of it at all times in accordance with National Operating Policy #2.
- A Member will be notified when a complaint against them is under investigation and be provided an opportunity to communicate with the Ethics Committee regarding the allegations against them.
- The investigation process will be as follows:
 - review the complaint;
 - inform the Member of the complaint;
 - interview the complainant and gather any relevant documents;
 - interview any witnesses, if necessary, and gather any relevant documents;

- provide the Member with the details of the allegations;
- interview the Member and gather any relevant documents;
- prepare a written summary of the evidence gathered, make credibility assessments and make findings of fact (on a balance of probabilities), determine whether misconduct has occurred (and set out the level of misconduct – see section 2.3 below), attach relevant documents to the written summary provide a recommendation to the Board regarding discipline, if appropriate;
- A complaint may be impossible to substantiate if the complainant and the Member have differing opinions as to what transpired and there is no reliable evidence of a Code violation. Unsubstantiated complaints will be dismissed with no further action taken.

2.3

Levels of Misconduct

The following are examples of misconduct listed in order of seriousness (minor to gross):

- the Member has been found in violation of the Code but no actual harm or damage has been done to CIPHI;
- the Member violates the Code a third time within 5 years of two previous substantiated complaints;
- a Member's response to being notified of a Code violation complaint indicates non-compliance was intentional and/or they are unwilling or unable to comply with the Code;
- a violation involves behaviors for which CIPHI has "zero tolerance" (for example, personal or sexual harassment, physical, verbal, or emotional abuse or discrimination); or
- the violation has caused actual harm to CIPHI and/or obstructed the business of a provincial branch of CIPHI, the Board or any working groups, committees etc. associated with the branches or the Board.

2.4

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action against a Member recommended by the Ethics Committee must be approved by a simple majority vote of the Board. Members of the Ethics Committee who are Board members may take part in the vote.

The degree of discipline should be proportional to the seriousness of the misconduct. Disciplinary action against a Member includes but is not limited to:

- a written warning regarding the consequences of further violations;
- Member required to complete an ethics course acceptable to the Board;
- suspension or permanent withdrawal of Member's appointment to CIPHI committees or activities;
- suspension or expulsion of CIPHI membership (in accordance with By-Law #1 Section 2.06).
- termination of membership following expulsion (in accordance with By-Law #1 Section 2.05).

Consideration of the impact on the Members ability to retain the use of their professional designation must be considered when determining disciplinary action.

In the event the Board determines that a Member should be expelled or suspended from membership By-Law #1 Section 2.06 (b)(c) is to be implemented. The Board's decision shall be final and binding on the member, without any further right of appeal.

2.5. Documentation and Communication

- The details of the complaint, details of the review process, Ethics Committee written summary and any corrective action taken shall be documented and securely retained for 5 years by the Office.
- The complainant and the Member will be advised of the outcome of the review in a manner the Board deems appropriate for the situation, respecting the confidentiality and privacy of the individuals involved in the process.
- Notice of any disciplinary action will be sent to the Member from the Office by registered letter or e-mail.

2.6

Notice of Suspension

Notice of suspension of participation in CIPHI activities or suspension of membership must include details of the duration of the suspension and any other conditions that must be met by the Member for the Board to consider reinstating the Member. Conditions may include but are not limited to:

- a minimum 6 months suspension of participation in CIPHI activities
- a minimum 6 months suspension of membership
- successful completion, within an established condition period, of an ethics course acceptable to the Board and provision of written proof to the Board of having done so.

Accountability

The Board of Directors holds the accountability to ensure complaints of Code of Ethics violations are reviewed according to this policy.

Supporting Documents

Attachments / Appendices

1. Code of Ethics (June 2020)

Document Change History

Revised: June 2025

APPENDIX 1



Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
L'Institut canadien des inspecteurs en santé publique

Revised June 2020

Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors Code of Ethics

CIPHI Vision

Personal Growth... Professional Success

CIPHI Mission Statement

CIPHI represents and unites Environmental Public Health professionals across Canada. We advance the profession and field of Environmental Public Health through certification, advocacy, education and professional competencies. Through this we protect the health of all Canadians.

Preamble

All members of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) have moral obligations relating to their professional practice in return for the trust given to them by society. They are obliged to uphold the law and to act to protect the public's health. Members are required to follow the By-Laws, and the Standards of Practice of CIPHI. All members must conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the environmental public health profession.

Principles

CIPHI Members must promote and maintain these seven fundamental principles of conduct and ethics.

Principle 1: Justice

Environmental Public Health Professionals (EHPs) are dedicated in their career and commitment to the public. Each member respects that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or social distinction. EHPs shall uphold the principles of justice by safeguarding human rights, equity, and fairness by promoting the public good. Justice is defined as "the quality of being righteous, equitable and moral" EPHP's must always consider the concept of justice while performing their duties. EPHP's shall:

- Perform the duties of the profession in a moral and righteous manner
- Always strive to behave in an honorable fashion
- Identify and take action to mitigate any conflicts of interest
- Refrain from any criminal activity in the practice of the job including substance abuse or, sexual misconduct
- Not use the influence of their position for personal gain or to harm others
- Refrain from knowingly accepting gifts or any form of remuneration from clients
- Ensure that all records are accurate and shall not falsify any documents
- Maintain the confidentiality of clients, colleagues, their employer and CIPHI
- Always maintain the integrity of the profession and report the indiscretions of others

Principle 2: Inclusion

CIPHI members are unique individuals who are united by our dedication to environmental public health. It is important to CIPHI as a professional organization to do our part to ensure that all members have equal opportunities regardless of ethnicity, race, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, and parental status; and that they are free from harassment and discrimination. CIPHI encourages the inclusion of all people in its operations and events.

Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines Diversity as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: The inclusion of different types of people in a group or organization" and defines Inclusion as "The act of including: the state of being included".

Our inherent diversity is an important part of what makes our professional organization so rich and robust. Our differences mirror the diversity of our client base and bring us the skills and talents of a knowledgeable profession that is in touch with the people we work so hard to keep healthy.

EPHPs believe that no person shall be discriminated against, regardless of ethnicity, race, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, and parental status.

CIPHI will make every effort to ensure that its structure, policies and systems promote an inclusive atmosphere and provide equal access to all its members. CIPHI encourages individuals to participate fully in all CIPHI operations and events that they wish to. Discriminatory or oppressive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Principle 3: Accountability

EPHPs are accountable for their actions and answerable for their practice. As a member, an individual must practice with integrity, honesty and loyalty to CIPHI and the profession. Collectively, members have an obligation to the public - whose trust they hold - and to safeguard these interests honestly and wisely. Each member practices under conditions that neither compromise professional standards, nor impose such conditions on others. Members shall:

- Be accountable for their actions to both their employer and CIPHI
- Work to identify their limitations and seek help when needed
- Ensure that personal issues do not compromise professional performance

- Seek assistance and support when needed for personal and professional matters
- Conform to and cooperate with any disciplinary measures as imposed by CIPHI such as education, suspension or expulsion
- Not interfere with investigations into their conduct or the conduct of others
- Report any known violations of the code of ethics

Principle 4: Privacy & Confidentiality

EPHPs recognize the importance of privacy and confidentiality. They safeguard personal, health, family, corporate, and community information obtained in the context of a professional relationship. Members are aware and respectful of privacy laws designed to protect and preserve people's right to privacy. Members shall:

- Follow all employer policies regarding information and privacy
- Take all necessary precautions when accessing, collecting, storing, disclosing or using information
- Only disclose personal or sensitive information in accordance with any and all provincial and federal privacy legislation
- Not use the information gained through their employment for personal gain

Principle 5: Evidence-Informed Decision Making

Members have an obligation to the sciences and arts for the advancement of the field of environmental public health. They shall continuously search for truths; refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection; and disseminate their findings for the benefit of all. Members are committed to basing their practice and policy work on reliable sources of health evidence. In the absence of conclusive health evidence and in the face of uncertain risk, EPHP's will follow the precautionary principle to safeguard the public they serve and will uphold a high degree of health protection. Members shall:

- Strive to advance the field through research and evaluation
- Ensure that all opinions and advice given are within their area of expertise

Principle 6: Health, Well-Being & Collaboration

Each member collaborates with other health professionals and stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients and communities by understanding and placing value on the individual roles and contributions of others. Members shall:

- Act for the safety and welfare of the public and of CIPHI
- Work collaboratively and respectfully with other agencies and health professionals to provide the best possible outcomes for the population of their communities

Principle 7: Competent Practice

Membership types not required in the CIPHI By-Laws to participate in the CIPHI continuing professional competency program are exempt from Principle 7.

EHPs strive to be current in their professional knowledge and recognize its relationship to practice. Members apply the knowledge, skills and experience needed in carrying out their duties in the field. Practitioners actively participate in and adhere to the objectives and requirements of the Continuing Professional Competencies (CPC) program as it relates to their respective scope of practice. They strive to keep themselves fully informed of the broader advancements in the field of public health. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge. Members shall:

- Complete their required professional development hours
- Take responsibility for their own professional development
- Share knowledge with others and assist students and colleagues to fill knowledge gaps
- Identify their own knowledge gaps through self-evaluation or with the assistance of others and work to fill those gaps

Complaints, Investigations and Discipline

For reporting of violations of the Code of Ethics, along with details of complaint, investigation, and discipline process, please refer to National Policy #27.