



Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

Excerpted from the AAP Policies and Procedures (amended May 2024)

Article XI – AAP Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct are to establish ethical and professional guidelines for assessing officials and other members of the Assessor's Association of Pennsylvania (AAP) and to set forth the standards by which to judge an AAP member whose conduct is in question. Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect favorably on themselves, the appraisal profession, the property tax system and the AAP, and avoid any action that could discredit themselves or these entities.

1. Performance

Perform their duties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and apply them uniformly and fairly. Perform all appraisal or other assessment-related assignments to the best of their ability and in accordance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice adopted by the AAP and the State Laws.

2. Access to Information and Records

Make available all public records in their custody for the public review unless access to such records is specifically limited or prohibited by law, or the information has been obtained on a confidential basis and the law permits such information to be treated confidentially. Make every effort to inform the public about their rights and responsibilities under the law and the property tax system.

3. Respectful Attitude

Maintain an open, courteous and respectful attitude in their dealings with the public and require the same of their subordinates.

4. Public Officials

Cooperate with public officials to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the property tax in particular and public administration in general.

5. Conduct and Propriety

Conduct their duties and activities in a manner that will reflect credit upon themselves and their profession. Members shall avoid the appearance of impropriety.

6. Professional Qualifications

Claim no professional designation unless authorized by the conferring organization, whether the claim be oral or written, nor claim qualifications that are not factual or may be misleading. Strive to increase knowledge and improve professional skills.

7. Recognition

Give full credit to the source of any material quoted or cited in writings or speeches.

8. Prohibited Activities

Accept no appraisal or assessment-related assignment that could reasonably be construed as being in conflict with their responsibility to their jurisdiction, employer or client or in which they have an unrevealed personal interest or bias or which they are not qualified to perform.

9. Contingent Compensation

Accept no appraisal engagement for which their compensation is contingent upon or influence by any condition that could impair their objectivity, including but not limited to:

- a. Reporting a predetermined conclusion or recommendation of value,
- b. The amount of the value estimate,
- c. The amount of a reduction in taxes,
- d. Any other similar action or result.

10. Advertising and/or Solicitation

Use no advertising or promotion to solicit assessment-related assignments that are not totally accurate and truthful, and avoid using, misleading claims or promises of relief that could lead to loss of confidence in appraisal or assessment professionals by the public.

11. Reporting Unethical Practices

Report to AAP any unethical practices or other actions by AAP members which reflect discredit upon the AAP or upon the appraisal or assessment profession.

12. AAP Officers and Board of Governors

Cooperate fully with the Executive Board, Professional Ethics Committee and staff of the AAP in all matters relating to the enforcement of this code.

13. Responsibility of Membership

Subscribe to this Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct and the Bylaws of the AAP as they may be amended from time to time. *(Amended July 13, 2018)*

14. Discrimination and Disabilities

AAP does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex or color. AAP members also support the American with Disabilities Act.

Article XII – Amendments

Section 1 -- The Policies and Procedures may be amended at any time by the Board.

Section 2 -- Any such amendments must be submitted in writing twenty (20) days prior to the Board meeting at which they are to be considered.

Section 3 -- Approval shall be by a majority vote of the Board.

Section 4 – Any resolutions referenced in this document can be found on the AAP website, www.paassessors.org.

AAP Code of Conduct for Attendees

Effective February 1, 2018

By registering for AAP-sponsored events, all attendees agree to abide by the AAP Code of Conduct as described below. AAP’s expectation is that each attendee recognizes that they are adults that represent their county or company when attending AAP-sponsored events and will conduct themselves accordingly. All attendees are expected to abide by the AAP Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, including those that are not yet licensed as Certified Pennsylvania Evaluators (CPEs). A copy of these policies will be provided upon request.

Applicability: This Code of Conduct shall apply during all classes, educational offerings, seminars, conferences and events sponsored by AAP which are monitored by AAP.

This Code of Conduct shall be observed by all attendees during AAP-sponsored events both on the AAP premises and at offsite locations such as hotels, conference centers, office buildings and other locations where AAP may hold classes. It does not apply to social events that are not sponsored or monitored by AAP.

Purpose: AAP wants to make certain that everyone attending an AAP-sponsored class, conference or other event is able to participate fully in the educational programs offered without fear of harassment or disruption from other attendees. AAP is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to learning and part of that is a reasonable expectation that AAP attendees will behave as adults.

The Code of Conduct delineates behavioral expectations and the means for holding attendees accountable when allegations of misconduct arise. The Code of Conduct also affords attendees certain rights designed to ensure due process. This discipline system is intended to allow attendees to demonstrate their capacity for accountability, responsibility, and respect for others.

Every attendee must understand that violations of the AAP Code of Conduct and/or Standards of Professional Conduct (Title 49 § 36.281) shall be grounds for disciplinary action which may include expulsion from classes/conferences and/or permanent or temporary revocation of AAP membership without refund. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis by the AAP Board of Appeals. Depending upon the type of conduct involved, attendees should understand that law enforcement or other public authorities may also be informed about the conduct.

Specific Examples of Improper Conduct: The following types of misbehavior shall be grounds for disciplinary action. Certain categories of behavior have been set forth and specific examples of such behavior are given only as examples of the types of conduct mentioned. This list is not intended to list all possible types of misbehavior that may subject a attendee to disciplinary action. Certain infractions will result in immediate expulsion from an event, class or conference as indicated.

Alcohol: Attendance at any class, educational offering or seminar while visibly under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate expulsion from the class in addition to other discipline as determined by the Board of Appeals.

Drug Use/Possession: The use or possession of any drug not prescribed for the person in possession of the drug or controlled substance by an attendee or an attendee found to be under the influence of any drug or controlled substance, including possession of drug paraphernalia, will not be tolerated.

Attendees found in possession of controlled or illegal substances (which includes open containers of alcohol) will be dealt with severely and will immediately be expelled.

Additional disciplinary measures may be taken such as suspension, revocation of membership, mandatory referral to legal authorities, and referral for community agency counseling services, as appropriate.

Physical Contact, Threats, Harassment: Physical use of force or violence by an individual against another and uninvited physical contact will not be tolerated. This includes threats to cause physical harm to another person with or without the use of a weapon. Likewise, fighting defined as two or more persons mutually participating in the use of force or physical violence that requires physical or verbal restraint or results in injury that requires first aid or subsequent medical attention is prohibited. Such conduct will result in immediate expulsion from an AAP-sponsored class or event and other discipline as determined by the Board of Appeals.

Bullying, unwanted and/or repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including threats, insults, or dehumanizing gestures will not be tolerated. Such conduct can create a hostile environment that is severe or pervasive enough to interrupt the educational environment AAP is committed to providing for all attendees. It should be noted that this includes sexual harassment defined as unwanted and repeated verbal or physical behavior with sexual connotations that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Such conduct may result in immediate expulsion from an AAP-sponsored class or event and other discipline as determined by the Board of Appeals.

Weapons Possession: Possession of any instrument or object that can inflict serious harm on another person or that can place a person in reasonable fear of serious injury, including but not limited to: any firearms, handguns, Tasers, zip guns, knives, brass knuckles, razor blades, chains, dangerous chemicals, explosives, sharp objects, etc. is prohibited.

Other Disruptive Behavior:

Profanity: Use of profanity, and/or vulgar, abusive, or inappropriate language or gestures will not be tolerated and any infraction will result in discipline as determined appropriate by the Board of Appeals.

Cell Phone Use: Use of any communication or recording device in a manner that is disruptive to the class, such as cell phones, text messaging devices, or digital cameras, during instructional activities, (which is not instructor approved or directly associated to the lesson) is prohibited unless the instructor grants specific permission to use the device.

Offense Consequences: 1st – Warning, 2nd - Suspension from class/conference

Cheating: Deliberate distribution or use of information, notes, materials, or work of another person in the completion of an academic exam, test, or assignment.

Offense Consequences: Zero Grade, Suspension from class and/or review by the Board of Appeals; 2nd - Suspension from class/conference

Safety Violation: Engaging in an act that endangers the safety of self or others.

Offense Consequences: Suspension from class/conference and Review by the Board of Appeals and notification of law enforcement or other authorities, as warranted under the circumstances.

Disciplinary Procedure:

1. Alleged violations of this Code of Conduct or other misconduct are to be referred to AAP Board of Appeals or AAP staff by the class instructor and/or class monitors. The only exception to this requirement is in cases involving exigent circumstances requiring the attendee's immediate removal. In these cases, the class instructor may remove an attendee from a class but must report the incident to the AAP Board of Appeals the same day for further review.
2. An individual who is the victim of an alleged violation of this Code of Conduct may refer the incident to the AAP Board of Appeals or AAP staff.
3. The charges will be investigated by the Board of Appeals with the assistance of AAP staff. After careful consideration of the facts, the Board of Appeals will determine the exact disciplinary action to be taken, if any.
4. If a formal complaint is to be filed against an attendee, the attendee will be notified in writing of the nature of the charges against him/her and the date and place of the AAP Appeal Board administrative review.
5. The attendee and their employer (if employed by a county) will be notified in writing of the disciplinary action to be taken by the Board of Appeals, if any, as soon as possible following the administrative review.

Types of Discipline: The AAP Board of Appeals has the right to determine the appropriate disciplinary response for misconduct based on the facts and circumstances of each individual incident. Discipline that the AAP Board of Appeals may use depending upon the particular circumstances of the offense include the following and may involve more than one response depending upon the facts of a particular incident:

1. **Warning:** A written reprimand to the attendee indicating that repetition of said act will be cause for further disciplinary action;
2. **Restitution:** Reimbursement or payment for damage to or misappropriation of property;
3. **Suspension:** Exclusion from classes/conferences as set forth in the notice of suspension for a defined period of time. Any class or conference registration fees would be forfeited.
4. **Membership Revocation:** Revocation of AAP membership for a minimum of one year. Any membership dues monies would be forfeited. See Article VII of the AAP Bylaws for expulsion procedures.
5. **Reporting:** Actions may be in violation of Title 49, § 36.281, Standard 8 Reporting of Unethical Practices and/or Act 28 necessitating notification of the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers.

Appeals from Disciplinary Action:

The following procedures are to be followed:

Any appeal must be made in writing no later than five (5) working days following the date of written notification to the attendee. There are three grounds for appeal:

- (1) Improper disciplinary procedures followed.
- (2) New, relevant or mitigating evidence that was unavailable to the attendee at the time of the original hearing.
- (3) Discipline recommended by the Board of Appeals is excessive given the particular facts of the incident.

Re-admittance to AAP after Disciplinary Suspension

Attendees under disciplinary suspension may attend AAP events and classes following the specified time period identified in the suspension notice. Attendees who have been removed from AAP membership may request readmission to the AAP but such readmission is not guaranteed.

Important Note: All attendees acknowledge their understanding that any AAP disciplinary action is in addition to and not in lieu of the rights of any victim to file a complaint with law enforcement or pursue other legal rights for redress from the perpetrator. *(Added April 24, 2018)*

For Code of Ethics.

The Pennsylvania Code: Title 49. Professional and Vocational Standards
Chapter 36 State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers;
Chapter 36.201 Subchapter C Certified Pennsylvania Evaluators

Act 28 of 1992, Amended 2020

Amended May 7, 2024