



The Association for Challenge Course Technology

An International Association Serving the Global Challenge Course Community

# CODE OF ETHICS

## **Statement of Purpose**

It is understood and expected that members of ACCT at every level strive to conduct business and interact with the highest good of the challenge course community in mind, including the clients, vendors, end users, and ACCT itself. The Code of Ethics serves to provide a frame of reference for members of ACCT and those served by the members. All ethical standards apply to vendors, practitioners, and program providers who hold membership within ACCT and to their staff, representatives, volunteers, and contractors. All members of ACCT are expected to follow the standard of ethical conduct as defined and detailed here. Vendors are organizations that provide services such as installation, training, or programming to other organizations. Practitioners are individuals who provide services to end users, either working independently or through a vendor. Program providers are organizations that provide program services to end users/participants. This code is not intended to establish a legal duty among ACCT members or to persons or entities served by ACCT members where one would not otherwise exist.

### **This document will...**

1. Clarify the ethical conduct expected of members of the Association for Challenge Course Technology.
2. Support the mission and the vision of the Association for Challenge Course Technology.
3. Establish ethical guidelines for professional behavior and business practices.
4. Provide a foundation for use in reviewing and addressing ethical concerns and complaints within the association membership.

## **ACCT Mission Statement**

The Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) establishes and promotes the standard of care and measure of excellence that defines professional practice and effective challenge course programs. ACCT develops, refines, and publishes standards for installing, maintaining, and managing challenge courses; provides forums for education and professional development; and advocates for the challenge course industry.

## **ACCT Vision Statement**

The Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) is recognized as the leading professional resource for those who create safe and effective challenge course programs that facilitate learning and positive change in individuals, groups, and communities.

## **ACCT Code of Ethics**

### **1. Sales and Marketing**

- 1 (a) Vendors and practitioners accurately identify their type of membership or accreditation with ACCT.

*Example: whether an organization is a PVM or an Institutional member.*

- 1 (b) Vendors and practitioners accurately communicate to clients and potential clients their certifications and accreditations relative to ACCT standards.

*Example: practitioners communicating their level of certification, or vendors communicating the practices for which they have been accredited.*

- 1 (c) Vendors and organizations adhere to ACCT policies and guidelines for use of the ACCT logo.

*Example: obtaining written permission from ACCT for any and all use of the ACCT logo.*

- 1 (d) Vendors and practitioners accurately identify their competence and professional experience as installers, inspectors, facilitators, trainers, and so on. This includes both vendors who sell services and employees who work for vendors and program providers.

- 1 (e) Vendors and practitioners accurately represent their level of education and training as well as licensure, if any.

*Example: contractor's license for organizations and individual credentials such as counseling degrees or similar.*

- 1 (f) Vendors and practitioners market themselves in a positive manner. Vendors and practitioners avoid false or unfair statements about competitors.

### **2. Competence**

- 2 (a) Vendors and practitioners accept only work that fits within vendor/program provider's training/education, experience, and competence. Vendors and practitioners recognize when additional competence and expertise is needed and have a system in place to bring in the necessary core competence or expertise, or to refer out to a qualified vendor, program provider, or practitioner.

*Example: installers who need additional engineering expertise or program providers who need additional professional training to provide corporate development programs.*

2 (b) Vendors and practitioners have systems in place to assess an organization's and individual's competence in order to properly assign responsibilities.

2 (c) Vendors and practitioners strive to provide products and services that meet ACCT written standards and, in the absence of written standards, follow commonly accepted practices.

*Example: the use of proof-tested materials such as quick links or cable clamps versus non-verified materials.*

### **3. Professional Responsibility**

3 (a) Vendors and practitioners install, train, operate, and inspect according to ACCT and other applicable standards.

3 (b) Vendors and practitioners will take reasonable steps to manage the risks associated with challenge course activities.

*Example: an employer providing appropriate personal protective equipment to employees and a program having systems in place to account for weather or gear retirement. This relates to the installers of the course, the staff who facilitate, and the end user.*

*It is important to note that all challenge course-related activities—training, facilitating, and participating—have inherent risks to them. These risks are integral to the activities, and without them the activity would lose its value and appeal.*

3 (c) Vendors and practitioners strive to maintain professional communication, interaction, relationships, and dealings with all stakeholders.

*Example: one vendor talking to another about differences in interpretation of the ACCT standards. Stakeholders can include, but are not limited to, owners, creditors, clients, competitors, or peers.*

3 (d) Vendors and practitioners follow business practices that maintain or enhance the professional standing of the field.

*Example: vendors and organizations providing documentation in a timely manner.*

3 (e) Vendors and practitioners follow business practices that maintain and enhance the profession.

3 (f) Vendors and practitioners demonstrate a commitment to be guided by the best interests of the program participants, client organizations, and membership of ACCT.

3 (g) Vendors and practitioners make a clear distinction between ACCT standards, industry standards, and company or personal preferences.

*Example: statements in challenge course inspection letters as well as operations on specific challenge courses.*

3(h) Vendors and practitioners are aware of and work to avoid professional and personal conflicts of interest in their business practices.

*Example: personal relationships with staff and/or clients that conflict with or distract from professional dealings.*

#### **4. Confidentiality and Protected Information**

4 (a) Vendors and practitioners adhere to applicable laws and commonly accepted practices with regard to legally protected information, including (but not limited to) copyrights, trademarks, and patents.

4 (b) Vendors and practitioners protect the practices and designs of other organizations and individuals when there is an understanding or agreement to do so.

*Example: variations on activities that have been specially designed by a program and that the program deems, or might reasonably deem, confidential.*

4 (c) Vendors and practitioners adhere to laws and commonly accepted practices pertaining to protected client information, including (but not limited to) medical or therapeutic information.

#### **5. Management/Administration**

5 (a) Vendors and practitioners follow commonly accepted ethical practices with regard to recruiting, hiring, training, supervising, and managing staff.

*Example: vendors and practitioners accurately describe the work and benefits when recruiting employees; vendors and practitioners take corrective action with employees to ensure optimal training and performance.*

5 (b) Vendors and practitioners follow commonly accepted industry management and administrative practices.

*Example: the use of contracts or annual inspections of challenge courses.*

5 (c) Vendors and practitioners adhere to all standards and/or requirements applicable to their ACCT membership.

*Example: for a PVM, include record keeping for certification or inspections.*

5 (d) Vendors and program providers adhere to industry standards for proper insurance coverage to protect employees, clients, and end users.

*Example: carrying appropriate liability insurance as well as workers' compensation, where needed.*

## **6. Resolving Ethical Dilemmas**

6 (a) Vendors and practitioners are proactive in preventing ethical dilemmas through open communication with affected parties.

6 (b) Vendors and practitioners resolve ethical issues according to ACCT procedures.

ACCT has a Grievance and Mediation Procedure in place for organizations and individuals who cannot resolve ethical issues on their own. For more information or to request forms, please contact the Executive Director or any member of the Ethics Committee.

## Grievance and Mediation Procedure

Many issues can be resolved with direct, open, and honest communication. The Grievance and Mediation steps described below are designed to help individuals and organizations who have not been able to resolve issues on their own. Participation in the grievance and mediation process does not preclude the right to legal recourse. The Ethics Committee reserves the right to not review a grievance.

This process applies directly to members of ACCT and those parties affected by them.

1. Communicate your concerns to the other person(s) or organizations involved in the dispute, and attempt to resolve the conflict. If unsuccessful, continue as follows.
2. Initiate contact with the Executive Director or any member of the ACCT Ethics Committee, and request a conflict/grievance form.
  - a. All conflicts or grievances will be brought to the attention of the Executive Director *and* chair of the Ethics Committee.
3. Give a copy of the original conflict grievance form to the other party so that they can reply. A conflict/grievance form is given to the both parties to respond.
4. Create a mediation team, which might include representation from committees that focus on the issue.
  - a. The mediation team is agreed upon by both parties.
5. Schedule mediation time.
  - a. The mediation may be conducted by phone conference or in person, depending on the conflict/grievance and the potential harm delay could have on the outcome.
  - b. The intent of every mediation is to
    - i. Facilitate dialogue between the parties involved.
    - ii. Facilitate resolution between the parties involved.
6. Document the outcome of the mediation.
  - a. The intended outcome of every mediation is a resolution that reasonably satisfies all parties' needs and addresses their concerns.

- b. In the event that satisfactory resolution is not attainable during mediation, the mediation team may forward the grievance to the ACCT Ethics Committee and Board of Directors for further action.
  - c. Though it is the intent of mediation to resolve issues amicably, participation in the mediation process is not a waiver of the right to pursue litigation unless the parties so agree.
  - d. All mediations will be concluded with both parties signing the Mediation Agreement Form that will document the mediation. This form will be signed even in the event that parties cannot come to agreement. Once agreements are made, they are legally binding. Agreements cannot be forced.
7. Follow up by the chair of the Ethics Committee. This follow-up is intended to ensure closure for both parties.
8. File paperwork at the ACCT office.
- a. The outcome of the conflict will be shared with members of the Ethics Committee.
  - b. All specific information and identifying characteristics of any conflict and its resolution will remain confidential to the involved parties, the mediation team, the Executive Director of ACCT, and the Ethics Committee.

## **APPENDIX B: Outcomes and Actions**

It is important to note that the ACCT Code of Ethics and Grievance and Mediation Procedure is a reference for ethical behavior and actions as well as a framework to help resolve conflicts and misunderstandings between parties associated with ACCT. Behaviors that are deemed by the ACCT Ethics Committee, the ACCT Board of Directors, and the Executive Director to violate the Code of Ethics will result in action including dialogue with the organization(s) and/or individual(s) responsible for the behavior, with the intent of resolving any ethical misconduct or perception of misconduct. In the event that resolution cannot be reached, ACCT may take action up to and including revocation of PVM status in the case of a PVM and/or dismissal from the ACCT community.