



## VIRGINIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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### VEMA CODE OF ETHICS

The Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA) Code of Ethics must be upheld by all individuals that are VEMA Executive Board Members upon being sworn in. The promise to uphold the Code signifies the assumption that the emergency manager will act prudently and responsibly beyond the requirements of laws and codes.

Maintenance of public trust and confidence is central to the effectiveness of the emergency management profession. The members of VEMA reflect the spirit and proper conduct dictated by the conscience of society and commitment to the well-being of all. Members shall conduct themselves so as to maintain confidence in their position and conduct themselves in a manner as to give clear impression that they cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of their official duties. The members abide by the association's core values of respect, commitment and professionalism.

#### **Respect**

- Respect for supervising officials, colleagues, associates and VEMA members. Comply with all laws and regulations applicable to our purpose and position and responsibly and impartially apply them to all concerned.
- Respect fiscal resources by evaluating organizational decisions to provide the best service or product at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality.
- Prevent all forms of mismanagement of association funds by establishing and maintain strong fiscal and management controls, and by supporting audits and investigative activities.
- Members who serve in multiple roles- being involved with multiple associations- should avoid participating in matters that create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

#### **Commitment**

- Commit to continuous improvement by fairly administrating the affairs of our positions by fostering honest and trustworthy relationships.
- Commit to enhancing stewardship of resources and the caliber of service we deliver while striving to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.
- Respond to inquiries with answers that are complete, clear and easy to understand.

## Professionalism

- Promote professionalism to ensure public confidence in emergency management.
- Recognize and support the general membership's right to know the Boards' business.
- Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism
- Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest
- Members should not directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift--whether it be money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, promise, or any other form--under the following circumstances: (1) it could be reasonably inferred or expected that the gift was intended to influence them in the performance of their official duties; or (2) the gift was intended to serve as a reward for any official action on their part. (The guideline is not intended to isolate members from normal social practices where gifts among friends, associates and relatives are appropriate for certain occasions).

## Rules and Reporting Ethics Violations

When becoming aware of a possible violation of the VEMA Code of Ethics, members are encouraged to report the matter to the VEMA Executive Director. In reporting the matter, members may choose to go on record as the complainant or report the matter on a confidential basis.

The Executive Director will convene an ethics panel of three members to investigate the matter of violation. This Committee will be responsible for fact finding to address the complaint of a violation in code. The Executive Director and Committee has 60 days from the date of a complaint to issue a decision on the matter. Each finding must be supported and relevant evidence which has been made available to the person in question for review.

Upon finding a violation, sanctions may be imposed on the member, The following factors may be considered when imposing a sanction: nature of violation, prior violations by the same individual, willfulness of the violation and any other factors which bear upon the seriousness of the violation.

The following sanctions may apply:

1. Private Censure: A letter to the member in violations indicating the violation of the Code of Ethics, that VEMA disapproves of such conduct, and that if it is reported in the future, it may be cause for additional sanctions.
2. Expulsion: A revocation of membership privileges.
3. Membership Bar: A prohibition against reinstatement of membership.

Criminal Charges: upon receiving documented evidence that a member has been found guilty after trial by a judge or jury of criminal conduct, which constitutes a violation in the VEMA Code of Ethics and occurred while a member, the Executive Director shall immediately issue a notice of expulsion to that member.

A member who has been expelled from membership under these rules may apply for reinstatement to VEMA only after a period of (2) years from the date of expulsion. A written request must be sent to the Executive Director for a reinstatement review and reasons for consideration. This will be further reviewed by the Executive Board with whom a determination will be made.