

Our Core Values and Code of Conduct for the Board of Directors, Committee Members, Staff, Members, Volunteers and Contractors

(Competition Participants should also refer to the [Athlete Code of Conduct](#))

The American Canoe Association is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for our employees, members, athletes, volunteers, and other participants. We believe it is the responsibility of all those who work with or represent the ACA to treat others with dignity and respect.

We believe that all people are entitled to enjoy all aspects of paddling; therefore, we welcome all who wish to participate and will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, or diminution of any individual, regardless of their race, religion, national origin, age, civil status, veteran status, marital status, language, social condition, mental or physical ability, sexual preference, or gender identity. The ACA seeks to be a community that recognizes that we each have something valuable to contribute.

Our Code of Conduct emphasizes that we will not tolerate behavior that violates our **core values** even if this behavior falls short of unlawful misconduct or discrimination.

Organizational Expectations

Our Core Values define our organizational expectations and guide our behaviors as we work to realize our vision and accomplish our mission.

We believe every paddlesport participant has a right to define their path on the water, from fun recreational activities to elite athletic pursuits; however, we are united by these core values.

Enjoyment: *We paddle because it is fun.* We develop programs, instruction, training camps, events, and competitions that provide a fun, satisfying, and rewarding experience for all.

Safety: *Paddling is fun when we're safe and healthy.* We create tools, programs, policies, and procedures to ensure that safety is a top priority for all our members and other paddlesport participants.

Inclusion: *Everyone is welcome in the paddling family.* We promote a culture and atmosphere of honesty, camaraderie, and sportsmanship to enrich lives and unleash the full potential of all participants. We maintain an environment of respect, fairness, and kindness and embrace the value of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

Teamwork: *We cannot achieve our mission alone.* We work collaboratively with our volunteers and partner organizations. We nurture connections throughout the paddlesport community and with the US Coast Guard, the US Olympic & Paralympic Committee, the International Canoe Federation, the Outdoor Alliance, and other partners.

Excellence: *We are committed to the pursuit of excellence* at the individual, team, and organizational levels. We strive to provide the best possible service to our members and the paddling community. We are accountable for how effectively we achieve that goal.

Additionally, we:

- Will respect others including members, teammates, instructors, athletes, officials, spectators, volunteers, sponsors, and the staff of the American Canoe Association without regard to race, religion, national origin, age, civil status, veteran status, marital status, language, social condition, mental or physical ability, sexual preference, or gender identity.
- Will not engage in any form of discriminatory, verbal, physical or sexual harassment/abuse, fraud, stealing, deception or dishonesty related to events or activities of the American Canoe Association.
- Will not disrespect, intimidate or embarrass other members, teammates, instructors, athletes, officials, spectators, sponsors, volunteers, Board of Directors, Committee members, American Canoe Association staff in person, electronically, or through social networking channels (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or websites, etc.).
- Will not participate in any non-consensual sexual contact or advance or other inappropriate sexually oriented behavior or action directed towards any other member.
- No person in authority of American Canoe Association will participate in any sexual contact or advance or other inappropriate sexually oriented behavior or action towards a member under his or her authority.
- Respect and not cause damage to private or public property of others while at an event sanctioned by American Canoe Association or at a designated American Canoe Association facility.
- Will not knowingly misrepresent competitive achievements, professional qualifications, education, experience, eligibility, criminal record or affiliations of oneself or another member.

In addition, unacceptable behaviors include any violations of:

- All other rules and policies of the American Canoe Association.
- All other applicable state or federal law.
- Any violation of any regulations of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- The rules governing fair play and competitive manipulation in the Olympic and Paralympic movements (the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulations of Competitions and/or IPC Code of Ethics).

Disciplinary action for violation of any provision in this Code of Conduct may include any or all of the following: (i) an oral or written reprimand; (ii) suspension from membership privileges (iii) imposition of fines (including with respect to reimbursement of expenses incurred by the American Canoe Association (iv) any combination of the foregoing.

If a American Canoe Association member receives a disciplinary penalty or otherwise has a grievance related to this Code of Conduct, the member has the right to file a written request with the Board of Directors and Executive Director of the American Canoe Association within thirty (30) days of the action giving rise to the member's claimed grievance, to seek a review of the action in question. Any competitive athlete has a right to a hearing per Article 9 of the USOPC Bylaws. The American Canoe

Association strictly prohibits retaliation against any complainant by the organization or any member of the organization.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein shall conflict with or curtail the members' rights with respect to disputes involving the members' right to participate in protected events as set forth in the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (36 U.S. Code § 220501.)

Reporting

Potential Code of Conduct violations should be reported following the ACA Grievance Policy. This form on our website facilitates should be used to report violations and will be directed automatically to the appropriate parties.

ACA prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting incidents of any kind (including Safe Sport and Code of Conduct violations) or for cooperating in related investigations. The effectiveness of our efforts to enforce our Code of Conduct depends on all participants being vigilant and trustful of the process.

Resolution

ACA's Grievance Policy describes the resolution process for resolving potential code of conduct violations.

Policy Owner

The individuals who are responsible for the policy and enforcement of the policy are:

- Chair of the Ethics Committee (position currently not filled)
- ACA Executive Director, Beth Spilman (bspilman@americancanoe.org)
- Chair of the Board of Directors, Suzanne Britt (canoe12judgesb@gmail.com)

Resources

External resources are also available to assist in supporting participants in pursuing an investigation and resolution of a potential Code of Conduct violation including the USOPC Office of the Ombudsman (ombuds@usathlete.org).