

Core Values and Code of Conduct

American Canoe Association

The American Canoe Association (ACA) 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.

1. Applicability of Policy

This Policy applies to all ACA members, board members, officers, directors, committee members, task force members, employees, coaches, independent contractors, officials, and volunteers, and anyone participating in ACA events and activities (collectively, “Affiliated Individuals”). All such Affiliated Individuals should become familiar with the rules and standards of this Code.

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

2. Legal Compliance

The ACA requires that Affiliated Individuals follow the Code of Conduct and abide by all applicable ACA policies and procedures; United States federal, state and local law as applicable, including the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act; and foreign law as applicable. If an Affiliated Individual should ever encounter a conflict of law, such as a conflict between United States and foreign law, or have any questions about the legality of any action, they should contact the personnel listed below for further information and guidance.

3. 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.

4. Code of Conduct

All Affiliated Individuals:

- i. Must 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.
- ii. Must 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
- iii. Must 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.).

- iv. Must refrain from foul language, violence, and behavior that could reasonably be deemed dishonest, offensive, intentionally malicious, or illegal.
- v. Must not participate in any non-consensual sexual contact or advance or other inappropriate sexually oriented behavior or action directed towards any other member.
- vi. 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.
- vii. Must 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.
- viii. Must not knowingly misrepresent competitive achievements, professional qualifications, education, experience, eligibility, criminal record or affiliations of oneself or another member.
- ix. Must comply with all other rules and policies of the American Canoe Association.
- x. Must comply with all other applicable state or federal law.
- xi. Must not violate any regulations of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- xii. Must adhere to the anti-doping rules and policies of the International Olympic Committee, International Paralympic Committee, USOPC, World Anti-Doping Agency, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, and ICF.
- xiii. Must abide by 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), must comply with the USOPC Sports Betting Policy, and must commit to promote sport free from manipulation, corrupt conduct, or using or disclosing inside information for any purpose.
- xiv. In competition, must compete to the best of their ability while being safe and sportsmanlike.
- xv. Must respect and comply with the laws of the state and/or country in which they are training, traveling, or competing, including, but not limited to, laws governing the possession and use of drugs and alcohol, and providing of drugs to any person and of alcohol to minors.
- xvi. Must be responsible for their own behavior and for reading, understanding, and abiding by all applicable policies, including those of the ACA, as well as the competitions and events in which they participate.
- xvii. Respect and abide by all other rules, policies, and procedures of the ACA, and of the facilities and accommodations in which they train and live at and/or use.

5. Conduct Specific to all Board and Committee Members and ACA Staff

- i. Function primarily on behalf of [NGB] and not on behalf of any one constituency or group.
- ii. Respect confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
- iii. Maintain a thorough knowledge of [NGB] governance documents, policies and procedures.
- iv. Be independent and impartial and not influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward or fear of criticism.

6. Conduct Specific to all Coaches

All those functioning as coaches must:

- i. Treat all athletes with respect at all times.
- ii. Be aware of the health and safety of all athletes at all times in regard to our sport. If the conditions are unsafe, follow best practices and not allow the health and safety of the athletes to be compromised.
- iii. Recognize the signs of injury, physical and psychological stress in themselves and in athletes, take these indicators seriously, and refer or seek out appropriate and qualified support.
- iv. Be prepared with an executable emergency plan for their primary use facilities that has been shared and practiced.
- v. Assist the athlete in forming goals and expectations that are realistic and practical with consideration of the age, resources and experience of the athlete.
- vi. Consistently give the athletes the opportunity to develop their sport and non-sport skills translating into other facets of their lives (e.g. time management, goal setting) at a minimum of once per season.

7. Conduct Specific to all Officials

All those functioning as officials must:

- i. Maintain a current and thorough knowledge of the rules and officiating procedures of our sport and officiating procedures.
- ii. Conduct themselves impartially, professionally and in good faith.
- iii. Assist with the development of lesser-experienced officials as needed.
- iv. Take ownership of actions and decisions made while officiating.

8. Conduct Specific to all Spectators

Parents, fans, and spectators must:

- i. Encourage athletes to compete within the rules and to resolve conflicts positively.
- ii. Never ridicule a participant for making a mistake during a competition, practice or training session.

- iii. Respect the decisions of officials and encourage participants' continued effort.
- iv. Respect and show appreciation to all competitors, officials, and volunteers.

9. Disciplinary Action

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 an 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.)

10. Reporting

Potential Code of Conduct violations must be reported following the ACA Grievance Policy. [This form](#) on our website 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.

11. Resolution

All properly filed complaints regarding the violation of the Code of Conduct will be investigated and resolved in accordance with the Grievance Policy as published and available on the ACA website.

12. Policy Owners

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 (canoejudge@aol.com)

13. Resources

Athlete members may contact the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative, Jonas Ecker (jwecker000@gmail.com), or any athlete board member with any concerns related to this Code of Conduct.

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).