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# Code of Ethics

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**Effective:** 11/18/2019 (CPPS); 7/1/2020 (CIH, QEP, EPI)

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## Introduction

The Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BGC) maintains several EHS voluntary, non-profit, professional credentialing programs. BGC credentialing programs certify qualified environmental, health and safety (EHS) professionals who work to protect, manage, and enhance the health and safety of people and the environment, and who have met the professional knowledge standards established by the Board of Directors. Regardless of any other professional affiliation, the BGC Code of Ethics (Code) applies to each individual certified by BGC credentialing programs (certificants); and, each individual seeking certification (candidates). The Code serves as the minimum ethical standards for the professional behavior of BGC certificants and candidates.

The Code is designed to provide both appropriate ethical practice guidelines and enforceable standards of conduct for all certificants and candidates. The Code also serves as a professional resource for EHS professionals, as well as for those served by BGC certificants and candidates.

## Preamble/General Guidelines

The BGC is dedicated to the implementation of appropriate professional standards designed to serve the public, employees, employers, clients and EHS professionals. First and foremost, certificants and candidates give priority to EHS interests related to the protection of people, workplaces and the natural environment. They are required to act in a manner that promotes integrity and reflects positively on the profession, consistent with accepted ethical and legal standards.

As EHS professionals, certificants and candidates have the obligation to:

- Maintain high standards of integrity and professional conduct
- Accept responsibility for their actions
- Continually seek to maintain and/or enhance their professional capabilities
- Practice with fairness and honesty.

In order to retain their credentials, all those recognized by the BGC are required to act in a professional manner consistent with the certification standards and responsibilities set forth, below.

- I. Responsibilities to BGC credentialing programs, the profession and the public.
  - A. Certificant and candidate compliance with all organizational rules, policies and legal requirements. A certificant/candidate must:
    1. Comply with laws, regulations, policies and ethical standards governing professional practice.
    2. Provide accurate and truthful representations concerning all certification and recertification information.
    3. Maintain the security of BGC examination information and materials, including the prevention of unauthorized disclosures of test information.
    4. Cooperate with BGC concerning ethics matters and the collection of information related to an ethics matter.
    5. Report, upon a reasonable and clear factual basis, apparent violations of the ethics code by certificants and candidates.

6. Refrain from public behavior that is clearly in violation of professional, ethical or legal standards.
- II. Responsibilities to clients, employers, employees and the public.
- A. Education, experience, competency and performance of professional services. A certificant/candidate must:
1. Deliver competent services with objective and independent professional judgment in decision-making.
  2. Recognize the limitations of one's professional ability and provide services only when qualified. The certificant/candidate is responsible for determining the limits of his/her own professional abilities based on education, knowledge, skills, practice experience and other relevant considerations.
  3. Maintain and respect the confidentiality of sensitive information obtained in the course of professional activities unless: the information is reasonably understood to pertain to unlawful activity; a court or governmental agency lawfully directs the release of the information; the client or the employer expressly authorizes the release of specific information; or, the failure to release such information would likely result in death or serious physical harm to employees and/or the public.
  4. Properly use professional credentials, and provide truthful and accurate representations concerning education, experience, competency and the performance of services.
  5. Provide truthful and accurate representations to the public in advertising, public statements or representations, and in the preparation of estimates concerning costs, services and expected results.
  6. Recognize and respect the intellectual property rights of others and act in an accurate, truthful and complete manner, including activities related to professional work and research.
  7. Affix or authorize the use of any issued BGC organization's seal, stamp, signature or other signifier of certification by the certificant only when the document is prepared by the certificant/candidate or has been fully reviewed and approved by the certificant/candidate. Any such use does not represent BGC approval of the work so endorsed.
  8. Communicate clearly, to clients and/or employers, the potential consequences if professional decisions or judgments are overruled or disregarded.
- B. Conflict of interest and appearance of impropriety. A certificant/candidate must:
1. Disclose, to clients and/or employers, significant circumstances that could be construed as a conflict of interest or an appearance of impropriety.
  2. Avoid conduct that could cause a conflict of interest with a client, employer, employee or the public.
  3. Assure that a conflict of interest does not compromise legitimate interests of a client, employer, employee or the public and does not influence or interfere with professional judgments.
  4. Refrain from offering or accepting significant payments, gifts or other forms of compensation or benefits in order to secure work or that are intended to influence professional judgment.
- C. Public health, safety and the natural environment. A certificant/candidate must:
1. Follow appropriate health and safety procedures, in the course of performing professional duties, to protect clients, employers, employees and the public from conditions where injury and damage are reasonably foreseeable.

Any violation of the preceding numbered requirements may result in sanctions up to and including the suspension or removal of credentials awarded by the BGC.