

The Institute of Fire Safety Managers



Ethical Policy

The Institute's Code of Ethics

Version: 6

Summary:	This document outlines the rules and expectations of the Institute of Fire Safety Manager's (IFSM) members, staff and Council with regards to ethical conduct and behaviour	
Target Audience:	All members, staff, and Council	
Next Review Date:	November 2028	
Approved by:	Council	Date of meeting: 04/11/2025
Ratified by:	Council	Date of meeting: 04/11/2025
Date issued:	December 2019	

Introduction

1. Any professional organisation, especially one supporting those working on critical public safety issues, must uphold the highest ethical standards to maintain trust among its members and the wider public. Given the high-profile nature of fire safety, any lapse in ethical conduct—whether by an organisation or an individual practitioner—can undermine confidence in the profession as a whole.
2. The Institute of Fire Safety Managers requires its members to maintain the highest ethical standards and behaviour so that those standards are transferred into the profession as a whole and so that the good name and standing of the Institute is maintained. In complying with this code of practice, members may sometimes find that the standards appear contrary to their personal self-interest; this document is therefore intended to act as a guide to members in the identification of occasions when they might be at risk of failing to recognise or conform to the required standards of conduct.
3. It is neither practicable nor possible to establish ethical requirements that will apply to each and every situation and all circumstances that members may encounter. Every situation depends on its own specific context and if members are in doubt as to their correct course of action, they should contact the Business Manager of the Institute or obtain appropriate legal advice.
4. This policy is enacted under the By-Laws of the Institute

Ethical Rules

1. Members of the Institute, consequent upon their election, are expected and required to follow the ethical rules and procedures set out below.
2. Members are expected to uphold integrity in all professional and business relationships. Integrity encompasses not only honesty but also fairness and truthfulness in all professional dealings.
 - 2.1. While employed, members must adhere to the terms of their employment. However, no terms or conditions of employment should compel members to participate in any dishonest transaction. The following principles must always be upheld.
 - a) If encouraged or instructed to engage in any unlawful activity, members have both the right and duty to decline.
 - b) If a member becomes aware that his or her employers have committed an unlawful act, every effort should be made to persuade

the employer not to continue the unlawful activity and to rectify the matter.

- c) If an employee would feel uncomfortable about defending an action or activity in open court or to the press, then it is likely that such action should be avoided on ethical grounds.

2.2. Members should be clear and truthful, avoiding jargon that may confuse or allow misinterpretation of advice and recommendations. When necessary, the use of professional terms, legal jargon, or standard text should be supplemented with clear explanations. Members should support questioning and challenge to ensure clarity, transparency and understanding.

2.3. Members are required to conduct their business in accordance with the laws of the United Kingdom and, when overseas, in accordance with the laws of the host country.

2.4. Members in practice overseas or working overseas, are required to comply with local laws and should, in a country in which the profession is controlled by a reputable body, adhere to any local ethical guidance and good practice, even though to do so may not be strictly in accordance with these rules and procedures.

2.5. Members working in a country in which the profession is not so guided or controlled should follow the guidance of the Institute unless the well established and generally accepted legal custom and practice of local reputable firms is to the contrary.

3. Members must perform their professional duties with skill, care, diligence, and expedition, always upholding the technical and professional standards expected of them as Institute members.

3.1. In agreeing to carry out professional work, members imply they have the level of competence to perform those services and that their knowledge, skill and experience will be applied with reasonable care and diligence.

3.2. Members should not accept or perform work that they are not competent to undertake unless they obtain such advice, training and assistance from a suitably qualified person to enable them to carry out the work in a competent and professional manner.

3.3. Members are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and consideration towards all with whom they come into contact during the course of performing their work.

4. Members should strive for objectivity in all professional and business judgements.
 - 4.1. Conflicts of interest have an important bearing on objectivity and independence, and could be relevant where there is any relationship or situation affecting a member or firm, or any business or other interest held by the member or firm, which may threaten or appear to threaten objectivity. The member concerned should consider the possible need to disclose the relationship, situation or interest to the affected parties.
 - 4.2. A self-interest threat to the objectivity of a member or firm will arise where there is or is likely to be a conflict of interest between a firm and its client. If it cannot be determined by both the member and the client that any conflict can be managed with appropriate safeguards, the member should refuse or discontinue the assignment as speedily as possible.
 - 4.3. A self-interest may arise or be seen to arise where the interests of two or more clients are in conflict. There is, however, nothing improper in a member having two or more clients whose interests may potentially be in conflict with each other, as long as the activities of the member's business are managed so as to avoid the work on behalf of one client adversely affecting that on behalf of another. Where a member believes that the situation can be managed, appropriate and adequate disclosure should be made to the parties concerned, together with details of any proposed safeguards to preserve confidentiality and manage such conflict.
 - 4.4. The public interest should be a factor that all members should bear in mind when accepting any assignment or appointment.
 - 4.5. Members should be aware of the difficulties which may arise from the offer or acceptance of any gift, favour or hospitality that may be intended to influence the recipient or which could be interpreted by a reasonable person in full possession of the facts as likely to have that effect. Where there is any doubt the member should politely refuse the gift, favour or hospitality.
 - 4.6. Any report for which a member is responsible, whether it bears their signature or not, should be prepared with integrity and objectivity. This means, for example, while a report may effectively present one side of a case and may present that case to its best advantage, the report should be accurate, truthful and, within its scope, both complete and balanced. It should not rely on ambiguities, half-truths or hearsay / anecdotes but should be objectively justifiable and should not be based on unreasonable assumptions. This practice ensures assessments are suitable for external scrutiny, meet regulatory, audit, quality standards and demonstrate competency experience. Copies of all reports and records should be securely stored and retained for a minimum period of 7 years

- 4.7. A member engaging an individual or firm to undertake work on behalf of a client should ascertain that the individual or firm complies with the ethical standards of the Institute.
5. Members operating as consultants or as partners or principals in companies offering fire safety and related services shall be required to comply with this code of ethics and in addition, should operate their businesses to the highest ethical standards.
 - 5.1. The business of a member should be so conducted that a client or potential client cannot mistake it for any other firm or business.
 - 5.2. A member should not enter into arrangements to provide services to clients of another firm unless satisfied that the requesting firm's professional work is in accordance with ethical standards governing members of the Institute.
 - 5.3. A member must not make derogatory remarks about or unfavourable comparisons with, the services of any other fire safety practitioner or business.
 - 5.4. The name adopted by a member for his practice or for a business must not be designed or calculated to mislead potential customers or others.
6. Members are required to maintain complete confidentiality about their dealings with customers, unless specifically authorised to reveal information by the individual customers involved or there is a legal requirement or professional duty to disclose information.
 - 6.1. Members acquiring or receiving confidential information in the course of their professional work should neither use nor appear to use that information for their personal advantage or the advantage of a third party.
 - 6.2. Members should use and handle information in accordance with the client's given consents and in adherence with any legal controls and constraints designed to protect the data. A suitable management system that is secure, auditable and capable of meeting the imposed requirements must be provided.
 - 6.3. When members change their employment they are entitled to use the experience gained in their previous employment but not confidential information of any description acquired or received by them in the course of the previous employment.
 - 6.4. Members are reminded that in certain circumstances it may be a criminal act to use confidential information for an improper purpose.
7. Members should not undertake work if there is a potential risk to public or personal safety. All risks must be reported in accordance with legal and employer standards.

8. Members should cooperate with other professionals operating in the built environment through an integrated, mutually supportive, co-working framework. However concerns about breaches that may jeopardize safety or established principles should be reported as necessary.
9. All members should ensure they have suitable professional indemnity insurance or an alternative composite protection to ensure all work undertaken has adequate guarantee of financial redress in the event of failure to meet agreed contractual, legal or public safety requirements.
10. Members should have a clearly stated and accessible dispute resolution process to enable complainants of alleged shortcomings or failures to be addressed. The dispute and complaint process should be accessible and aimed at addressing concerns in a timely manner with the objective of reaching a speedy mutually acceptable solutions.

Disclosure of convictions and investigations

Members and applicants must disclose to the Institute any current or unspent criminal convictions, and any relevant civil judgments or findings, at the time of application and promptly if they arise during the period of membership.

Members must also inform the Institute if they have been or are subject to investigation, disciplinary proceedings, or sanctions by another professional or regulatory body.

Such disclosures are required where the matter is relevant to the member's professional role in the field of fire safety and to the reputation of the Institute.

Failure to make a relevant disclosure may itself be treated as a breach of this Ethics Policy and subject to disciplinary action. All disclosures will be handled sensitively and considered in accordance with the Institute's complaints and conduct procedures.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
13/05/21	R Docherty	2	4	Added need to be able to suspend a member prior to or pending an investigation. Outcome 3d 'no further action' added.
09/03/22	H Hilton	3	ALL	Updated to house style. This policy is enacted under the By-Laws of the Institute' added to intro.
18/12/23	H Hilton	4	3 - 6	Inclusion of ethical requirements agreed in FRA strategic competency group. Update doc number from PF004.
22/12/25	H Hilton	5	ALL	Grammatical changes. Disciplinary procedures and public announcements moved to 003Av Complaints Policy. Disclosures added.
01/06/26	H Hilton	6	5	Amendment to 5.3. from specifically Institute members or their employers to any other fire safety practitioner or business.

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
R Docherty, D White & H Hilton	Management Committee	V2 – 13/05/21
H Hilton	Business Manager	V3 – 09/03/22
H Hilton	Business Manager	V5 – 04/11/25