



Evidence Photographers International Council

PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ETHICS QUESTIONS

Intent

It is EPIC's policy to support and uphold the highest professional imaging and ethical standards for evidence photography. This policy extends to each member and encompasses that member's dealings with the Association, its members, and competitions. This policy also encompasses each member's dealings with their vendors, suppliers, clientele and the public. (See Section 3. Code of Ethics in the Adopted Procedures). EPIC is committed to upholding its reputation and that of its members by enforcing this policy against any member action, whether ethically, civilly or criminally questionable, that may portray the Association or its members in a negative way. Once begun, the Due Process will continue regardless of membership status.

Procedure for Submitting a Claim

Any individual or individuals can make an ethics complaint about a member. Complainants do not need to be EPIC members. Complaints must be received in writing and will be accepted into the official record of the proceeding. When submitting a complaint, the complainant should first show physical evidence that they tried to come to a resolution with the Subject on their own. No action can be initiated until a signed, written complaint is received. The Certification Commission is responsible for investigating a complaint received against a member. The Certification Commission shall withhold rendering a decision on an ethics complaint if there is pending civil or lower court litigation. The Commission will consider ethics complaints after adjudication. The Commission shall notify the member of his/her automatic suspension until the member can show due cause why the member should not be suspended. Upon the rendering of a legal decision, an ethics case can be instituted.

Procedure for Following Up on a Complaint

The Certification Commission has the right to determine if the case has merit. If it is determined that the case has merit, within 21 days of EPIC receiving a complaint, the Commission will notify the member accused (Subject) via certified mail. The certified return mail stub becomes part of the official case file. This notification may, or may not, include the Complainant's name, depending on circumstances. The Subject notification should include:

- The specific charges or allegations
- The purpose of EPIC's Ethics Policy
- An explanation of possible actions
- A request for a response to the charges or allegations to be received within 14 days of the delivery of this notification
- Any other information pertinent to the case

The Subject will be given 14 days to respond in a signed writing to the charges or allegations outlined. If no response is received, the Certification Commission will assume the Subject has no response and will continue with the process. If a response is received, the Commission has a minimum of 21 days to conduct follow up interviews to determine whether a hearing should be held. At this point, the Commission may decide:

- a. To discontinue any further action and end the process. If this is the case, the Commission should notify the Subject and Complainant that there is not sufficient cause to continue, and extend the Association's appreciation to all parties for their input.
- b. To continue the process and schedule a hearing at the regularly-scheduled Certification Commission. A special Certification Commission meeting may be convened at the expense of the Complainant.

NOTE: The Certification Commission is permitted to suspend the accountability time line or investigation of a case if there is a compelling reason to do so.

Conducting a Hearing

NOTIFICATION

Notification that a hearing has been scheduled should be sent promptly to the Subject and Complainant via certified mail. The return mail stubs are to become part of the official case file.

VENUE

The hearing may be held in person or by telephone conference call. If the decision is made to hold the hearing in person, every effort should be made to accommodate all parties. EPIC is not responsible for travel costs if Subject or Complainant choose to attend the hearing.

THOSE ATTENDING

It is NOT necessary for the Subject or Complainant to attend the hearing in person. Either or both may be invited to attend by telephone conference call. Lack of attendance by any party will not be considered in the committee's deliberations. They may present witnesses at their own expense, if they so choose. The Subject may also choose to be represented by counsel, at his own expense. A majority of the Commission must be in attendance; however, some members may participate by telephone conference call. If obtaining a majority is not possible because of absences.

EVIDENCE

Materials and evidence that could have a bearing in the hearing should be distributed to the commission and Subject at least 14 days prior to the hearing.

PROCEDURE

The Certification Commission conducts the hearing. If the Chairman is unable to attend, the Vice-Chairman will conduct in the Chairman's stead. The Chairman will review the complaint with the committee and submit any related materials. If the Complainant is in attendance, the Chairman will call on the Complainant to add additional appropriate information. Commission members will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Complainant. If the Subject is in attendance, the Chairman reviews the complaint with the Subject. The Subject is then invited to respond to the complaint. Commission members will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Subject. The Subject and Complainant are excused. The Chairman invites comments from the Commission. After sufficient deliberation, the Chairman may entertain a motion from any member of the Commission.

Possible Findings

The committee may impose a number of penalties in cases where an ethics violation is found. Those penalties include:

- No action
- Censure. The Subject may be publicly reprimanded for specified conduct for violation of the Code of Ethics or for other just cause.
- Suspension. The Subject is removed from active membership during suspension. Certification is also suspended. Payment of membership dues is still required during the period of suspension. The Subject may not participate in competitions, speak at EPIC-merited events, reference or advertise EPIC membership or certification, nor hold leadership positions. Suspension shall last until such time as recommended by the Commission.
- Termination. The Subject's membership is revoked, resulting in the loss of certification. A time period after which the Subject may reapply MAY be attached in this case.
- Once a decision and recommendation have been reached, the Commission will notify the Subject and Complainant on EPIC letterhead via certified mail. The certified return mail stub becomes part of the official case file. The notification should specifically outline the findings of the Commission, the penalty recommended (if any), and should carefully outline the appeals process.



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FORM FOR FILING AN ETHICS COMPLAINT

Your Name: _____

Name and Address of the Subject of the Complaint:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Your reason for filing the complaint:

(if this has already been outlined in a written and signed complaint, please state so)

What, if anything, has been done to resolve the complaint?

How would you (the Complainant) like to resolve the matter?

Please attach additional supporting information.

Please return this form to:
Attn: Sandra Lang
EPIC
229 Peachtree St. NE #2200
Atlanta, GA 30303

