



MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FACT SHEET

The purpose of the MEHA Code of Professional Standards is to serve as a guide for members to maintain and pursue professionally recognized ethical behavior in conducting duties, serving the community and clients, and working with colleagues and partners. The intent of the Code of Professional Standards is not to create and enforce law, but rather to promote unity and collaboration among members.

Environmental health professionals recognize that dilemmas and conflicts may develop that do not have guidelines, data or statutes to assist with problem resolution; thus, environmental health professionals use problem-solving, communication, collaboration and appropriate resources to resolve dilemmas and conflicts.

The MEHA Code of Professional Standards is not intended to establish or replace standards of practice with respect to the workplace rules or credentials members may have. In summary, the Code of Professional Standards and interpretive statements provide a guiding ethical framework for decision-making, the manner in which we work with colleagues and the evaluation of actions as environmental health professionals fulfill responsibilities to society and our profession.

Under the MEHA Membership Strategic Direction Plan, GOAL 3, our Membership sub-committee has been tasked with developing and implementing a membership Code of Professional Standards. Our direction is to:

1. Develop a code or canon of conduct that is expected among members.
2. Support and promote professional behavior, unity and open communication.

We reached out to MEHA members who had indicated they were interested in committee work with the goal of including representatives from federal, state and local agencies, industry, academia, trainers and educators and varied geographical regions. The final committee make up provided representation from state, county and city government; Northern and Southern Minnesota, and Twin City Metro region. We additionally had feedback from industry, academia and a member with a law background.

As a subcommittee, we discussed commitment to standards of conduct and professional ideals, communicating effectively and resolving issues and differences in a constructive manner for the following reasons:

- To promote unity in a time when the field is facing funding, re-structuring and staffing challenges.
- Preserve our profession and maintain the field as an attractive option for students and other individuals who may be interested in an Environmental Health career.
- Provide training to members on conflict resolution, consulting skills, how to balance the regulator/consultant roles, effective communication and breaking down the barriers to team work.

The intent and spirit of code of professional standards are not to find fault but rather to create unity and to strengthen the association by providing a framework and ideals around which we can unify and collaborate in our primary purpose of protecting the health of the public.



MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

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Preamble

The MEHA Code of Professional Standards has been developed in response to the profession's acceptance of its goals, values and the trust conferred upon it by society to guide the conduct and practices of the profession. As professionals, we accept the responsibility and inherent obligation to uphold these values. This Code of Professional Standards is based on the belief that the environmental health profession is a unified team working to protect and improve public health by means of a specialized practice that focuses on health education, promotion, and restoration; prevention of illness and injury, control of diseases; protection of the food and water supply; assurance of occupational health and safety; prevention of environmental hazards and public health emergency preparedness and response.

Purpose and Foundation

The purpose of the MEHA Code of Professional Standards is to serve as a guide to maintain and pursue professionally recognized ethical behavior in conducting our duties, serving the community and clients, and working with colleagues and partners. *This code is not a rule of law and should not be used as a disciplinary tool but rather as a guide for conduct. Breach of this Code of Professional Standards or the public trust of the member is not the liability of the Minnesota Environmental Health Association.*

Environmental health professionals utilize these significant universal principles when making judgments related to the health, safety and welfare of the community and the individual client:

- Right of self-determination
- Confidentiality
- Honesty
- Doing or producing good
- Avoiding harm
- Fair and nondiscriminatory treatment and cultural understanding
- Public Service

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The MEHA Code of Professional Standards is not intended to establish nor replace standards of practice. In summary, the Code of Professional Standards and interpretive statements provide a guiding ethical framework for decision-making, the manner in which we work with colleagues and the evaluation of actions as environmental health professionals fulfill responsibilities to society and the profession.

Ethical Commitment to our World and Profession

As a member of the Minnesota Environmental Health Association, I acknowledge and pledge to honor to the best of my ability the following values:

I commit that my professional goal is to serve humankind by working to raise the standards of environmental health to the highest attainable levels because the enjoyment of health is an inalienable right of every human being without distinction of race, sexual orientation, religion, cultural background, economic, or social condition.

I will appreciate and respect diversity in its value to bring a global perspective and a broader spectrum of viewpoints into solving the environmental public health challenges of today and the future. I will strive to engage stakeholders and promote inclusiveness and unity in our common purpose to protect the health and well-being of the public.

I will communicate openly with my colleagues and collaborate to find creative solutions to problems and challenges that confront the field. Where possible, I will address my differences and concerns directly with the respective individual or party.

I will be aware of, and sensitive to, cultural differences and will act in a respectful manner in concurrence with maintaining the integrity of public health protection. I will seek and utilize the needed resources to educate and inform individuals we serve to empower them to protect public health.

I will conduct myself in such a manner that the public is not deceived or misled and will conduct myself in a manner that is professional and impartial to all parties including governmental, industrial, institutional, and public. I will behave honestly in all matters, honor confidential information, respect privileged communication, and interact with others courteously and politely.

I will practice my profession following recognized scientific principles with full realization that the lives, health, and well being of the public may depend on my professional judgment.

I will work to raise the standards of the profession, mentor future and emerging environmental health professionals and demonstrate sound knowledge, practice, ethical behavior, and professionalism in the environmental health field. I will continually search for ways to improve the delivery of services, support others by sharing my experiences, foster creativity through encouragement, and strive to keep myself fully informed of new developments in the profession.

I will remain qualified for my position and maintain an acceptable level of competence by continued study, observation, and personal investigation. I will perform services only in the areas of my competence, and properly represent my professional education, credentials, and experience.

I will act responsibly to uphold the integrity of my profession and avoid conduct or practices that may appear to or in actual fact discredit my profession. I will ensure ethical conduct regarding conflicts of interest by recognizing, acknowledging, and appropriately addressing any secondary interests that might in reality distort the integrity of judgments or be perceived to do so.

I will proudly represent MEHA membership to my professional peers and to the public I serve in the course of performing my duties. I will conduct myself in a manner befitting my professional status and will do nothing to undermine, detract from, or otherwise cause damage to my membership or representation of MEHA. I accept that any activity on my part that will cause MEHA injury serves as a failure on my part to uphold my obligations to MEHA.

Acknowledgement of the Code of Professional Standards

I will uphold the By-Laws of the Minnesota Environmental Health Association; enforce the applicable laws, rules, principles of public health to ensure equitable protection to the public; and will at all times conduct myself in a manner worthy of my profession.