



Code of Conduct

Washington State Search and Rescue Volunteer Advisory Council (SARVAC)

(Adopted Pursuant to RCW 24.03A – Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act)

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct establishes standards of ethical, professional, and lawful behavior for all members, directors, officers, committee participants, volunteers, and representatives of the Washington State Search and Rescue Volunteer Advisory Council (“SARVAC”).

This Code is intended to:

- Promote compliance with RCW 24.03A
- Support SARVAC’s public safety mission
- Protect member organizations and volunteers
- Maintain public trust in search and rescue services
- Ensure fair and transparent governance

2. Scope

This Code applies to:

- Organizational members
- Directors and officers
- Organizational member Regular Representative and Alternate Representatives
- Committee members and advisors
- Volunteers and agents
- Anyone acting on behalf of SARVAC

This Code applies to conduct during SARVAC activities, meetings, training events, conferences, public outreach, and official communications.

3. Fiduciary and Statutory Duties

Directors, officers, and persons exercising governance authority shall perform their duties in accordance with Washington law, including:

A. Duty of Care

Act with reasonable diligence, preparation, and informed judgment.



B. Duty of Loyalty

Act in SARVAC's best interests and avoid self-dealing, favoritism, or improper personal benefit.

C. Duty of Obedience

Ensure compliance with:

- SARVAC Articles of Incorporation
- SARVAC Bylaws
- Board resolutions
- Applicable state and federal law
- Agreements with public agencies

4. Standards of Ethical Conduct

All covered individuals shall:

1. Act in good faith and with integrity.
2. Place public safety and volunteer welfare first.
3. Exercise independent and objective judgment.
4. Avoid conduct that undermines cooperation among SAR units.
5. Protect SARVAC's credibility and reputation.

Fraud, misrepresentation, or misuse of authority is prohibited.

5. Respectful and Professional Conduct

All individuals shall:

- Treat fellow volunteers, partners, and the public with respect.
- Maintain a professional, inclusive, and supportive environment.
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, intimidation, or retaliation.
- Address disagreements constructively.

Discrimination or harassment based on any legally protected status is prohibited.

6. Conflicts of Interest

All covered individuals must:

- Disclose actual, potential, or perceived conflicts.
- Follow SARVAC's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Recuse themselves when required.
- Avoid using SARVAC positions to benefit personal, political, or organizational interests improperly.

This includes conflicts involving member units, vendors, grants, training contracts, or public agencies.



7. Confidentiality and Records

Individuals shall:

- Protect sensitive operational, personnel, and financial information.
- Safeguard incident-related data and training records.
- Respect privacy of volunteers and subjects of SAR operations.
- Comply with SARVAC's records retention policies.

Confidential information shall not be used for personal or political purposes.

8. Use of Organizational Assets

SARVAC assets include funds, equipment, training materials, data systems, logos, and intellectual property.

All assets shall:

- Be used solely for authorized SARVAC purposes.
- Be protected from misuse, waste, or diversion.
- Not be used for personal benefit without authorization.

9. Member Rights and Fair Treatment

SARVAC recognizes and protects statutory and bylaw-based member rights, including:

- Voting and representation rights
- Notice of meetings
- Access to records as allowed by law
- Fair disciplinary procedures

Members shall exercise their rights responsibly and in support of SARVAC's mission.

10. Compliance with Governance and Operational Decisions

All covered individuals shall:

- Comply with valid Board and membership actions.
- Respect committee and officer authority.
- Follow adopted policies, training standards, and agreements.
- Cooperate with audits, compliance reviews, and investigations.

Personal disagreement does not justify refusal to comply.



11. Public Statements and Representation

Only authorized representatives may speak on behalf of SARVAC.

Members shall:

- Clearly distinguish personal views from official positions.
- Avoid unauthorized endorsements.
- Use SARVAC branding only with permission.
- Protect SARVAC's reputation in public forums and social media.

12. Reporting Misconduct

Suspected violations of this Code, law, or policy should be reported in good faith to:

- The President
- Any Board Member
- The Executive Committee, if existing
- The designated Compliance Officer, if existing

Reports may be made without fear of retaliation. Retaliation is prohibited.

13. Discipline and Due Process

Any potential violations of this Code of Conduct shall be handled in accordance with the SARVAC Investigation and Discipline Policy.

14. Acknowledgment and Commitment

All covered individuals are expected to read, understand, and comply with this Code.

Participation in SARVAC constitutes agreement to abide by these standards and to support SARVAC's mission of strengthening search and rescue services throughout Washington State.