

# The American Phytopathological Society Code of Conduct

## I. Introduction

The American Phytopathological Society (APS) is a professional membership organization of plant health scientists focused on the advancement of science to benefit society. This Code of Conduct rests on values important to APS and the scientific profession and sets forth director, officer, chair of volunteer groups, and member responsibilities to APS, other APS members, the public, and others. Affiliation with APS includes an obligation of self-discipline in complying with this Code of Conduct.

This Code is effective June 15, 2022 and replaces any earlier professional or other codes of conduct issued by APS (other than any separate written code of conduct or conduct standards for APS directors, officers, chairs of volunteer groups, and members which are supplementary to this Code). This Code may be modified at any time by APS as its leaders determine to be in the best interests of APS.

## II. Scope

This Code sets forth conduct expectations for APS directors, officers, chairs of volunteer groups, and members, (collectively, “**APS Affiliates**”). By accepting a directorship, officer or chair position or membership with APS, each Affiliate agrees to comply with this Code of Conduct in its current form or as it may be amended in the future.

## III. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

APS respects and values diversity and is committed to being a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable organization. APS welcomes into the organization and encourages membership and other affiliations with APS regardless of an individual’s legally protected or other unique characteristics or identity. APS values and seeks diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in every aspect of its society, including but not limited to membership, leadership, committees, and staff.

## IV. Member Principles

APS Members are expected to adhere to the following principles.

- A. Members accept the obligation to serve the public interest, honor the public trust, enhance the welfare of humanity, encourage environmental stewardship, and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and legal and ethical compliance.
- B. Members perform all professional responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity and maintain objectivity and freedom from conflicts of interest in discharging their responsibilities.
- C. Members strive continually to improve their competence and the quality of their work and to discharge all professional responsibilities to the best of their ability.

- D. Members treat others with civility and professionalism, refraining from harassment and discrimination and behavior that is threatening, intolerant, abusive or violent.
- E. Members uphold the highest standards of truthfulness and honesty in all scientific and professional endeavors.
- F. Members evaluate the work of colleagues fairly — with open-mindedness, courtesy, and respect.
- G. Members recognize past and present contributors to science and do not claim undeserved credit for the accomplishments of others.
- H. Members encourage and promote climates where multiple scientific and professional perspectives may be freely expressed.

## V. Conduct Expectations for all APS Affiliates

APS values high-quality research, education, professional practice, and service, combined with highly professional, ethical, nondiscriminatory, and inclusive conduct. These values are fundamental to excellence and integrity within APS and the scientific and academic communities in which APS members and other APS Affiliates operate. APS directors, officers, chairs of volunteer groups, members and other APS Affiliates are expected to comply with the following conduct standards, and each APS Affiliate is responsible for the conduct of any of their guests participating in any APS event or activity:

- ***Nondiscrimination and Harassment:*** As part of its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, APS is dedicated to providing an environment free of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, ethnicity, age, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, physical ability, and other legally protected characteristics. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, and or sexual misconduct by or towards APS Affiliates.

APS expects all APS Affiliates to refrain from discriminatory or harassing behavior and from sexual misconduct. All communications and interactions should be professional, respectful and inclusive of people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and characteristics. Sexual language and imagery and unwelcome sexual overtures or contact are forbidden.

- ***Integrity, Courtesy and Respect:*** APS Affiliates are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, courtesy and respect for others and maintain a high level of professionalism in all interactions whether officially sponsored by APS or not. These interactions include, but are not limited to, email or other written communication, phone communication, video interactions, in-person interactions, and APS events. APS Affiliates are expected to work and act in a strict spirit of truth and fairness, personal helpfulness and

collegiality. In addition, threatening, malicious, abusive and violent conduct is prohibited.

- **Responsible Alcohol Use:** Within the conduct of APS events, APS Affiliates may share and enjoy alcoholic beverages. APS Affiliates are responsible to ensure that their consumption of alcohol does not cause them to engage in conduct inconsistent with this Code or other APS policies. Responsible consumption is expected. APS directors, officers, employees, members, and others representing the organization are responsible for protecting the image of both APS and the scientific community by taking steps to assure that no APS Affiliate, to include themselves, breaks any laws in the process of purchase, sharing, or consumption of alcoholic beverages in association with APS sponsored events. Furthermore, should any APS Affiliate be observed to be so intoxicated that they are or appear to be incapable of functioning appropriately, APS asks that its other Affiliates contact APS meeting staff and/or event facility staff for intervention. In the event of emergency, calls should be made to 911.
- **Compliance with the Law and Ethics:** APS expects Affiliates to comply with laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to their profession and where APS does business and has events. APS Affiliates are expected to uphold the dignity and honor of their profession, expose illegal or unethical conduct in the profession, and comply with all applicable ethical standards. Without limiting the foregoing, local laws and ethics related to recreational drugs must also be followed and APS Affiliates should not be under the influence of recreational drugs or illegal drugs while participating in APS activities.
- **Prohibition on Scientific and Academic Misconduct:** APS members strive to increase the integrity of the profession by sharing the results of their research through APS, academic forums, commercial forums, public service, APS and other journals, and/or other means. APS members and other Affiliates shall not commit scientific, academic, or other professional misconduct, such as, but not limited to, fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism. Inadvertent scientific error or incorrect interpretation of research data that may occur as part of the normal scientific process does not constitute scientific misconduct.

**Without limiting the foregoing:**

- *Members must not allow the use of their names, reports, or other technical materials by any enterprise known to be illegal, fraudulent, of questionable character, or contrary to the welfare of the public or the environment.*
- *Members must neither seek employment, grants, or personal gain, nor attempt to injure the reputation or opportunities for employment of other scientists by false or undocumented claims or accusations, or by offers of gifts or favors.*
- *Members must be accurate in reporting observations made by themselves and others and recognize contributions of others whenever appropriate.*

- **Conflicts:** APS Affiliates are expected to endeavor to recognize and avoid conflicts of interest and to avoid the abuse of privileged positions or circumstances, including, but not limited to, in connection with the following:
  - review and evaluation of manuscripts and grant applications;
  - establishment of program directions and responsibilities;
  - evaluation of candidates for employment or promotion;
  - service in APS or other leadership positions;
  - service in consulting activities;
  - student guidance;
  - simultaneous service in profit-making and not-for-profit organizations; and/or
  - use of any position or resources to compete unethically or unfairly with colleagues.
- **Mentoring:** APS members recognize responsibilities to postdocs, students, interns, technicians, and other associates working under their supervision to treat them with dignity, respect, and consideration, provide them with mentoring and training, and by direction and example teach them to adhere to professional, legal, and ethical standards.
- **Concern for the Environment:** APS Affiliates are expected to act in such a manner as to protect the resources of the natural and agricultural environments in which they work and strive to avoid direct or indirect adverse effects on people or the environment that might result from their presence, activities, or equipment.
- **Non-Retaliation:** APS Affiliates must not retaliate against any person(s) who raises a conduct concern under this Code or any other APS policy or who participates in APS processes to address such concerns.

## V. Reporting Concerns

If you observe behavior that you believe is inconsistent with this Code and you feel it is safe to intervene and feel comfortable doing so, you might intervene by pointing out, respectfully, the conduct that is concerning and should stop. This is not required, but safe bystander intervention can sometimes safely bring problematic behavior to an end. Whether or not bystander intervention occurs, APS encourages that reports of conduct that may violate this Code be made to APS as set forth below.

APS strongly encourages anyone who suspects or knows of conduct in violation of this Code to come forward at the earliest possible point. APS does not want individuals to wait until a problem becomes overwhelming, extreme, severe, or pervasive. We are committed to stopping misconduct even if the conduct has not risen to the level of a violation of law. Anyone who has a concern that this Code has been violated is encouraged to notify APS by reporting their concerns through the [Lighthouses Services](#) system online or through their mobile app, or to APS CEO or the APS VP of Operations. Additionally, you can call toll-free at (877) 222-3011\* or download the free app in the Apple or Google app store. When you download the app, you will need to enter the keyword "scisoc"

If the suspected violation occurs at an APS or APS Division meeting, including in-person and virtual meetings, the volunteer leaders at the meeting (APS Council members or Division officers) and/or APS staff in charge of the meeting should be notified. In addition, the online reporting system and toll-free number may also be used.

Some individuals associated with APS have heightened reporting responsibilities. The following individuals are expected to promptly report any known or potential violations of this policy to APS CEO or to any member of APS Council, APS officers, and APS management level employees.

## **VI. APS's Response to Possible Code Violations**

Upon receipt of a report of a potential Code violation, APS will investigate the concerns to determine if a violation occurred and to determine what responsive action is appropriate to take. The process is summarized in APS' Summary of Response Process for Possible Code of Conduct Violations.

The APS Council will typically appoint an ad hoc team of three or more APS members, including one member of the presidential lineage, to investigate a potential violation of the Code, weigh the evidence gathered in the investigation, and make recommendations to the APS Council as to whether or not to find a conduct violation and, in the case of a recommended finding of a violation, on proposed sanctions. The APS Council also may decide, rather than appointing an ad hoc team, to engage one or more outside investigator(s) when it feels appropriate to carry out the tasks that would otherwise normally be done by an ad hoc team. APS will ensure that any appointed investigator(s) are conflict-free. The APS Council will have the investigator(s) prepare written report to document the investigation process, key evidence, and recommended findings and, if applicable, sanctions. This report will be submitted to a closed session of the APS Council for review and for determination, by majority vote, as to whether or not to accept recommended findings and, if applicable, sanctions.

While APS is engaged in its response process, it may take a variety of interim measures to preserve the status quo, protect the integrity of its response process, and ensure a professional, nondiscriminatory and harassment-free environment. Such measures might include, but are not limited to, the following measures for APS directors, members and/or others: loss of APS membership; loss of APS awards or honorifics and removal of member from APS websites; restricting access to APS property and/or events; temporary suspension or restriction of member, director, or other roles.

APS is committed to handling reports of potential violations of this policy as quickly and as discretely as possible, subject to its need to look into and respond to concerns and subject to applicable law.

In addition, APS prohibits retaliation based on a good faith report or participation in APS's response process or any legal proceeding. If an individual protected by this Code believes that they or another person has experienced retaliation, they should report their concerns as set forth above in the reporting section of this Code. Mandatory reporters listed above must promptly report any knowledge or other notice of potential retaliation. Members and Affiliates

are expected to be truthful in any investigations conducted by APS. Failure to be truthful can also be considered a violation of the Code.

## **VII. Consequences for Code Violations**

Affiliation with APS requires acknowledgement of and compliance with this Code of Conduct. Violations of this Code or other APS policy will lead to consequences as determined to be appropriate by APS. Such consequences may include but are not limited to removal of an individual from attendance or other participation in an event without prior warning or refund; revocation of, or removal of APS awards and award statements from APS websites; future attendance or participation limits, restrictions or conditions, and/or suspension or expulsion from membership or other participation in APS. Any course of action decided upon by APS is final.