



# **NRA TRAINER'S ETHICS GUIDE**

## **Table of Contents**

### **INTRODUCTION**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

COMPETENCE

INTEGRITY

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

RESPECT OF PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

CONCERN FOR OTHERS' WELFARE

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

### **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

#### **A. GENERAL STANDARDS**

1. APPLICABILITY OF ETHICS GUIDE
2. BOUNDARIES OF COMPETENCE
3. MAINTAINING EXPERTISE
4. BASIS FOR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENTS
5. DESCRIBING THE NATURE OF INSTRUCTING OR COACHING JUDGMENTS
6. RESPECTING OTHERS
7. DISCRIMINATION
8. SEXUAL HARASSMENT
9. AVOIDING HARM
10. MISUSE OF INFLUENCE
11. MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS
12. EXPLOITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS
13. DELEGATIONS TO AND SUPERVISION OF SUBORDINATES
14. HONORING COMMITMENTS

#### **B. PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

1. AVOIDANCE OF FALSE OR DECEPTIVE STATEMENTS
2. MEDIA PRESENTATIONS
3. TESTIMONIALS
4. REPRESENTING THE NRA

#### **C. RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES**

1. FAMILIARITY WITH ETHICS GUIDE
2. CONFRONTING ETHICAL ISSUES
3. CONFLICTS BETWEEN ETHICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEMANDS
4. INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF ETHICS VIOLATIONS
5. FORMAL REPORTING OF ETHICS VIOLATIONS
6. COOPERATING WITH ETHICS INVESTIGATIONS
7. IMPROPER COMPLAINTS

# **NRA TRAINER'S ETHICS GUIDE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We are not immune from ethical problems in the shooting sports.

The intent of this guide is to provide both general principles and the decision rules to cover most situations encountered by NRA trainers.

It has been designed with the purpose of establishing trainer ethics in order to protect the students, athletes, trainers, volunteers, clubs, the NRA, and the public. These standards define (to the extent possible) acceptable and unacceptable categories of behavior.

Whether a trainer has violated the Ethics Guide does not in itself determine if a contract or agreement is enforceable or if legal consequences occur. These results are based on legal rather than ethical rules. However, compliance with or violation of the Ethics Guide may be relevant as evidence in some legal proceedings, depending upon the circumstances.

It is the individual responsibility of each trainer to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Trainers should respect and protect human civil rights, and should not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

### **COMPETENCE**

Trainers strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience. Trainers exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They maintain knowledge of relevant educational information related to the services they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing education. Trainers make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical, and administrative resources.

### **INTEGRITY**

Trainers seek to promote integrity in the practice of instructing and coaching. Trainers are honest and fair. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Trainers strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations, and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they attempt to clarify, for relevant parties, the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Trainers avoid improper and potentially harmful relationships.

### **PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Trainers uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different participants. Trainers consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutes to the extent needed to serve the best interests of their students, or other recipients of their services. Trainers' moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except when trainers' conduct may compromise their responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in shooting instruction or shooting instructors and/or coaches.

### **RESPECT OF PARTICIPANTS'\* RIGHTS AND DIGNITY**

Trainers respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all participants. Trainers are aware of individual differences. Trainers try to eliminate the effect of biases on their work, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unlawful discriminatory practices.

### **CONCERN FOR OTHERS' WELFARE**

Trainers seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact. In their actions, trainers consider the welfare and rights of all participants. When conflicts occur among trainers' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Trainers are sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people before, during or after their instructional or coaching relationships.

### **RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY**

Trainers are aware of their ethical responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge of shooting in order to contribute to human welfare. Trainers try to avoid misuse of their work. Trainers comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of shooting and responsible gun ownership.

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\* Participants: Those taking part in shooting (shooters and their family members, instructors, coaches, officials, volunteer, administrators, and spectators).

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

### **A. GENERAL STANDARDS**

These General Standards are applicable to the activities of all NRA trainers.

#### **1. APPLICABILITY OF ETHICS GUIDE**

While many aspects of personal behavior and private activities seem far removed from official duties of teaching shooting, all trainers should be sensitive to their position as role models for shooters and their community. Private activities perceived as immoral or illegal can influence the public's perception of shooting instructors and coaches. Trainers are encouraged to observe the standards of this Ethics Guide consistently.

#### **2. BOUNDARIES OF COMPETENCE**

- a. Trainers provide services only after first undertaking appropriate study, training, supervision, and/or consultation from qualified members of their respective credentialing association.
- b. In those areas of the United States that require specified education or certification for instructors or coaches, trainers take reasonable steps to ensure that they are in compliance with the law.

#### **3. MAINTAINING EXPERTISE**

Trainers maintain a reasonable level of awareness of related educational information and undertake ongoing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they use.

#### **4. BASIS FOR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENTS**

Trainers rely on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge when making judgments or when engaging in instructional or coaching endeavors.

#### **5. DESCRIBING THE NATURE OF INSTRUCTION OR COACHING**

When trainers provide services or information to an individual, a group, or an organization, they use language that is reasonably understandable and appropriate to the recipient of those services, and information that is always updated and truthful.

#### **6. RESPECTING OTHERS**

- a. Trainers respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from their own.
- b. When engaged in instructing or coaching, trainers recognize the power they hold over participants, and therefore make reasonable efforts to avoid engaging in conduct that is demeaning to participants.

#### **7. DISCRIMINATION**

Trainers do not engage in discrimination on any basis prescribed by law.

#### **8. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

- a. Trainers do not engage in sexual harassment.
- b. Trainers will treat sexual harassment complainants and respondents with dignity and respect.

#### **9. AVOIDING HARM**

Trainers take reasonable steps to avoid harming their participants.

## 10. MISUSE OF INFLUENCE

Because trainers' judgments and actions may affect the lives of others, they are alert to guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence.

## 11. MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

a. In many communities and situations, it may not be feasible or reasonable for trainers to avoid social or other non-training contacts with students, athletes and other participants. Trainers must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of other contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal. A trainer refrains from entering into or promising a personal, professional, financial, or other type of relationship with such persons if it appears likely that such a relationship might impair the trainer's objectivity or otherwise interfere with the trainer effectively performing his or her function, or might harm or exploit the other party.

b. Whenever feasible, a trainer refrains from taking on obligations when preexisting relationships would create a risk of harm.

c. If a trainer finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the trainer attempts to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and in maximum compliance with this Ethics Guide.

## 12. EXPLOITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

a. Trainers do not exploit participants over whom they have supervisory, evaluative, or other authority.

b. Trainers do not engage in sexual/romantic relationships with participants over whom the trainer has evaluative, direct, or indirect authority whenever such relationships are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative.

## 13. DELEGATIONS TO AND SUPERVISION OF SUBORDINATES

a. Trainers delegate to their assistants only the authority that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently on the basis of their education, training, experience, or certification.

b. Trainers provide proper training and supervision to their assistants or substitutes, as well as take reasonable steps to see that such persons perform services responsibly, competently, and ethically.

## 14. HONORING COMMITMENTS

Trainers take responsible measures to honor all commitments they have made to participants.

## **A. PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

### **1. AVOIDANCE OF FALSE OR DECEPTIVE STATEMENTS**

Trainers do not make public statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent (either due to what they state, convey, or suggest, or because of what they omit) concerning their accomplishments or activities or those of persons or organizations with which they are affiliated. As examples (and not in limitation) of this standard, trainers do not make false or deceptive statements concerning:

- a. Their training, experience, competence, or services.
- b. Their institutional or association affiliations.
- c. Their academic degrees.
- d. Their credentials.
- e. The basis for, results of, or degree of success of their services.
- f. Their shooting accomplishments

### **2. MEDIA PRESENTATIONS**

When trainers provide advice or comment by means of public lectures, demonstrations, radio or television programs, pre-recorded tapes, printed articles, mailed material, or other media, they take reasonable precautions to ensure that the statements are consistent with this Ethics Guide.

### **3. TESTIMONIALS**

Trainers do not solicit testimonials from current or prospective participants who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

### **4. REPRESENTING THE NRA**

Trainers understand that their business relationship with the NRA is that of an independent contractor who has been given credentials by the NRA to teach specific NRA courses or perform other specified training activities. Trainers understand they are not NRA employees and may not represent the NRA on matters of NRA policy formulation or policy interpretation nor may they make business commitments on behalf of the NRA unless given specific written authorization to do so.

## **B. RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES**

### **1. FAMILIARITY WITH ETHICS GUIDE**

Trainers have an obligation to be familiar with this Ethics Guide (or as it may be amended from time to time), other applicable ethics codes, and their application to the trainer's work. Lack of awareness, or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not, in itself, a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

## 2. CONFRONTING ETHICAL ISSUES

When a trainer is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate the Ethics Guide, the trainer ordinarily consults with other trainers knowledgeable about ethical issues, or with the NRA Training Department.

## 3. CONFLICTS BETWEEN ETHICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEMANDS

If the demands of an organization with which trainers are affiliated conflict with this Ethics Guide, trainers clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to this Ethics Guide, and to the extent feasible, seek to resolve the conflict in a way that permits the fullest adherence to the Ethics Guide.

## 4. INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF ETHICS VIOLATIONS

When participants believe that there may have been an ethics violation by a trainer, they may attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual in an informal manner.

## 5. FORMAL REPORTING OF ETHICS VIOLATIONS

If an apparent ethics violation is not appropriate for informal resolution under this Ethics Guide, or is not resolved properly in that fashion, participants and the NRA may take further action by:

### a. Participant:

Any participant with first-hand knowledge may notify the NRA Training Department in writing, identifying those involved and the specific ethics violations and describing actions taken to resolve the situation.

### b. The NRA Training Department:

(1) Will review and investigate documented ethics violation charges.

(2) If necessary, will review the ethics violation charge with NRA counsel.

(3) If the charge is credible, will notify the accused of the allegation in writing. The accused will be given the opportunity to respond in writing.

(4) Will render a decision and notify the accused in writing. The decision may result in exoneration or in sanctions, including, but not limited to, suspension or revocation of NRA training credentials.

(5) Will keep a written record on all reviews, responses, and actions.

## 6. COOPERATING WITH ETHICS INVESTIGATIONS

Trainers cooperate in ethics investigations and proceedings. Failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation.

## 7. IMPROPER COMPLAINTS

Participants do not file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are frivolous or are intended to harm the respondent rather than protect the public.