

Code of Ethics

The Society aspires to preserve for its members and for all future generations of prospective members the sacred right of men to seek haven from the burden of their daily cares through indulgence in old-fashioned vocal quartet harmony, and to that end we do hereby solemnly pledge ourselves to abide by the precepts of the Code of Ethics. Please refer to the Society's General Statements of Policy for further clarification of some of the following canons.

1. We shall do everything in our power to perpetuate the Society.
2. We shall deport ourselves and conduct the Society's functions in such manner as to reflect credit upon the Society and its membership.
3. We shall conform in all respects to the bylaws of the Society and the rules from time to time promulgated by its Society Board of Directors.
4. We shall accept for membership only congenial men of good character who love harmony in music or have a desire to harmonize.
5. We shall exhibit a spirit of good fellowship toward all members.
6. We shall refrain from forcing our songs upon unsympathetic ears.
7. We shall not use our membership in the Society primarily for personal gain.
8. We shall not permit the introduction of political, religious or other similar controversial issues into the affairs of the Society.
9. We shall, by our stimulus to good music and vocal harmony, endeavor to spread the spirit of harmony throughout the world.
10. We shall render all possible altruistic service through the medium of barbershop harmony.

Ethics Complaint Policies, Procedures and Regulations

The Society has a Code of Ethics. So that each member is aware of the Code, it is printed on the back of every membership card.

Though the Code is binding on every member, it obviously affects some more than others. The officer, the bulletin editor, the master of ceremonies - each becomes a "spokesman" and therefore bears the brunt of upholding the Code of Ethics - or degrading it. This is especially true of quartets, for they must exhibit good taste in all aspects of their performance. Certainly, nothing is more representative of our Society and what it stands for than our quartets and the music they sing.

The Society has set up certain procedures which should be followed in reporting alleged violations of the Code of Ethics. Violations of the rules, regulations or statements of policy adopted by the Society Board shall be deemed to be violations of Canon 3 of the Code of Ethics. Violations of the Code of Ethics shall be dealt with in accordance with the following procedures, which are in addition to the procedures for suspension or expulsion of a member set forth in Section 3.04 of the Standard Chapter Bylaws. An appeal made to the Society Board under Section 3.05 of the Standard Chapter Bylaws, of the suspension or expulsion of a member by a chapter, shall be referred to the Society Ethics Committee for a hearing conducted under the procedure set forth in Section E below.

A. District and Society Ethics Committees

- (1) Each district president shall appoint the chairman and members of the district ethics committee, pursuant to Section 8.02 of the Standard District Bylaws.

- (2) The Society president shall appoint the chairman and members of the Society Ethics Committee, pursuant to Sections 8.01 and 8.03 of the Society bylaws.

B. Reporting Suspected Violations;

- (1) Reports of suspected or alleged ethics violations are to be in writing. A forms is available on the Society web site or from the Society office, but any written report is acceptable. Regardless of format, the report should include all available details and documentation in order to assist with the investigation and resolution. Reports may be made by any member of the Society.
- (2) It is the duty of each committee member and each district officer to report any suspected or alleged violation of the Society's Code of Ethics to their district ethics committee chairman. The importance of this responsibility must be impressed on each district officer, and on the members of each district ethics committee, at the start of their term of office.
- (3) Although reports regarding individuals, chapters and district matters ordinarily should be made to the appropriate district ethics committee chairman, reports of suspected or alleged ethics violations also may be made to the chairman of the Society Ethics Committee, or to the Society executive director.

C. Preliminary disposition of ethics violation reports

- (1) Upon receipt of a written report of a suspected or alleged ethics violation, an ethics committee chairman shall determine whether the matter shall be processed by his committee, or referred to another ethics committee for processing; provided, however, that any matter referred to the Society Ethics Committee by a district ethics committee chairman shall be processed by the Society Ethics Committee, unless the chairman of the Society Ethics Committee deems the matter to be one which should properly be referred to the ethics committee of another district, in which case such referral shall be made. Any ethics committee chairman referring a matter to another ethics committee for processing shall promptly forward the report of violation to the chairman of the other ethics committee. A report of violation made to the Society's executive director may, in his discretion, be handled administratively if not of a serious nature, or he may refer the same to an ethics committee.
- (2) The chairman of the ethics committee which is to process the report of violation shall furnish a copy of the report to each member of his committee, and the committee will then institute its own inquiry and investigation. The committee will make personal contact with the alleged violator (and if necessary the reporter of the violation) and if the allegation is deemed to be valid the committee shall, to the extent possible, request immediate correction of the problem.
- (3) If, after investigation, the committee finds probable cause that the violation exists and is of a serious nature, the chairman will issue to the alleged violator an "Ethics Violation Citation" by return receipt requested certified mail, clearly stating the nature and details of the alleged violation. If suspension or expulsion of the member is being sought, the citation shall also notify the accused of that fact, and of the time within which the accused must respond in order to be entitled to a hearing, if applicable. The accused shall be given 30 days from the mailing date of the citation to respond to the chairman in writing. If the accused desires a hearing, such response must contain a request for the same. Based on the response received from the alleged violator, the chairman shall determine if the matter has been satisfactorily resolved or if it should be referred to the ethics committee for further action or a hearing. If suspension or expulsion of the member is being sought, the alleged violator shall be entitled to a hearing as a matter of right, if he requests the same. No hearing shall be required if the action proposed to be taken is limited to reprimand or dismissal of the charge. Upon request of a majority of the members of his committee, the chairman shall refer the matter to the committee for a hearing.
- (4) Should a reply not be received by the chairman from the alleged violator within the 30-day period, the alleged violator will be deemed to have waived any right to a hearing, and the matter shall then be referred to the ethics committee for action. The chairman of a district ethics committee shall promptly report to the Society president and to the chairman of the Society Ethics Committee, the details of any matter being referred to the district ethics committee for hearing or action.
- (5) The chairman shall maintain a complete, documented file on each reported violation and action taken.
- (6) The chairman is encouraged to consult with the Society Governance and Bylaws Committee if there is any question of policy or legal interpretation.

D. Hearing before ethics committees; actions

- (1) Each ethics committee, whether Society or district, shall constitute a Hearing Committee for the purpose of conducting hearings provided for under Section 3.01 (c) of the Society Bylaws. Any appeal taken to the Society Board by a member suspended or expelled by his chapter, and any application for readmittance of a former member expelled by action of the Society Board, shall be referred to an ethics committee for hearing. All hearings referred to an ethics committee shall be scheduled as soon as reasonably practicable, at a time and place determined by the chairman of the committee. All such hearings shall be conducted under the procedures set forth in Section E below.
- (2) Upon the conclusion of any hearing, or at the conclusion of the investigation if no hearing is required or demanded, the ethics committee shall take one of the following actions:
 - (a) Dismiss the complaint.
 - (b) Reprimand the member.
 - (c) Recommend to the Society Board the suspension, for a definite period of time, of all privileges of membership of the accused member or a suspension of less than all privileges under specified conditions for a definite period of time.
 - (d) Recommend to the Society Board the expulsion of the accused member.
 - (e) Recommend to the Society Board such legal or other actions deemed appropriate.
- (3) Notice of the action taken or recommended by the ethics committee shall promptly be given in writing to the accused member, to the complainant and to the Society Board.

E. Hearing procedures

- (1) At least 14 days prior written notice of a hearing shall be given by the chairman of the ethics committee to the accused member, to the other members of the ethics committee and to other necessary persons. Notice to the accused member shall be given by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the member's last known address. Notice to others may be by mail or electronic transmission.
- (2) Prior to, or at a hearing, any interested party (including the accused) may submit written statements or other documentary proof to the chairman, for consideration by the ethics committee. Any interested party shall be entitled to be heard at the hearing, subject to reasonable limitations established by the chairman. A hearing may, at the request of the accused member or by vote of a majority of the ethics committee, be held in executive session.
- (3) Within 30 days following the hearing, the chairman of the ethics committee shall make and furnish to the executive director, to the accused member and to the complainant, written findings of fact, and a statement of the action taken or recommended by the ethics committee. Any interested party may also submit to the executive director, within 30 days following the hearing, such party's version of the facts as presented at the hearing.
- (4) If suspension or expulsion is recommended by the ethics committee, the chairman shall promptly forward to the executive director all written statements or documentary proof submitted to the ethics committee by interested parties. If suspension or expulsion is recommended by the Society Ethics Committee, the committee shall make its report and recommendation to the Society Board as to the action to be taken by that body. If suspension or expulsion is recommended by a district ethics committee, the chairman shall promptly forward its report and recommendation to the Society Ethics Committee. The Society Ethics Committee shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, review and consider the reports, documents, statements and recommendations submitted by the district ethics committee, and by the interested parties, and the Society Ethics Committee shall then make its report and recommendation to the Society Board as to the action to be taken by that body.
- (5) At the meeting of the Society Board next following the receipt of the report and recommendation of the ethics committee, the Society Board shall consider the report and recommendation, and shall take such action as the Board shall deem appropriate, including any of the actions set forth in Section D(2) above. Prior to taking any action, the Board may, by a vote of two-thirds of its members (by mail or otherwise), require the interested parties to appear before the Board at a designated time and place for a further hearing upon the matter. All interested parties shall be given written notice of the hearing, not less than 14 days prior to the date set for the hearing.

- (6) The Society Board may direct an ethics committee to monitor compliance by a member suspended under specified restrictions or conditions, and to report, or make further recommendations, to the Board.
- (7) The action taken by the Society Board shall be final and binding upon all interested parties, and the executive director shall notify all interested parties of such action, in writing.

The purpose of the Society's Code of Ethics and policy for handling ethics complaints is to maintain the reputation and public and private image of the Society and its units as being truly family entertainment in good taste. Wherever possible, alleged violations should be handled at the chapter and district level.