



ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL (EP)



GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE



Table of Contents

EP Guidelines for Ethical Practice	3
1.1 Environmental Stewardship.....	4
1.1.1 Champion Environmental Stewardship	4
1.1.2 Embrace EP Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
1.1.3 Strive to Leave a Legacy	5
1.1.4 Use Scientific and Traditional Knowledge.....	6
1.1.5 Support and Promote Ecological Resilience	6
1.2 Environmental Advocacy.....	7
1.2.1 Exercise Due Diligence	7
1.2.2 Inspire Others and Show Value in Making Environmentally Conscious Decisions	8
1.2.3 Facilitate and Promote Environmentally Positive Changes	8
1.2.4 Restrict Professional Practice to Areas of Competency and Expertise.....	9
1.3 Professional Responsibility.....	10
1.3.1 Promote the Value of Being an	10
1.3.2 Maintain Competencies and Continuously Improve.....	11
1.3.3 Recognize When Compliance is Not Enough	11
1.3.4 Use the Precautionary Principle.....	12
1.3.5 Hold Others Accountable and Report Unethical Practices	12
1.3.6 Conduct Practice Towards Other Professionals with Courtesy.....	13
1.3.8 Abide by the Law, Regulatory Guidelines and Policies	14
1.3.10 Be Mandate-Oriented and Follow Policy, Agree to Value a Certain Code (Includes Ethics and Consequences).....	16
1.4 Ethical and Moral Standards	17
1.4.1 Conduct all Professional Practice Honestly and with Integrity	17
1.4.2 Present Facts Accurately and Seek Understanding.....	18
1.4.3 Maintain Integrity	18
1.4.4 Maintain Objectivity and Respect for Other Opinions.....	19



1.4.5	Remain Transparent and Declare Conflicts of Interest	19
1.4.6	Uphold Ethical Environmental Requirements and Practices	20
1.4.7	Protect Vulnerable Sectors of the Population	21
1.5	Confidentiality	22
1.5.1.	Safeguard Confidential Information.....	22
1.5.2	Respect Contractual Obligations.....	23



EP Guidelines for Ethical Practice

The **EP Code of Ethics** outlines the values and expected behaviours that guide Environmental Professionals in all activities related to their professional duties. By committing to these values and adhering to the expected behaviours, Environmental Professionals strengthen and inspire the public's confidence in the environmental profession.

The **EP Guidelines for Ethical Practice**, a companion document to the EP Code of Ethics, uses practical examples for Environmental Professionals to interpret and apply the EP Code of Ethics in their work.

In the context of a profession serving society and the environment, the EP Code of Ethics shapes individual practice. By adhering to the EP Code of Ethics, Environmental Professionals:

1. Share a common set of values within the profession and thereby offer a reliable professional product to the public. Practicing in both a competent and ethical manner are inseparable components vital to maintaining a relationship of trust with clients and with the public in general.
2. Provide societal and environmental leadership. Trust is a fundamental element as EPs guide society to adopt environmental responsibilities for the advancement of ecological and human welfare. The public is looking to EPs for this leadership particularly because of the increasing rate of advancements in the environmental world.

The EP Code of Ethics includes five tenets that all certified and in-training members must perform under to remain a member in good standing. The five tenants include:

1. Environmental Stewardship
2. Environmental Advocacy
3. Professional Responsibility
4. Ethical and Moral Standards
5. Confidentiality



EP designation staff, volunteers, and board and committee members must also abide by the EP Code of Ethics. This section describes each of these five central tenets of the EP Code of Ethics.

1.1 Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Professionals recognize the value of environmental efficiency and sustainability, determine the benefits and costs of additional environmental stewardship, and continue to implement sustainable solutions.

As part of their responsibilities, Environmental Professionals must also:

- Champion Environmental Stewardship
- Embrace EP Roles and Responsibilities
- Strive to Leave a Legacy
- Use Scientific and Traditional Knowledge
- Support and Promote Ecological Resilience

1.1.1 Champion Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship involves thorough efforts to protect the global environment and minimize the impacts of human activity. Although all citizens are responsible for sustaining the viability of our environment, Environmental Professionals must champion environmental stewardship with an objective towards sustainability.

Society must reconcile these environmental stewardship needs with an EPs need for responsible sustainable development. EPs should take an active and cooperative role to help society meet present and upcoming environmental challenges. EPs are responsible for maintaining their knowledge in areas that have a bearing on the quality and effect of their work.

When acting in a professional capacity, EPs are obligated to consider the implications of their work regarding environmental effect prevention and mitigation. Many aspects of a project can have direct or indirect environmental effects; these effects can be both positive and negative. All stages of a project have environmental consequences that must be considered early in the project; therefore, a systematic evaluation procedure is needed to effectively address such environmental issues. Developing effective prevention or mitigation strategies requires integrated project planning. EPs should ensure these integrated project planning and evaluation procedures are in place to affirm they protect, steward, and promote the environment when conducting their work.



1.1.2 Embrace EP Roles and Responsibilities

Environmental work is best undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team. Due diligence requires that all reasonable steps be taken to ensure that the team comprises the necessary expertise and that this expertise is appropriately applied.

As part of Environmental Professionals service to society, they are accountable for their own professional practice, for the professional practice of those under their supervision, and generally, for the profession itself. This environmental and public interest bias must take precedence over self-interest. Protection of the environment and the public from unethical or incompetent practice is a top priority for Environmental Professionals. Clients and employers depend on Environmental Professionals for not only their environmental competence but also the confidence the public has in them; in addition, Environmental Professionals must also be credible in their character and in their integrity to serve society.

Environmental Professionals duty to public service extends beyond the EP Code of Ethics. EPs should continually strive to give back to their communities through service to public bodies that draw on professional expertise. EPs are also encouraged to participate in activities that contribute to their communities that require professional and ethical behaviour but not necessarily the application of environmental knowledge.

1.1.3 Strive to Leave a Legacy

Environmental Professionals must uphold and enhance the honour, dignity, and reputation of their professions and serve environmental and public interests. EPs must strive to leave an environmental legacy while maintaining opportunities for future generations to drive responsible environmental management practices.

EPs recognize environmental impairment as a risk to public welfare, and in response, members of society are being urged to protect, preserve, and enhance the quality of the environment. The long-term objectives of Environmental Professionals and professionals employed in the environmental sector are to sustain the viability of our ecosystems and to safeguard the well-being of future generations so that they will not be compromised by our activities today.

Environmental Professionals recognize that stewardship of the environment is a responsibility for all citizens; the public has a rightful role in setting goals for environmental management, and the public's expectations are evolving and vary widely.



Integrating environmental sustainability with social and economic considerations will require Environmental Professionals to be innovative and creative in their planning and design. In the broader context, Environmental Professionals are encouraged to look ahead and foresee how their role will shape the future. Not only through today's innovations, but by showing others how innovations advance in the interest of the environment; public safety, health, and welfare; risk minimization and management; and social and cultural values.

1.1.4 Use Scientific and Traditional Knowledge

EPs know that the projects they work on may involve scientific knowledge, which relies on laws that have been established through the application of the scientific method. Environmental Professionals also need to consider and apply traditional knowledge, developed over centuries through the experiences of local communities around the world and adapted to local culture and environment.

The recognition of industry experts in this area is paramount. The EP must be vigilant in selecting a process or assembling a team with the appropriate knowledge for the proposed project. Environmental Professional must also recognize values applicable to the social and economic effects of projects. These values could include local and neighbourhood concerns, quality of life, specific-effect concerns (e.g., visual, sound, odour), along with traditional and cultural values have all gained acceptance as pertinent and definable criteria that many jurisdictions are now interpreting and applying.

1.1.5 Support and Promote Ecological Resilience

Environmental Professionals must support and promote ecological resilience by incorporating information about natural variation, cumulative impacts, and climate change where appropriate or possible. An EP should evaluate and investigate any possible impacts their work could have on nearby micro-ecosystems. These impacts can be individual or cumulative and they may have social and economic implications. Environmental Professionals should, wherever applicable, monitor the effects of a changing climate on standard design practices and adapt their decisions and project designs to accommodate these changes as they evolve.

Environmental Professionals must, at the minimum, comply with all relevant legislation, approvals, and orders relating to the sustainable treatment of resources and disposal of the same resources and by-products. In addition, even where not required by legislation, approvals or orders, EPs should aim to increase the lifecycle of a resource to increase sustainability.



EPs understand that they are building resilience into an ecosystem by supporting the health and function of associated habitats, organisms, and ecosystem processes that are affected by their work. For ecological systems, an EP understands the importance of biodiversity and functional redundancy, helping ecosystems become more resilient to environmental changes. With this knowledge, an EP will use a diverse set of strategies and methods to build the resilient ecosystem for coping with and adapting to change.

1.2 Environmental Advocacy

Environmental Professionals empower communities around them, enhancing the dignity and reputation of both the profession and the designation, as well as respect the welfare, health, and safety of all persons and environment through competency, honesty, and transparency.

As part of their responsibilities for environmental advocacy, Environmental Professionals must:

- Exercise Due Diligence
- Inspire Others and Show Value in Making Environmentally Conscious Decisions
- Facilitate and Promote Environmentally Positive Changes
- Restrict Professional Practice to Areas of Competency and Expertise

1.2.1 Exercise Due Diligence

EPs shall practice due diligence and apply reasonable care in all work. Environmental Professionals should:

- Stay apprised of the major environmental issues facing society so that they may inform the potential interaction of these issues with their professional activities.
- Recognize how their professional activities can affect the environment.
- Develop a system of monitoring to maintain a reasonable level of understanding and awareness of the environmental issues related to their field of expertise.
- Recognize the value of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in identifying, controlling, and reducing negative impacts on the environment.
- Use other specialists in areas where the EPs knowledge alone is not adequate to address environmental issues.
- Apply professional and responsible judgment in their environmental considerations.
- Integrate environmental planning and management into all their activities.
- Consider the costs of environmental protection and promotion among the essential factors used to evaluate the economic viability of projects.



- Recognize the value of environmental sustainability, consider all benefits and costs of environmental stewardship, and endeavor to implement efficient and sustainable solutions.
- Openly engage and ask for input from stakeholders and strive to promptly respond to environmental concerns.
- Comply with regulatory requirements and endeavor to exceed or better them by striving to apply the best available cost-effective technologies and procedures.
- Disclose information necessary to protect public safety to the appropriate authorities.
- Work actively with others to improve environmental understanding and practices.

1.2.2 Inspire Others and Show Value in Making Environmentally Conscious Decisions

EPs must demonstrate the benefits for engaging in environmentally positive behaviour and encourage clients, colleagues, employers, and the public to act towards making ethical decisions at an individual, corporate, and public interest level.

EPs realize that no simple definition of “the environmental and public interest” exists and that environmental, technical, economic, and social issues related to sustainability and environmental projects are complex and interrelated. Trade-offs are frequently required.

Substantial pressure can be applied on a project, based on the uni-dimensional agenda of a special interest group. Environmental Professionals make decisions in the best interest of the environment, even if these choices are not the most financially feasible or the easiest path forward.

The solution to complex long-term problems requires the participation of industry, governments, and academia. EPs are encouraged to interact with others to translate concepts from theoretical research into applied practice.

1.2.3 Facilitate and Promote Environmentally Positive Changes

EPs are encouraged to be actively involved with environmental issues. They should go beyond merely facilitating improvements; Environmental Professionals must promote environmentally positive change. By being actively involved, EPs can be proactive, they can anticipate and prevent negative impacts on the environment, rather than being reactive and respond late.

Developing effective prevention or mitigation strategies requires integrated project planning. EPs are encouraged to verify that such evaluation procedures are in place and are followed; this



commitment would indicate that effective environmental protection strategies are an integral part of their activities. Environmental effect prevention and mitigation will always be a key consideration for Environmental Professionals in the execution of their work. Because of this, many projects present an opportunity to consider planning and design alternatives that may have a positive effect on the environment. Environmental Professionals should advise their employers or clients of alternatives that could have a positive effect on the environment; employers and clients would then have the opportunity to help manage from both a project and financial perspective avoiding negative environmental impacts and maximizing positive impacts on society.

Environmental Professionals are uniquely poised between the two extremes of absolute preservation and unfettered development. Three strategies for creating positive change include:

1. For EPs to understand and exercise "no" when they know that the right decision is not being properly considered or executed -- speaking up in the interest of environment and not of 'self'.
2. For EPs to be part of or involved with organizations constituted to formulate environmental laws and their enforcement.
3. For the public to see EPs as true stewards of the environment, professionals who have practical, knowledge-based solutions that serve the best interest of the environment and public.

1.2.4 Restrict Professional Practice to Areas of Competency and Expertise

Environmental Professionals must restrict their advice, opinions, and practice to their areas of competency and expertise. In situations where the environmental issue or an aspect of a project may be outside of the EPs speciality, they are responsible to consult an appropriate subject matter expert. The practice of environmental science requires the integration of diverse disciplines and philosophies; therefore, many projects will require a team of specialists to address complex environmental issues. EPs should engage, or recommend that their clients and employers engage, other experts or specialists to best service the client's or employer's best interests. EPs shall only undertake work they are competent to perform based on their training and experience.



Before accepting assignments, EPs should ensure that their clients and employers understand the extent of their professional responsibilities. Defining the EPs professional responsibilities and developing their scope of services involves listing both the EPs tasks within the terms of engagement and the performance expectations. All parties, the EP, the employer and the client, benefit from the accurate representation of skills, abilities, and expectations.

1.3 Professional Responsibility

The EPs commitment to ongoing learning and development – the sector is growing and continuously changing, and the EP needs to adapt and grow along with it. EPs will adhere to the ethical guidelines, understand the rules of conduct, and uphold the standard of practice. They will also maintain accountability, understand their responsibility, work within the rules and regulations, and always conduct themselves to the maximum of their expertise.

EPs must remember that they need the publics trust for their decisions to be impactful, respected and sought out.

Environmental Professionals have a responsibility to:

- Promote the value of being an EP
- Maintain competencies and continuously improve
- Recognize when compliance is not enough
- Use the precautionary principle
- Hold others accountable and report unethical practices
- Conduct practice towards other professionals with courtesy
- Provide high quality services
- Abide by the law, regulatory guidelines, and policies
- Communicate respectfully
- Be mandate-oriented and follow policy, agree to value a certain code (includes ethics and consequences)

1.3.1 Promote the Value of Being an EP

At all times, EPs should endeavour to communicate the value of their EP designation to their peers, employers, and the public. Obtaining the EP designation validates knowledge obtained through both educational and employment paths, the skillsets obtained, and the ability to meet a professional standard. The EP designation certifies the experiences the professional has gained in their environmental role(s) and attests to their dedication to the environmental sector.



When an EP is presenting, speaking at an event, or writing a proposal, affirming their qualifications by highlighting their EP status will help gain them credibility, as well as grow the legitimacy of the EP community.

1.3.2 Maintain Competencies and Continuously Improve

Environmental Professionals must maintain competencies and continuously improve professional and ethical knowledge through education and skills enhancement. EPs have a responsibility to maintain a knowledgeable interest within their specialization which have the potential to impact the public interest. Environmental, technical, and professional standards of conduct are set, revised, maintained, and enforced by EPs. Mutual accountability within the EP designation and amongst EPs must be stringent, so they are always seen to merit societal trust. If each member of a working group is highly professional, it elevates the professionalism of the entire group. It is up to the EPs to continue their professional development to maintain the standard expected of them through the designation.

Such standards may be provincial, national, or global, and address the following issues:

- **Code of Ethics** – protecting the public from ethical and/or incompetent practice in the highest esteem
- **Technical Requirements** – engaging in skilled practice to ensure the protection of the environment and the public's well-being and safety
- **Continuing Competence** – concerning personal and professional development and adherence to standards and guidelines in all areas of environmental practice
- **Discipline** – disciplining members who fail to comply with proper standards of environmental practice and ethical conduct

1.3.3 Recognize When Compliance is Not Enough

When Environmental Professionals recognize when compliance is not enough nor the best that they can do, they must set a higher standard. The EPs primary responsibility is to protect the welfare of the environment and the public, whether the work is paid or voluntary. This responsibility is not reduced or diminished when the EP provides service to the public through an employer; therefore, employed Environmental Professionals are still bound by these ethical responsibilities and obligations, even if or when they are influenced by others, such as employers, clients or the public. This dilemma may require EPs to confront company loyalty versus professional responsibility.



When an EP takes a professional stance, their career may be negatively affected. EPs must ensure that they take appropriate action or notify the proper authorities when they believe that public safety or the environment is endangered or when required by relevant legislation, approvals, or orders. EPs share corporate responsibility for the quality of products and services delivered.

When faced with these conflicting situations as either a consultant or employee, EPs must use reasoned judgement from their accumulated knowledge and experience. Recognizing ethical dilemmas and determining the actions to address them are important skills for EPs. If necessary, ECO Canada and the EP designation can help the professional in making ethically sound decisions through clarifications withing the EP Code of Ethics.

EPs must understand that meeting the minimum standard is insufficient; EPs should always strive for higher standards. For EPs to have a real impact, their professional competence and project delivery should be rated as “excellent”.

1.3.4 Use the Precautionary Principle

There is not always certainty that an activity can lead to something negative or cause harm, however, EPs have an obligation to actively try to prevent harm. In Professional Practice when there is not scientific proof upfront, an EP should use professional judgement based on their expertise to try and anticipate harm. Environmental Professionals must understand and use the precautionary principle, meaning that they must minimize harm wherever and whenever possible. EPs must keep up with society’s increased awareness of activities that can affect the environment; this awareness will inform an EPs contribution to designing and implementing solutions recognizing the possible significant effects that their professional activities have on the environment.

EPs are expected to respect the law in their personal conduct; they should not engage in activities outside of their professional practice that may compromise their professional or personal reputations, bringing discredit to their professions. If an EP is presented with a situation that may compromise their reputation or the reputation of the profession, they should be prudent and take extra care, even while they await further evidence.

1.3.5 Hold Others Accountable and Report Unethical Practices

Although they may not have formal authority, EPs have a responsibility to lead by example and demonstrate competence and ethical conduct of business in their organizations. To many



employers, this leadership is an asset and often a contributing factor towards offering employment to EPs.

When a disagreement occurs between two EPs, the individual who bears professional responsibility for the recommendation must ensure that their facts and recommendations are correct and that the information and assumptions are communicated simply and clearly. For contentious issues, this communication should be done both in writing *and* by phone or in person. If the senior EP chooses to overrule the other EPs recommendation, in full knowledge of its basis, the senior EP consciously takes responsibility.

When an EPs recommendation is questioned by someone the EP must value their opinion and seek to understand. Although, the other party may not have the environmental technical knowledge to appreciate both the rationale of the recommendation and the potential consequences of failure, their opinion should be addressed. The EP must explain, describe, and defend their recommendation and if necessary, seek support from their managers or their superiors to help resolve the conflict. In such instances, the EP should ensure that an appropriate decision is made.

As mentioned throughout the EP Code of Ethics, an EP has a duty of care to protect public welfare and report unethical practices if necessary.

1.3.6 Conduct Practice Towards Other Professionals with Courtesy

An EPs behaviour toward employers and clients demonstrates the quality and sets an example of their professional brand. Environmental Professionals must conduct their practice towards other professionals with courtesy and good faith. For example, when an EP is administering a contract on behalf of a client or employer, they should act with fairness and justice to all parties including fellow professionals.

When providing services to a client, EPs should consider themselves as part of the client's organization or team. The foundation of an EP-client relationship involves the EPs duty of care for a client's interests, which should not supersede the EPs duties to protect public safety and other duties that may conflict with a client's interests. EPs should put their client's interests before their personal biases and act towards other professionals with respect and accountability.

The relationships of EPs with their business associates should be friendly, but independent and free from obligating favours.



EPs are expected to have proper regard for all individuals. They must not violate the human rights of others and must not discriminate based on race, religion, sex, or disability.

EPs should take responsibility and precautions not to injure the professional reputation of another EP or person through troublesome or frivolous statements.

1.3.7 Provide High Quality Services

Environmental Professionals must provide high quality services in a timely manner. EPs have an obligation to their client that the project and the project deliverables are completed not only to the best of their ability, but also meet the contract requirements while keeping public interest in mind. Providing timely service does not mean doing a fast job, it means being efficient and effective in addressing concerns in timely manner. Providing efficient customer service is part of the EP designation gaining a positive reputation in the environmental sector.

In addition, Environmental Professionals have an obligation to their clients to provide timely notifications and advise their clients when they believe a project will not be successful or will not meet the original agreed upon timelines.

1.3.8 Abide by the Law, Regulatory Guidelines and Policies

Environmental Professionals must abide by the law, regulatory guidelines and policies and ensure that personal actions respect the environment and environmental laws. EPs shall determine which environmental laws, if any, apply to the activity they are undertaking early in the project's timeline; this due diligence investigation will ensure compliance with applicable municipal, provincial, or federal environmental laws.

EPs should consider consulting with municipal, provincial, and federal authorities at the project scoping and planning stage. It is intended that this guideline will be universally applied, regardless of the size of the activity or project. Some projects will require a full environmental impact assessment and other projects will require thought and planning to minimize environmental disruption even if disruption appears to be very minor.

Environmental legislation can place responsibility for environmental impairment on an individual. In such cases, if the individual took all reasonable measures to prevent the offence, then they can demonstrate that they exercised their due diligence. The basis for judging these measures for an EP should be determined by evaluating their standard practice and their compliance to meet any legislation, approval, or order requirements relating to the project in question.



Furthermore, in recent Canadian environmental legislation, an individual can be considered party to an offence if the individual was complicit in the commission of the offence.

To ensure that their personal and professional actions comply with environmental laws, Environmental Professionals should abide by the following principles:

1. Environmental Professionals shall develop and maintain knowledge and understanding of legislation, regulations, approvals, codes, and guidelines; their purposes and limitations; and any changes to these requirements. EPs must also apply these requirements both on a procedural and substantive basis.

Environmental Professionals must:

- Ensure that proper documentation of adherence to environmental procedures, protocols, and regulations is maintained, and that relevant information is provided to regulatory agencies in a timely manner.
 - Have regard for both the reality and the trend of environmental legislation to assign personal responsibility for both action and omission. EPs shall reflect this reality in their professional duties accordingly as it relates to themselves, their employer, colleagues, and clients.
 - Exceed the standards and regulatory requirements to protect the health and well-being of the environment and the public. EPs are encouraged to collect evidence of cumulative, persistent, and synergistic environmental effects where they may not be fully considered in standards or regulations.
2. Environmental Professionals shall disclose, accurately represent, and provide information concerning environmental effects to regulatory authorities, including:
 - Informing public regulatory authorities on all environmental effects of any assignment they are involved in through the normal regulatory review and approval process.
 - Maintaining client and employer confidentiality unless otherwise required by relevant legislation, approvals, or orders. Where any confidential information is disclosed to public authorities, EPs shall advise their employers and clients of such disclosure as soon as practicable.

They shall ensure that appropriate action or notification of proper authorities occurs in any instance where they believe that public safety or the environment is endangered, or where required by relevant legislation, approvals, or orders.

1.3.9 Communicate Respectfully



Environmental Professionals will need to communicate with many different stakeholders and represent themselves, their organization, their client, the public and the EP profession. EPs must communicate respectfully to all parties. Respectful communication means having the ability to effectively convey their own views and fully listen to the views of others. When there is a disagreement or a difference of opinion, the objective should be on healthy discussions. An EP should be open to dialogue, to share their insights and collaborate using the strengths of different contributors to achieve the common goal.

An EP understands that the way they communicate with others is a reflection not only on themselves, but also on the EP designation and profession.

1.3.10 Be Mandate-Oriented and Follow Policy, Agree to Value a Certain Code (Includes Ethics and Consequences)

The daily actions of Environmental Professionals affect the public's trust in the profession, and the public's perception of an EPs ability to handle increasing public expectations, specialization and complexity, and multiple constituents or stakeholders. If EPs are aware of and consciously consider these issues, they can address them better.

Environmental Professionals must, therefore, manage expectations. EPs must inform clients of their professional responsibilities and the legal, ethical, and practical limitations of the service provided. EPs could provide this information through general documents (i.e., practice standards or guidelines), through targeted campaigns, or more specifically within service contracts and company information.

EPs are leaders in organizations and on projects. They must be vigilant in areas beyond their direct professional responsibility; EPs have an obligation to report conditions or changing circumstances that present a material, immediate threat to safety, health, welfare, or the environment in either the workplace or on the project site. EPs must report these conditions first to those professionals who are responsible; if a satisfactory response is not forthcoming then the EP must report it to the appropriate corporate or regulatory authorities.

Note: This facet is aimed at informing responsible professionals about unknown or changing circumstances that require action or response. It does not empower those not involved directly in the decision to challenge, without all the facts, the environmental judgements or recommendations of those who are responsible.



1.4 Ethical and Moral Standards

EPs are counted on for their specific expertise related to environmental issues and concerns. Because much of their work has a direct impact on public health and safety and the future of the environment, it is important that they are bound to an ethical code where objectivity can be ensured, where they conduct themselves with full integrity and serve in the interest of public health and safety, and the environment. EPs need to act as advocates for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Environmental Professionals must:

- Conduct all professional practice honestly and with integrity
- Present facts accurately and seek understanding
- Maintain integrity
- Maintain objectivity and respect for other opinions
- Remain transparent and declare conflicts of interest
- Uphold ethical environmental requirements and practices
- Protect vulnerable sectors of the population

1.4.1 Conduct all Professional Practice Honestly and with Integrity

Environmental Professionals must conduct their professional practice honestly and with integrity, fairly and in good faith with due care to the public and the environment. EPs should recognize how their activities and professional membership can influence society. They should recognize the value of early involvement and action versus reaction.

EPs are encouraged to share their expertise and share this knowledge on environmental issues with other members, governments, and the public. In working with other disciplines, EPs can help bring theoretical and technological research into applied practice.

EPs can encourage professionalism through mentoring and demonstrating their professional behaviour. In groups, EPs can encourage professionalism by being involved in environmental, technical, or professional areas and by promoting corporate professional responsibility.

EPs should not attach their professional self to activism. EPs have a right to make political contributions, but they also have a duty under the EP Code of Ethics to avoid acting in a manner that impacts their professional stature. Their professional reputation may be damaged or exposed or their intentions misunderstood.



1.4.2 Present Facts Accurately and Seek Understanding

Environmental Professionals must present facts honestly and accurately and speak directly and plainly to ensure the recipients understanding. EPs should clearly distinguish between facts, assumptions, and opinions in their professional work, in public discussion, or in published articles related to their professional work. They should, when expressing opinions or taking part in public discussion on professional matters, clearly disclose on whose behalf they are giving opinions or statements.

EPs should express opinions on environmental matters that only present their knowledge, experience, and honest conviction. EPs should ensure, to the best of their ability, that any statements related to environmental matters accurately reflect their professional opinion.

Advertisements, proposals, presentations, and other solicitations for professional engagement should be factual, clear, and dignified. The intent of the statement is clear, advertising and presentations should complement the EP image and enhance the stature of the profession.

In contrast, some behaviors damage an EPs image and professional reputation. Some examples include:

- Exaggerating project involvement, experience, or level of expertise
- Negatively comparing or commenting on competing professionals
- Suggesting or implying solutions not duly founded in fact
- Making misleading claims, self-praising language, and sensationalism that diminish the dignity of the individual and, by association, the dignity of the entire profession

Environmental Professionals hold specialized expertise pertaining to environmental practices in both competence and ethical matters. This expertise offers a reliable resource to industry and the public.

1.4.3 Maintain Integrity

Environmental Professionals should undertake assignments only when they are competent to complete the work. This rule clearly does not prevent EPs from tackling new challenges and learning new skills, provided that the successful completion of the assignment is not jeopardized, and honesty is maintained with the client or employer. Similarly, EPs should not overlook the fact that today's environmental sector demands specialized knowledge.

Most importantly, EPs should regularly review their own and their organization's capabilities to provide specific services to the public. Many proven specialty companies are available to help



when required; however, if specialized help is needed, EPs should evaluate the company's credentials. This due diligence is particularly important when a lack of capability could result in adverse consequences. When sub-consultant expertise is retained, it should be with the client's approval.

An EP shall not take credit for work done by others. An EP shall also take responsibility for their own work through authorship or acknowledgement; EPs should not allow their name to be associated with work that has been altered.

1.4.4 Maintain Objectivity and Respect for Other Opinions

Environmental Professionals should faithfully perform their duties and responsibilities to their clients and employers and always act with fairness and justice to all. EPs must maintain objectivity and have respect for the opinions of others, even if facing emotionally driven issues.

To maintain objectivity and respect for another's point of view, EPs must:

- Express the results of their work clearly and accurately
- Qualify the results, if necessary, when a matter is only partially resolved
- Avoid bias due to political, economic, or other non-technical factors

In both corporate and societal settings, EPs should focus their discussion on the facts of an issue and accurately represent their professional opinions. When presenting complex issues to a non-environmental or technical audience, EPs are encouraged to use plain language principles and simplify their discussion without losing the critical elements ensuring that their audience understands; this communication approach avoids misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Although this subsection is not meant to dissuade an EP from stating their personal or political interests, they should consider that their personal views may differ from their professional practice and obligations. EPs must present and rely on facts when expressing professional opinions.

1.4.5 Remain Transparent and Declare Conflicts of Interest

Environmental Professionals must remain transparent and avoid and declare conflicts of interest. An EP will hold the interests of their clients or employers in high regard; however, some of an EPs duties take precedence over the interests of the professionals' client or employer. These duties include:



- The duty to protect the safety of the environment and public
- The duty to act fairly and justly to all parties when administering a contract on behalf of a client or employer

As stated previously in this document, one of the primary objectives of the EP designation is to protect the public and to maintain professional integrity. These objectives are achieved through careful examination of each member in the Environmental Professional designation. For an EP to maintain professional integrity, they must be transparent in their intentions and actions. EPs should make provisions so that clients and employees under their responsibility have knowledge of and comply with the laws affecting their work.

An EP must disclose any influence, interest, or relationship that impairs or affects their professional judgement or objectivity. Failure to disclose any real, perceived, or potential conflict situation with an employer, a client or a stakeholder is a conflict of interest.

Under normal circumstances and before accepting assignments, EPs should inform their clients and their employers of any special interests, business connections, personal relationships, conflicts of interest, or other circumstances that could influence their professional services or judgement. They should never offer or accept any covert payment or benefits.

1.4.6 Uphold Ethical Environmental Requirements and Practices

Environmental Professionals must uphold ethical environmental requirements and practices. When an EP becomes aware of public concerns related to an assignment they are involved in, the nature of the concern should be investigated in a timely manner. Once they have determined the validity of the concern, the EP should promptly communicate the information through the normal lines of responsibility.

EPs are encouraged to seek a second opinion (professional or specialist) on the technical validity of their conclusions whenever possible and when there appears to be a difference of opinion with the other responsible parties regarding environmental effects.

In disclosing information about environmental effects, EPs should communicate the information through normal lines of responsibility. Where, in the opinion of the EP, the withholding of confidential information poses a potential threat to the environment, they should make reasonable effort to contact responsible parties before disclosing the information to the proper regulatory authority. EPs must recognize, however, their individual



responsibilities for reporting threats to the environment in accordance with legislation requirements.

There are many legal uncertainties with respect to the disclosure of confidential business information or intellectual property when an EP is involved in the design or supervision of a project that may pose a threat to the public. This situation may present a dilemma to the EP; the EP must remember that it is their responsibility to protect the well-being and safety of the public. This responsibility may conflict with their duty to a client or their employer to act as a loyal agent and not disclose, without consent, confidential information concerning the client's or employer's business affairs, technical methods, or processes. Since duty to the public is paramount, an EP in such conflict is required to advise the employer or client, preferably in writing, of a concern regarding the material threat to the public. If the concern is ignored or overruled and the client or employer continues to follow a course of action that is harmful, the EP should inform his employer or client that they are ethically bound to present the concern to the appropriate authorities and may perhaps even disassociate themselves from the project.

Environmental Professionals must not disclose the employer's or client's confidential information gained during the term of employment (except as required by law). If the EP feels that withholding confidential information jeopardizes public safety, then they should make every effort to contact all parties before they disclose this information to the proper authority.

1.4.7 Protect Vulnerable Sectors of the Population

Environmental Professionals must protect the vulnerable sectors of the population. They must recognize the importance of social and economic values in the environmental assessment process and consider local, neighbourhood, traditional, and cultural criteria through stakeholder involvement.

Understanding the vulnerability of a group requires more than just analyzing the direct impacts their project may have on an economic, social, cultural, institutional, political or psychological level; EPs should address the effects on the human rights and the environment of the group and assess any future considerations which may include hazards, natural or otherwise, on a larger scale.

EPs are responsible in developing a protection plan if the projects they are working on will in any way affect a vulnerable group. In addition, an EP shall immediately advise their employer or client of any concerning potential adverse effects within a vulnerable group; these concerns can



arise from the work an EP is directly involved in or from information they discover through the project(s) on a peripheral level. If they do not receive a prompt response from their employer, client or both their employer and client, then the EP must know how to escalate the situation to appropriate representatives. For example, an EP may need to report on the potential conflict between Indigenous communities and the environmental management of their land.

1.5 Confidentiality

Environmental Professionals hold in strict confidence, except as required by law, all information they acquire during their professional relationships, and do not use this information for personal gain.

EPs must both safeguard confidential information and understand and respect contractual obligations.

1.5.1. Safeguard Confidential Information

Environmental Professionals should keep confidential all information acquired during their professional duties including business affairs of present or past clients or employers. This obligation of confidentiality ends if the information legally enters the public domain. EPs must not use client or employer confidential information for personal gain. This confidential information is proprietary and only given to an EP to appraise a situation for a specific project.

Process information and all confidential information received during professional service is the exclusive property of its owner and only disclosed to others with the owner's approval. Care should be taken regarding trade practices that may be unique and practices that identify the owner's special attributes.

When applicable Environmental Professionals must:

- **Disclose confidential information to legal authorities.** Confidential information may be disclosed if the prior permission of the client or employer or both, is obtained or if disclosure is required by law. If disclosure of confidential information is required by law, it should be made only to the extent required by law. Present or past clients or employers should be advised of such disclosure as soon as possible. Under certain circumstances, an EP should understand that withholding information is contrary to the safety of the public. As a result, the EP should disclose to appropriate authorities only that information necessary to protect public safety.



- **Maintain confidentiality when approached by two or more competing parties.** Extraordinary circumstances may arise; for example, when a consulting EP is approached by a second client to work on a program where they have already worked for another client, or when an EP is approached separately by two parties competing on a proposed project. Even to disclose to the second client that another client was actively considering a job or project would reveal competitive information about the original client. In such cases, the EP should use their professional judgement to decide if the second assignment can be fulfilled using their general professional knowledge, without being influenced by the first assignment. If there is a significant risk of influence by the first assignment or disclosure of proprietary information of the first client, the assignment should be declined without disclosing the interest of the first client.
- **Ensure client consent before the use and distribution of material.** The client maintains the exclusive rights and ownership of published content and designs. The EP must not duplicate published content or designs for others without the permission of the client.
- **Request permission to apply confidential information in new works.** If projects that EPs are working on or clients that they are working for require using confidential knowledge obtained through other projects, the EP can proceed only with the consent of all parties connected with the prior confidential information or projects.

Technical knowledge gained by an EP through work experience may be freely used in subsequent projects without consent from other parties.

1.5.2 Respect Contractual Obligations

An Environmental Professional must understand and respect contractual obligations. When an EP agrees to the terms and signs a contract, they are responsible for the agreed upon deliverables and timelines.

Understanding the obligations and responsibilities of a contract will help EPs perform their duties, understand what to do when unexpected or legal issues arise, and if necessary, renegotiate the terms of the contract.

EPs should spend sufficient time on-the-job to ensure that their direction, reports, and estimates reflect actual site conditions and progress.



An EP can expect, and should agree with their client, that all the relevant information regarding the project will be provided either before the contract is signed or during the project.

A client may oversee the progress of a project and perhaps even may have a preference for a particular solution or a specific outcome; however, an EP may find themselves in a situation where a client may try to influence the results in a direction that doesn't match scientific data, or influence the outcome of the project that the EP does not agree with. If this situation occurs, the EP should communicate the events that took place to both the client and employer and outline their ethical obligation to report illegal activities or practices even if under contract.

EPs must also try to negotiate terms in their contracts that would be beneficial to public good.