



**AEM® and CEM®
Certification Program: Professional
Ethics and Conduct Guide**

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Introduction

Certification Code of Ethics

The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is an international organization dedicated to promoting the goals of saving lives and protecting property by mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters/emergencies. IAEM sponsors the Associate Emergency ManagerSM (AEM®) and Certified Emergency ManagerSM (CEM®) Program to maintain professionalism through the certification process.

The IAEM Code of Ethics and the AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct (The Codes) must be embraced and upheld by all individuals who apply for and are awarded the AEM®/CEM® designation. Anyone that applies for and/or is awarded the AEM®/CEM® certification is required, as a condition of such certification, to at all times adhere to and uphold the IAEM Code of Ethics and AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct. All applicants promise to uphold the Codes that signify the assumption that the emergency manager will act prudently and responsibly beyond the requirements of law and codes.

The Codes embody the certification program philosophy and objectives. Each AEM®/CEM® applicant and certification awardee promises to be bound by and at all times adhere to the following:

- AEM®/CEM® Code of Ethics
- AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct
- Violations of the AEM®/CEM® Code of Ethics and AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct
- Certification Program Complaint Process Policy
- IAEM Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

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AEM®/CEM® Code of Ethics

PREAMBLE

IAEM has a Code of Professional Conduct that seeks to address a range of issues that impact the emergency management professional on their day-to-day work. Maintenance of public trust and confidence is central to the effectiveness of the Emergency Management Profession. This Code aims to ensure and justify public trust and confidence in the services provided by Associate Emergency ManagersSM (AEM®) and Certified Emergency ManagersSM (CEM®) of the International Associations of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

The IAEM Certification Program seeks to ensure that high levels of competence and professional conduct are maintained. AEMs®/CEMs® must adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. The Code of Professional Conduct for the AEMs®/CEMs® (whether or not they are IAEM members) reflects the spirit and proper conduct dictated by the conscience of society and commitment to the well-being of all.

PRINCIPLES

Individuals with an AEM® or CEM® designation agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the basic principles of RESPECT, COMMITMENT, and PROFESSIONALISM.

- **RESPECT**
Respect for supervising officials, colleagues, associates, and most importantly, for the people we serve is the standard for AEMs® and CEMs®. We comply with all laws and regulations applicable to our purpose and position, and responsibly and impartially apply them to all concerned. We respect fiscal resources by evaluating organizational decisions to provide the best service or product at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality.

- **COMMITMENT**
AEMs® and CEMs® commit themselves to promoting decisions that engender trust and those we serve. We commit to continuous improvement by fairly administering the affairs of our positions, by fostering honest and trustworthy relationships, and by striving for impeccable accuracy and clarity in what we say or write. We commit to enhancing stewardship of resources and the caliber of service we deliver while striving to improve the quality of life in the community we serve.

- **PROFESSIONALISM**
IAEM is an organization that actively promotes professionalism to ensure public confidence in Emergency Management. Our reputations are built on the faithful discharge of our duties. Our professionalism is founded on Education, Safety and Protection of Life and Property.

CODE

1. **Quality:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall aim to maintain high quality work at all times and apply the Principles of Emergency Management in their professional undertakings. Quality may be assessed by audits, monitoring, quality processes, or other appropriate means.
2. **Professional Independence:** AEMs® and CEMs®, however employed, owe a primary loyalty to the people in the community they serve and the environment they affect. Their practice should be performed according to high standards and ethical principles, maintaining respect for human dignity. Emergency management practitioners shall seek to ensure professional independence in the execution of their functions. The term professional independence relates to the function of the practitioners within the organization in which they practice. Their role may be advisory or executive.
3. **Legal Requirements:** AEMs® and CEMs® must abide by the legal requirements relating to their practice, and practitioners have a duty to make themselves aware of the appropriate legal requirements for the territory in which they practice.
4. **Objectivity:** AEMs® and CEMs® called to give an opinion in their professional capacity shall be honest and, to the best of their ability, objective and reliable. Objectivity and reliability is based on the best current available knowledge, or in the absence of such knowledge, reference to appropriate emergency planning and management principles.
5. **Competence:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall not undertake responsibilities as emergency management practitioners if they do not believe themselves competent to discharge them. AEMs® and CEMs® shall acknowledge any limitations in their own competence. In pursuit of this AEMs® and CEMs® shall take all reasonable steps to obtain, maintain and develop their professional competence by attention to new developments and shall encourage others working under their supervision to do so. Competence is defined as ‘the possession of sufficient knowledge, experience and skill to enable a person to know what he or she is doing and to be able to carry out a task in the way in which a person competent in the activity would expect it to be done and to have an appreciation of one’s own limitations’. Competence is maintained by undertaking continuing professional development and certification and may be supplemented at appropriate levels by membership of other specialist bodies.
6. **Abuse of Membership:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall not improperly use their certification.
7. **Conflict of Interest:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall avoid their professional judgment being influenced by any conflict of interest and shall inform their employer, or client, of any conflict between their own personal interest and service to the relevant party. For example, a consultant may be aware that his/her recommendations are not being implemented, but continues to advise the organization in order to avoid losing the revenue associated with the contract. The members, officers and agents of the

Association shall act in the best interest of the Association at all times and shall avoid activities resulting in actual or implied personal gain in keeping with the highest standards of ethics and professionalism.

8. **Confidentiality:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall not improperly disclose any information which may reasonably be considered to be prejudicial to the business of any present or past employer or client.
9. **Professional Responsibility:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall accept professional responsibility for all their work and shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons working under their authority or supervision are competent to carry out the tasks assigned to them; are treated with fairness and equal opportunity; and accept responsibility for the work done on the authority delegated by them. Where AEMs® and CEMs® have good reason to believe that their professional advice is not being followed, they shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons overruling or neglecting their advice are made aware of the potential adverse consequences which may result. In such instances it is advisable that such actions are recorded in writing.
10. **Upholding the Aims and Objectives:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall have regard to the reputation and good standing, other members' professional practice and standards, and shall not knowingly bring them into disrepute. Disrepute amounts to the loss of a previously good reputation. It may arise from the conduct of an AEM® or CEM® who by act or omission lowers the professional reputation of the Certification and its holders in the view of right-thinking Certification holders of The Association generally. At all times AEMs® and CEMs® shall seek to uphold the bylaws and APPs of the IAEM.
11. **Professional Reputation:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall not in the course of their practice recklessly or maliciously injure, or attempt to injure, whether directly or indirectly, the professional reputation, prospects or business of another.
12. **Members Relations Inter Se:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall at all times treat others of the Association with the utmost respect and fairness, and at no time undermine their integrity and dignity. AEMs® and CEMs® will at all times seek to work in a cooperative and productive way with each other. Elected representatives have a particular responsibility in this regard; to ensure that all AEMs® and CEMs® and their views are heard, valued, and respected.
13. **Financial Propriety:** AEMs® and CEMs® shall maintain financial propriety in all their professional dealings with employers and clients. Any inducements which may be seen as prejudicial to professional independence or in breach of contractual or moral obligations should be discouraged.
14. **IAEM Code of Conduct Conduct:** All members of IAEM, including those holding AEM® and CEM® certifications, are expected to at all times while participating in IAEM events, conferences, conventions, virtual programs, webinars, or other activities treat their fellow members and professionals within the emergency management

community with the utmost dignity and respect and to adhere to the policies of IAEM as adopted by its Board of Directors from time to time, including, but not limited to the IAEM Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct of the AEM®/CEM® and the Applicants for the AEM®/CEM®

The Certification Commission requires all applicants for and those awarded the AEM® and CEM® certification(s) to at all times maintain the highest standards of academic and professional integrity. IAEM considers academic and professional integrity to be an essential component to the emergency management profession. A violation of professional integrity is any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair advantage for the applicant. The Certification Commission considers violations of these standards to include, but not limited to, the following:

- **Plagiarism:** Taking of information, thoughts or ideas that came from another person, source, expression or publication and using that information to represent one's original work or idea.
 - For example:
 - Purposely copying parts or whole passages from another's work into the essay or any part of the professional contributions without acknowledgment.
- **Cheating:** The act of lying, deceiving or engaging in fraud to create an unfair advantage that allows one to gain leverage at the expense of others.
 - For example:
 - Copying or attempting to copy from others during the exam.
 - Communicating answers with another person or with the use of technology during the exam.
 - Having someone take the exam for you.
- **Misrepresentation of Credentials:** Any statements claimed and documents submitted by an applicant must be true and accurate to the best of the applicant's ability and reflects the applicant's work. Deliberately making false statements or submitting false documents is considered a misrepresentation of credentials.
 - For example:
 - Submitting false references.
 - Submitting transcripts or degrees that the applicant did not obtain on his/her own accord.
 - Providing false information by fabricating or altering certificates, records, degrees, and copyrighted material and presenting the information as genuine.
 - Forging signatures on any document where signatures are required.
 - Submitting another person's portfolio as one's own.

- **Theft or Damage of Property:** Theft or damage of property is defined as the removal of property without the express consent of the owner or author.
 - For example:
 - Improperly obtaining a copy of the exam without the consent of IAEM for personal use.
 - Taking an applicant's portfolio without the author's expressed consent.

Violations of the AEM®/ CEM® Code of Ethics and AEM®/ CEM® Professional Code of Conduct

If an applicant is found to have violated the IAEM Code of Ethics and the AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct, the Certification Commissioner reviewer will present the documents in question to the Chair of the Council Certification Commission. The Chair will appoint a review committee consisting of three independent Certification Commissioners to review the documents in question.

If the review committee determines that an applicant has violated the IAEM Code of Ethics and the AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct, IAEM will provide written evidence of the violation to the applicant and give the applicant an opportunity to respond to this evidence in writing within thirty (30) days from the date of the letter.

If, after reviewing the applicant's response, the Chair determines that the applicant has violated the IAEM Code of Ethics and the AEM®/CEM® Professional Code of Conduct, the Chair will make a recommendation to the Council Board of Directors to impose sanctions.

Sanctions for committing any of the above offenses include a complete rejection of the entire portfolio, revocation of all fees paid, and up to and including a lifetime ban on future credentialing.

Certification Program Complaint Process Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and fair process for handling complaints related to the administration of certification program or complaints against certified individuals or applicants. This policy aims to ensure that all complaints are addressed promptly, transparently, and impartially.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all applicants, certified individuals, and stakeholders of the certification program. It covers complaints regarding the certification process, exam administration, ethical conduct, and other related matters.

3. Definitions

- a. **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding the certification program.
- b. **Complainant:** The individual or entity filing the complaint.
- c. **Respondent:** The individual or entity against whom the complaint is filed.
- d. **Certification Commission:** The body responsible for overseeing the certification process and handling complaints.

4. Filing a Complaint

4.1. Eligibility: Anyone may file a complaint.

4.2. Submission: Complaints must be submitted in writing and be marked to the attention of the IAEM-USA Executive Director or in the alternative, the Assistant Executive Director.

4.3. Details: The complaint must include:

- Complainant's name and contact information
- A detailed description of the issue, including relevant dates and evidence
- Names of individuals involved, if applicable

4.4. Submission Channels: Complaints can be submitted via email to info@iaem.com.

5. Acknowledgment and Initial Review

5.1. Acknowledgment: Upon receipt of the complaint, The IAEM Executive Director or designee shall confirm receipt. Progress reports will be provided to the complainant as appropriate.

5.2. Initial Review: The Executive Director and IAEM Legal Counsel will conduct an initial review to determine if the complaint falls within the scope of the certification program. If the complaint is outside the scope, the complainant will be informed, and no further action will be taken.

A written notice of the complaint, along with submitted supporting documents will be provided to the party against whom the complaint is directed (Respondent).

The Respondent will be provided within thirty (30) days from the date of the written notice to submit to the IAEM-USA Headquarters, 201 Park Washington Court, Falls Church, VA, 22046 or to info@iaem.com to the attention of the Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director, a detailed written response to the complaint.

6. Investigation

6.1. Assignment: Upon receipt of the Respondent's written response to the complaint, the IAEM-USA Executive Director or designee will promptly forward both the complaint and the response and all submitted supporting documentation to a hearing panel selected by the IAEM-USA President.

If either party requests a hearing on the matter, the hearing will be scheduled within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the Respondent's answer to the complaint,

6.2. Investigation Process: The hearing panel will:

- Review submitted information and documentation
- Conduct interviews with the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses (if a hearing is requested)
- Review applicable policies, procedures, and standards

6.3. Timeline: The investigation will be completed within 60 business days from the acknowledgment of the complaint. If additional time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the revised timeline.

7. Resolution and Decision

7.1. Findings: Upon conclusion of the hearing, the assigned panel members shall convene to determine whether a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct or the IAEM-USA Bylaws or other IAEM-USA Board-adopted policy as stated in the complaint, has occurred.

Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing; or If no hearing was requested, within sixty (60) days of the panel's receipt of the complaint, response and supporting materials.

7.2. Decision: The panel's decision shall be issued in writing to the IAEM-USA Executive Director or designee to be promptly communicated to the parties.

The decision will be documented and include:

- A summary of the complaint and investigation
- The decision and rationale
- Any corrective actions or sanctions, if applicable

7.3. Notification: The complainant and respondent will be notified of the decision in writing within 10 business days of the decision.

8. Appeals

8.1. Right to Appeal: If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the decision, they may file an appeal.

8.2. Appeal Process: The appeal must be submitted in writing within 10 business days of receiving the decision. The appeal must include:

- A clear statement of the grounds for appeal
- Any new evidence or information not previously considered

8.3. Appeal Review: The IAEM-USA Board will review the appeal and make a final decision within 30 business days. The decision of the Board is final.

9. Confidentiality

IAEM will endeavor to maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

10. Record Keeping

IAEM will maintain records of all complaints, investigations, decisions, and appeals for a minimum of five years.

11. Contact Information

For questions or to file a complaint, please contact:

IAEM Headquarters
Complaint Submission
201 Park Washington Court
Falls Church, VA 22046
info@iaem.com
7803-538-1795
www.iaem.org

Submission Instructions

Please submit the complaint as a Word document or PDF along with any supporting documents to the address below or via email.

IAEM Headquarters
Complaint Submission
201 Park Washington Court
Falls Church, VA 22046
info@iaem.com
7803-538-1795

The necessary information that must be included in the submission are detailed below:

Certification Program Complaint Submission

1. Complainant Information

- Name:
- Address:
- Email Address:
- Phone Number:

2. Respondent Information (if applicable)

- Name:
- Address:
- Title/Position:
- Organization:
- Email Address:
- Phone Number:

3. Complaint Details

- Date of Incident:
- Location of Incident (if applicable):
- Description of Complaint: (Please provide a detailed description of the issue, including relevant dates, events, and any individuals involved. Attach additional pages if necessary.)

4. Evidence and Documentation

- List of Attached Documents: (Please list and attach any supporting documents, such as emails, letters, photographs, or other evidence.)

5. Additional Information

- Is there any additional information you would like to provide? (Please include any other relevant details that may assist in the investigation and resolution of your complaint.)

6. Declaration

- Declaration: By signing below, I affirm that the information provided in this complaint is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the information I have provided will be used to investigate my complaint, and I consent to the disclosure of this information to individuals involved in the investigation and resolution process.

