



## **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**

*This document describes the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to which all CIPS members must commit.*

### **Preamble**

The Information Technology profession has developed over the years to meet the need for IT services delivered on a professional basis. In order to satisfy this need, IT professionals and the quality of service they provide must command the confidence and respect of the public. This can only be achieved if IT professionals establish and maintain a reputation for both integrity and competence.

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct establishes ethical and enforceable standards, deals with matters subject to judgment, and those other matters that may be difficult to state absolutely. It is to be understood and applied in light of its primary concern for the protection of the public interest.

Inevitably, the application of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct will reveal gaps, ambiguities, and apparent inconsistencies. In such cases, the principle of protection of the public interest will serve to guide the CIPS member.

### **Principles:**

- 1. Protect Public Interest and Maintain Integrity**
- 2. Demonstrate Competence and Quality of Service**
- 3. Maintain Confidential Information and Privacy**
- 4. Avoid Conflicts of Interest**
- 5. Uphold Responsibility to the IT Profession**

## **1. Protect Public Interest and Maintain Integrity**

- CIPS members must protect the public interest and discharge with integrity all duties and services owed to the public, CIPS members, other IT professionals, and clients.
- The obligation to protect the public interest is paramount and must prevail when there is conflict with other obligations.
- Integrity and trustworthiness are the fundamental qualities of every CIPS member and are key elements of each requirement of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. If integrity and trustworthiness are lacking, then the CIPS member's usefulness to the client and reputation within the IT profession will be destroyed regardless of how competent the CIPS member may be.
- Dishonourable or questionable conduct, including conduct that may be adverse to the public interest or lacks integrity, will reflect adversely on the member, the integrity of CIPS, and the IT profession as a whole. If the conduct is such that knowledge of it would be likely to impair trust in the member as a professional, then CIPS will be justified in taking disciplinary action.
- CIPS members must:
  - carry out their work with due regard for public health, public safety, and the environment;
  - make all reasonable efforts to counter misinformation that could bring CIPS and/or the IT profession into disrepute;
  - report problems that might result in serious damage to persons, organizations, property or the economy, to the relevant authority; and
  - not discriminate in any manner based on grounds such as race, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, social origin, family status, or disability.

## **2. Demonstrate Competence and Quality of Service**

- CIPS members owe their client a duty to be competent to perform any IT services undertaken on such party's behalf.
- CIPS members must serve their client in a conscientious, diligent, and efficient manner so as to provide a quality of service at least equal to that which other IT professionals would expect of a competent IT professional in a like situation.
- Competence has to do with the sufficiency of the CIPS member's qualifications to deal with the matter in question. It includes knowledge, skill, and the ability to use them effectively in the interests of the client.
- CIPS members must not undertake a matter without honestly feeling either competent to handle it, or able to become competent without undue delay, risk, or expense to the client.
- CIPS members must:
  - conduct themselves in a professional manner and exercise uncompromised professional judgment;
  - be honest and candid when providing service to clients;
  - maintain professional competency and remain current in their area(s) of practice;
  - demonstrate knowledge required to undertake the work at hand and remain cognizant of and be compliant with relevant legislation, standards and bodies of knowledge; and

- conduct their work in accordance with the legitimate rights of third parties, give proper credit where and when it is due, and conduct all activities with due regard for ownership, property rights and privacy.

### 3. Maintain Confidential Information and Privacy

- CIPS members have a duty to hold in strict confidence all information concerning the business and affairs of the client acquired in the course of the professional relationship, and should not divulge such information unless disclosure is expressly (or implied to be) authorized by the client or otherwise required by law.
- CIPS members cannot render effective service to clients unless there is full communication between them about the matter at hand. At the same time, clients must feel completely secure and entitled to proceed on the basis that without any express request or stipulation on the client's part, information disclosed to the member will be held confidential.
- CIPS members owe a duty of secrecy to every client without exception, regardless of whether it is a continuing or casual client.
- CIPS members must:
  - not disclose having been retained by a client unless the nature of the matter requires such disclosure or the client has expressly given the member the authority to disclosure such information;
  - not repeat any gossip about the client's business or affairs that was overheard by or recounted to the member;
  - treat all client business information as confidential, and respect copyrights, tradesecrets, privacy and terms of license or other applicable agreements;
  - understand and comply with any obligations that may be imposed on them under applicable privacy legislation, including *The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and any amendments to or successor legislation; and
  - avoid disclosure to one client of confidential information concerning or received from another client, and decline employment that might require such disclosure.

### 4. Avoid Conflicts of Interest

- CIPS members must avoid situations where there is a significant risk that the interests of the member may conflict with the public and/or client. A conflicting interest is one that would be likely to affect adversely the CIPS members' judgment or service on behalf of, or loyalty to, a client or prospective client.
- CIPS members must:
  - not place personal or professional interests or those of colleagues above interests of the public or those of clients;
  - make reasonable efforts to notify all parties involved to make full disclosure to the relevant authority if any conflict might be seen to occur by an independent third party;
  - not create hidden reciprocal relationships with third parties who stand to gain as a result of their work; and
  - inform clients of any interests which might be seen to impair their professional judgment.

## 5. Uphold Responsibility to the IT Profession

- CIPS members must assist in maintaining the integrity of CIPS and the IT profession and should participate in its activities.
- CIPS members' conduct toward other CIPS members and IT professionals should be characterized by courtesy and good faith.
- CIPS members have an obligation to support and advance the interests of CIPS and the IT profession, and to respect the rights and professional aspirations of their colleagues. This obligation includes upholding the integrity, dignity and image of CIPS and the IT profession.
- CIPS members should:
  - participate and act with integrity in a manner that upholds the reputation and good standing of CIPS, and the IT profession in general, in relationships with anyone with whom they work;
  - participate with and support fellow CIPS members in their professional development, and provide opportunities for the professional development of new CIPS members, potential CIPS members, colleagues and subordinates;
  - make reasonable efforts to volunteer time and expertise by participating in activities that promote the advancement of CIPS and/or the IT profession; and
  - exemplify the values of equality, tolerance, and respect for others.

### Definitions

- **Conduct:** The way a person behaves toward people or organizations.
- **IT:** Acronym for Information Technology.
- **Public:** Of or having to do with the people as a whole.
- **Public interest:** What is considered beneficial to the public.
- **Client:** Some person or organization paying for goods or services.
- **Integrity:** Quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness, honesty, sincerity.
- **Relevant authority:** A person or group with jurisdiction over directly related areas of concern.
- **Competent:** Properly or sufficiently qualified or capable.
- **Body of Knowledge:** The prescribed aggregation of knowledge in a particular area an individual is expected to have mastered to be considered or certified as a practitioner.
- **Legitimate rights:** Entitlements assured in accordance with recognized or accepted standards or principles.
- **Trustworthy:** A characteristic of the professional whose intentions and competence can be trusted by colleagues, clients, employers, and the public.
- **Third party:** A general term that includes anyone not a party to a contract, agreement, instrument, etc.

NOTE: This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct should not be construed to deny the existence of other ethical, privacy or legal obligations equally important, although not specifically mentioned.