



## CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR PDI-POA MEMBERS

### Preamble

The word *protocol* derives from the Greek and literally means, “to bind things together.” Around the world, those who work in this profession do that every single day – bring people together and curate moments big and small, all to further and support the necessary work of diplomats, elected and appointed officials, educational and military leaders, and business executives.

Because protocol professionals frequently work with high-profile individuals making high-profile decisions in high-profile situations, standards of conduct, confidentiality, collegiality, and comity take on added importance. We take this responsibility seriously. We are committed to being ethical, fair, and honest in our dealings with principals, guests, partners, vendors, and colleagues.

We realize that each of us lives in a different place, subject to different laws and codes, informed by different ethical and cultural norms. Our professional and personal lives are textured by a wide array of experiences and beliefs. Our workplaces and work environments vary greatly.

We readily acknowledge these differences, yet we believe that we can still aspire to a common ethical platform to guide our professional lives.

Therefore, the Membership of Protocol & Diplomacy International – Protocol Officers Association (PDI-POA) adopted this Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (Code). As Members, we affirm these principles as cornerstones of our professional lives and our aspiration to abide by them in our work.

By joining PDI-POA and by remaining in good standing with the Association, Members commit to the tenets contained within this Code. Members agree that our behaviors reflect on more than just ourselves but on the profession as a whole, that we become ambassadors for those in this field and those with whom we share this Association. Members consent that we hold a collective responsibility to live by and enforce this Code and that any breaches merit serious and sober consideration by the Association’s Committee on Ethics.

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### Standards of Conduct and Ethics

These Standards revolve around four core principles: respect, responsibility, fairness and honesty.

**Respect** – Members must demonstrate a high regard for themselves, others, and the resources entrusted to them. Those resources may include people, money, reputation, the safety of others and natural resources. Respect engenders trust, confidence and performance excellence by fostering mutual cooperation, and creates an environment where diverse perspectives and views are encouraged and valued.

**Responsibility** – Members must take ownership of the decisions they make or fail to make, the actions they take or fail to take, and the consequences thereof.

**Fairness** – Members must be impartial and objective when making decisions and taking action. To accomplish this, a Member’s conduct must be free from competing self-interest, prejudice, and favoritism.

**Honesty** – Members must understand the truth and act in a truthful manner. Members must also display integrity both in their communications and their conduct.

To the best of our ability, Members agree to abide by the following Standards.

1. We believe that our work, by its very nature, intersects with individuals from different cultures, beliefs, political systems, religious backgrounds, and the like. Members should take professional care to understand the customs, norms, and mores of those individuals and, where appropriate, work with them to provide reasonable adaptations and accommodations.
2. We believe that we must understand, respect, abide by, and uphold all relevant public laws, statutes, ordinances, regulations, orders, or rules that govern our work, including those which address the protection of privacy and/or the personally identifiable information of others. Members are also expected to disclaim to their employers, clients, or other appropriate persons any conflicts of interest that may affect their work or give the perception that their work may be affected.
3. We believe that Members assume a fiduciary duty to represent their government, business, college or university, or other office, and its leadership, with integrity. Members are stewards of the trust vested in us by many, including our principals, our teams, and, at times, the public. Our comportment should be at all times civil and polite. Even when we disagree, decline a request, share unfortunate or unexpected news, or set clearer expectations, we strive to remain calm, levelheaded, and clear without being uncivil.
4. We believe that we owe a duty to our protocol colleagues to be collegial, civil, helpful, and fair. Unless the situation merits discretion or requires

confidentiality, Members should strive to share information with those on their teams and, when appropriate, colleagues representing their guests. Open, frank communication contributes to a positive, effective work environment and frequently prevents misunderstandings or conflicts.

5. We believe that Members also owe a duty to our non-protocol colleagues, those in communications, security, governmental affairs, policy, and other areas who frequently collaborate with and complement us in our work. When called upon, we ought to provide timely, accurate counsel rooted in the accepted conventions and rules of protocol of our particular jurisdiction or the jurisdiction we are visiting. We should aim to be diligent with details and flexible to meet the real-time demands of our work.
6. We believe that Members should understand, respect, abide by, and enforce the appropriate level of confidentiality required by or pertinent to their work. This would include, without limitation, the movements, decisions, and lives of their principals, guests, their families, and their staffs; sensitive information that, if publicly known, might compromise security or might breach someone's privacy; and any classified information.
7. We believe that Members should use discretion in their social media posts. We should avoid posts and comments that reveal extraneous or private details or discuss preparations for or criticisms of events. Members should likewise demonstrate discretion in their private professional and personal conversations, no matter the medium, time, or location, remembering our responsibility to our principals, visitors, and colleagues.
8. We believe that Members should also avoid drawing unnecessary attention to themselves in professional settings, including, without limitation, seeking autographs or gifts, taking photographs of principals or places without permission (including "selfies"), and soliciting gifts or accepting gifts beyond the bounds of normal protocol exchanges.
9. We believe that Members should be honest with their principals and their staffs, guests, or colleagues in the profession to the extent that our duties of confidentiality and discretion allow. We rely on the trust of others, including their trust in our professional judgment and subject matter expertise. We must honor and nurture that trust at all times. Members must endeavor to keep their word and expeditiously inform affected parties when circumstances change.
10. We believe that Members must respect the intellectual property of others. We should never attempt to use the work of others, especially colleagues in the profession, without appropriate attribution and formal citation. We should seek permission from others before using their original intellectual property.

This includes, without limitation, prepared materials such as presentations, training exercises, lectures, and writings; workplace materials such as seating charts, runs of show, manuals, etc.; and ideas, approaches, solutions, etc.

11. We believe that Members should take responsibility for their actions and the actions of the teams they supervise. Members should be quick to praise and share credit for good work. Members should correct or reprimand in private. Members should accept the consequences of their actions and take affirmative steps to learn from and remediate any mistakes.
  
12. We believe that, as protocol professionals, we should neither engage in nor tolerate inappropriate, unethical, or illegal behaviors. Discrimination covers all areas based on national origin, race, color, religion or creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability or disability, marital status, military or veteran status; physical, personal, psychological, or sexual harassment; bullying of any sort; and/or retaliation. We believe in the “inherent dignity” and “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” enumerated in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Statement of Affirmation:

As a Member of PDI-POA, I commit to abiding by and modeling these standards and behaviors – to the best of my ability – in my professional life.