



# **COLLEGE MANUAL**

**Revised September 2025**



## College Manual

### Table of Contents

I.	Applications for Membership.....	1
II.	Procedures for Addressing Charges of Ethical Violations and Other Misconduct .....	1
	A. Definitions .....	1
	B. Complaint Received .....	1
	C. Executive Director.....	2
	D. Ethics Complaint Review Process.....	3
	E. Bylaws Complaint Review Process.....	3
	F. Right of Respondent to Request a Hearing.....	4
	G. Hearing Procedures.....	4
	H. Notice to the Board of Directors.....	4
	I. Possible Disciplinary Action and Disclosure to ACEP Members .....	5
	J. Ground Rules.....	6
III.	Chartering Chapters .....	7
IV.	Charter Suspension-Revocation .....	7
V.	Filling Board Vacancies Created by Other Than Removal.....	8
VI.	Criteria for Eligibility & Approval of Organizations Seeking Representation in the Council.....	8
VII.	Amendments .....	9

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### I. Applications for Membership

All applications for membership will be in writing on an application form approved by the Board of Directors. Each member will receive a certificate of membership in such form as may be determined by the Board of Directors. The title to such a certificate shall remain, at all times, with the College.

### II. Procedures for Addressing Charges of Ethical Violations and Other Misconduct

Guiding Principle: Ethics charges and other disciplinary charges are important and will be addressed in accordance with College policy.

#### A. Definitions

1. ACEP means the American College of Emergency Physicians.
2. *Code of Ethics* means the *Code of Ethics for Emergency Physicians*.
3. *Procedures* means the *Procedures for Addressing Charges of Ethical Violations and Other Misconduct*.
4. Ethics Complaint Review Panel consists of three (3) members of the Ethics Committee and two (2) members of the Medical-Legal Committee with no conflicts of interest in each pending matter – in matters requiring the expertise of a different committee, the President may appoint two (2) members of the relevant committee to replace the standing members of the Medical-Legal Committee.
5. Bylaws Committee refers to the Bylaws Committee or appointed subcommittee.
6. Board Hearing Panel conducts all hearings and consists of an ACEP Vice President, Chair of the Board, and Board Liaison to the Ethics Committee.
7. ACEP review bodies are the Ethics Complaint Review Panel, the Bylaws Committee, the Board Hearing Panel and the ACEP Board of Directors.

#### B. Complaint Received

A complaint may be initiated by an ACEP member, chapter, committee, or section. No others have standing to present a complaint.

1. Must be in writing and signed by the complainant;
2. Must specify in reasonable detail an alleged violation by an ACEP member of an ACEP policy as it existed at the time of the alleged violation, including ACEP Bylaws, ACEP *Code of Ethics*, other ACEP ethics policies, or other conduct believed by the complainant to warrant censure, suspension, or expulsion;
3. Must allege a violation that occurred within ten (10) years prior to the submission of the complaint, is not the subject of pending litigation, and any rights of appeal have been exhausted or have expired;
4. Must state that the complainant has personal, first-hand knowledge or actual documentation of the alleged violation; substantiating documentation must accompany the complaint. Complainant is responsible for ensuring that the documentation does not provide information that can be used to identify a particular patient, including but not limited to any protected health information or any identifying information related to members of the patient's family;

5. Must state that the complainant is willing to have their name disclosed to the ACEP Executive Director and any additional ACEP review body listed in these *Procedures*, should the complaint be forwarded to the respondent; and
5. Must state that the complainant is willing to have his or her name disclosed to the ACEP Executive Director, any additional ACEP review body listed in these *Procedures*, and the respondent should the complaint be forwarded to the respondent; and
6. Must be submitted to the ACEP Executive Director.

### **C. Executive Director**

1.
  - a. If any elements of the complaint have not been met, returns the complaint and supporting documentation to complainant, identifying the elements that must be addressed in an ethics complaint.
  - b. If all elements of the complaint have been met, sends a written acknowledgement to the complainant confirming complainant's intent to file a complaint. Includes a copy of ACEP's *Procedures* providing guidelines and timetables that will be followed in this matter. Requests complainant sign acknowledgement specifying intent to file an ethics complaint and to be bound by the *Procedures*.
2. Confirms receipt of an acknowledgement signed by the complainant specifying intent to file an ethics complaint and to be bound by the *Procedures*.
3. Notifies the ACEP President and the Chair of the Ethics Committee or the Bylaws Committee, as appropriate, that a complaint has been filed and forwards to each of them a copy of the complaint.
4. Determines, in consultation with the ACEP President and the Chair of the Ethics Committee or the Bylaws Committee, along with other committee designee(s) as appropriate given the subject matter of the complaint, that:
  - a. The charges and conduct set forth in the complaint, as alleged by the complainant, do not allege an actionable violation of a policy or principle included in the *Code of Ethics* or ACEP Bylaws, or other conduct warranting censure, suspension, or expulsion. If so, the Executive Director dismisses the complaint and will notify the complainant of this determination; or
  - b. The complaint alleges conduct that may constitute a violation of a policy or principle included in the *Code of Ethics*, and if so, forwards the complaint and the response together, after both are received, to each member of the Ethics Complaint Review Panel after membership on the Ethics Complaint Review Panel has been confirmed; or
  - c. The complaint alleges conduct that may constitute a violation of ACEP Bylaws or other conduct justifying censure, suspension, or expulsion, and forwards the complaint and response together, after both are received, to each member of the Bylaws Committee, or at the discretion of the Chair of the Bylaws Committee, to members of a subcommittee of the Bylaws Committee appointed for that purpose and that has been screened for conflicts of interest; or
  - d. Determines that the complaint is more appropriately addressed through judicial or administrative avenues, such as in the case of pending litigation or action by state licensing boards, and ACEP should defer actions pursuant to such other avenues. If so, the Executive Director will refer the matter to the ACEP President for review. If the President also determines that the complaint is more appropriately addressed through judicial or administrative avenues, the Ethics Complaint Review Panel or the Bylaws Committee, as appropriate, will review the President's recommendation to reject the complaint. The President's action can be overturned by a majority vote of the applicable ACEP review body or adopted by the body.
5. Within ten (10) business days after the determination specified in Section-C.4.b. or Section C.4.c. of these *Procedures*, forwards the complaint to the respondent by USPS Certified Mail with a copy of these *Procedures* and requests a written response within thirty (30) days of receipt of the documents. The communication will indicate that ACEP is providing notice of the complaint, the reasons for the review action, that no determination has yet been made on the complaint, and that the respondent has the right to request a hearing if the applicable ACEP review body decides not to dismiss the complaint. A copy of the complaint and all supporting documentation provided by the complainant will be included in this communication. Such notice must also include a summary of the respondent's rights in the hearing, and a list of the names of the members of the applicable

ACEP review body, including the Board of Directors. The respondent will have the right to raise any issues of potential conflict or reason that any individuals should recuse themselves from the review. Such recusal shall be at the discretion of the ACEP President.

6. When a written response to a complaint is received, the Executive Director will forward that response and any further related documentation to the complainant and the Ethics-Complaint Review Panel or the Bylaws Committee appointed to review the complaint, as appropriate.

**D. Ethics Complaint Review Process. Within sixty (60) days of the forwarding of the complaint/ response specified in Section C.4.b. above, the Ethics Complaint Review Panel:**

1. Reviews the written record of any complaint that alleges a violation of the ACEP *Code of Ethics* or other ACEP ethics policies as they existed at the time of the alleged violation and the accompanying response.
2. Discusses the complaint and response by telephone conference or web conference call.
3. Determines the need to solicit in writing additional information or documentation from the parties, third parties, or experts regarding the complaint.
4. Considers whether:
  - a. Applicable version of the ACEP *Code of Ethics* or other ACEP ethics policies apply.
  - b. Alleged behavior constitutes a violation of the applicable version of the ACEP *Code of Ethics* or other ACEP ethics policies.
  - c. Alleged conduct warrants censure, suspension, or expulsion.
5. Decides to:
  - a. Dismiss the complaint; or
  - b. Renders a decision to impose disciplinary action, based on the written record.
6. If the Ethics Complaint Review Panel determines to impose disciplinary action pursuant to Section D.5.b., the respondent will be provided with notification of the Ethics Complaint Review Panel's determination and the option of:
  - a. A hearing; or
  - b. The imposition of the Ethics Complaint Review Panel decision based solely on the written record.
7. If the respondent chooses the option described in Section D.6.b., that is, an Ethics Complaint Review Panel decision based solely on the written record, the Ethics Complaint Review Panel will implement its decision to impose disciplinary action based on the written record.

**E. Bylaws Complaint Review Process. Within sixty (60) days of the forwarding of the complaint/ response specified in Section C.4.c. above, the Bylaws Committee:**

1. Reviews the written record of any complaint that alleges a violation of the ACEP Bylaws as it existed at the time of the alleged violation and the accompanying response.
2. Discusses the complaint and response by telephone conference or web conference call.
3. Determines the need to solicit in writing additional information or documentation from the parties, third parties, or experts regarding the complaint.
4. Considers whether:
  - a. Applicable version of the ACEP Bylaws apply.
  - b. Alleged behavior constitutes a violation of the applicable version of the ACEP Bylaws.
  - c. Alleged conduct warrants censure, suspension, or expulsion.
5. Decides to:
  - a. Dismiss the complaint; or
  - b. Renders a decision to impose disciplinary action, based solely on the written record.
6. If the Bylaws Committee determines to impose disciplinary action pursuant to Section E.5.b., the respondent will be provided with notification of the Bylaws Committee's determination and the option of:
  - a. A hearing; or
  - b. The imposition of the Bylaws Committee's decision based solely on the written record.

7. If the respondent chooses the option described in Section E.6.b., that is, a Bylaws Committee decision based solely on the written record, the Bylaws Committee will implement its decision to impose disciplinary action based on the written record.

#### **F. Right of Respondent to Request a Hearing**

If the Ethics Complaint Review Panel or Bylaws Committee chooses to impose disciplinary action, the Executive Director will send to the respondent a written notice by USPS Certified Mail of the right to request a hearing. The respondent may request a hearing to appeal the disciplinary decision or the sanction imposed. This respondent's request for a hearing must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice of right to a hearing. In the event of no response, the applicable ACEP review body will implement its final decision.

#### **G. Hearing Procedures**

1. If the respondent requests a hearing, the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing by USPS Certified Mail by the Executive Director within ten (10) business days of such request. Such notice will include a list of witnesses, if any, that the Board Hearing Panel intends to call in the hearing.
2. The Executive Director will send a notification by USPS Certified Mail of the date, time, and place of the hearing and will provide the parties with information regarding the hearing process and the conduct of the hearing.
3. The time set for the hearing will not be less than thirty (30) days nor more than nine (9) months after the date on which notice of hearing was received by the respondent.
4. The complainant and respondent each may be represented by counsel. Each party will bear the expense of his or her own counsel.
5. The parties have the right to have a record made of the proceedings by transcript, audio, recording, or video recording at the expense of the requesting party. A copy of any such record must be provided to the Executive Director.
6. The hearing will take place before the Board Hearing Panel. All members of the Board Hearing Panel must be present in person, except in circumstances in which it is impractical for the parties and the Board Hearing Panel to hold an in-person hearing, at which time the Board Hearing Panel may choose to hold a virtual hearing.
7. The parties to the complaint have the right to call, examine, and cross-examine witnesses and to present evidence that is determined to be relevant by the presiding officer, even if the evidence would not be admissible in a court of law. Any documents or materials to be provided or presented during the hearing not already in the record, including written documents, handouts, or slide presentations, must be provided to the presiding officer 14 days prior to the hearing to assess if the material and information contained therein are relevant to the proceedings. Respondent may submit a written statement at the close of the hearing. All witness expenses will be borne by the party who calls the witness.
8. The Board Hearing Panel will, after having given the complainant and the respondent an opportunity to be heard, including oral arguments and the filing of any written briefs, conclude the hearing.
9. The decision of the Board Hearing Panel will be expressed in a resolution that will be included in the minutes of the meeting at which the decision occurs. Written notice of the Board Hearing Panel's decision will be sent by USPS Certified Mail to the respondent and complainant within sixty (60) days of the decision. This written notice will include the Board Hearing Panel's decision and a statement of the basis for that decision.

#### **H. Notice to the Board of Directors**

At the next meeting of the ACEP Board of Directors, following a final determination regarding a complaint, the Board shall be presented with an outline of the steps taken by the applicable ACEP review body in its review of the complaint. The Board shall review the *Procedures* used in the complaint review process but will not review the facts or merits of the case. Should the Board decide

these *Procedures* were not followed appropriately, it will remand the case back to the reviewing committee or panel to correct the procedural error.

## **I. Possible Disciplinary Action and Disclosure to ACEP Members**

### **1. Nature of Disciplinary Action**

#### **a. Censure**

- i. Private Censure: a private letter of censure informs a member that his or her conduct does not conform with the College's ethical standards; it may detail the manner in which ACEP expects the member to behave in the future and may explain that, while the conduct does not, at present, warrant public censure or more severe disciplinary action, the same or similar conduct in the future may warrant a more severe action. Upon written request by a member of ACEP, ACEP may confirm the censure; however, contents of the letter will not be provided.

Private censure is appropriate in cases in which the member's conduct is not in conformity with the College's ethical standards but appears to be a minor isolated incident. The member's actions are not egregious in nature but fall outside of acceptable conduct. If the violation involves the College's Expert Witness Guidelines or the ethical principles regarding expert witness testimony in the Code of Ethics, this disciplinary action may be considered for single ethical violations in the course of a single legal case.

- ii. Public Censure: a public letter of censure shall detail the manner in which the censured member has been found to violate the College's ethical standards set forth in Section B.2. above. The censure shall be announced in an appropriate ACEP publication. The published announcement shall also state which ACEP policy or Bylaws provision was violated by the member and shall inform ACEP members that they may request further information about the disciplinary action, disclosure of which shall be subject to the discretion of the Executive Director.

Public censure is appropriate in cases in which the member's conduct is not in conformity with the College's ethical standards and demonstrates a pattern of unethical behavior or a single example of egregious conduct. If the violation involves the College's Expert Witness Guidelines or the ethical principles regarding expert witness testimony in the Code of Ethics, this disciplinary action may be considered for multiple ethical violations in the course of a single legal case.

- b. Suspension from ACEP membership shall be for a period of twelve (12) months; the dates of commencement and completion of the suspension shall be determined by the-ACEP President. At the end of the twelve (12) month period of suspension, the suspended member may request reinstatement. Request for reinstatement shall be processed in the same manner as that of any member whose membership has lapsed (i.e., has been cancelled for non-payment of dues). The suspension shall be announced in an appropriate ACEP publication. The published announcement shall also state which ACEP policy or Bylaws provision was violated by the member and shall inform ACEP members that they may request further information about the disciplinary action, disclosure of which shall be subject to the discretion of the Executive Director. ACEP is also required to report the suspension from membership and a description of the conduct that led to the suspension to the Board of Medical Examiners in the states in which the physician is licensed which may result in a report of such action to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

Suspension is appropriate in cases in which the member's conduct is not in conformity with the College's ethical standards and the member has either received prior disciplinary action by the College, demonstrates a pattern of serious unethical behavior, or demonstrates a single example or multiple examples of egregious conduct. If the violation involves the College's Expert Witness Guidelines or the ethical principles regarding expert witness testimony in the Code of Ethics, this disciplinary action should be considered for multiple ethical violations across more than one legal case.

- c. Expulsion from ACEP membership shall be for a period of five (5) years, after which the expelled member may petition the Board of Directors for readmission to membership. The decision regarding such a petition shall be entirely at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The expulsion announced in an appropriate ACEP publication. The published announcement shall also state which ACEP policy or Bylaws provision was violated by and shall inform ACEP members that they may request further information about the disciplinary action, disclosure of which shall be subject to the discretion of the Executive Director. ACEP is also required to report the expulsion from membership and a description of the conduct that led to expulsion to the Boards of Medical Examiners in the states in which the physician is licensed which may result in a report of such action to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

Expulsion is appropriate in cases in which the member's conduct is not in conformity with the College's ethical standards and the member has either received prior disciplinary action by the College, demonstrates a pattern of serious unethical behavior, or demonstrates a single example or multiple examples of egregious conduct to a degree warranting discipline beyond the suspension available under I.1.b. If the violation involves the College's Expert Witness Guidelines or the ethical principles regarding expert witness testimony in the Code of Ethics, this disciplinary action should be considered for multiple ethical violations over multiple legal cases.

## 2. Scope and Manner of Disclosure

- a. Disclosure to ACEP Members: Any ACEP member may transmit a request for information to the Executive Director regarding disciplinary actions taken by the College. The letter shall specify the name of the member or former member who is the subject of the request. The Executive Director may disclose, in writing, the relevant information as described in Section I.1.
- b. Disclosure to Non-Members: If a non-member makes a request for information about disciplinary actions against a member who has received public censure, suspension, or expulsion, the Executive Director shall refer that person to the published announcement of that disciplinary action in an ACEP publication. No further information shall be provided. If a non-member makes a request for information about disciplinary actions against a member who has received private censure, the Executive Director shall inform the individual that no published announcement of disciplinary action is available but shall not indicate or confirm that a private censure has been imposed.

## J. Ground Rules

1. All proceedings are confidential until a final decision on the complaint is rendered by the applicable ACEP review body, at which time the decision will be available upon request by ACEP members, to the extent specified in Section I. Files of these proceedings, including written submissions and hearing record will be kept confidential.
2. Timetable guidelines are counted by calendar days unless otherwise specified.
3. The Ethics Complaint Review Panel, the Bylaws Committee, or the Board Hearing Panel, may request further written documentation from either party to the complaint; a time to satisfy any request will be specified in the notice of such request, and these times will not count against the ACEP review body's overall time to complete its task.
4. All parties to the complaint are responsible for their own costs; ACEP will pay its own administrative and committee costs.
5. If a participant in this process (such as a member of the Ethics Complaint Review Panel, the Bylaws Committee, or the Board Hearing Panel) is a party to the complaint, has a material reason for bias, subjectivity, or conflicts of interest in the matter, or is in direct economic competition with the respondent, that person shall recuse himself or herself from the process except as a complaining party or respondent, at which time the ACEP President will appoint a replacement.
6. Once the Ethics Complaint Review Panel or the Bylaws Committee has made a decision on a complaint, it will not consider additional allegations against the same respondent based on the same or similar facts.



7. The Ethics Complaint Review Panel or the Bylaws Committee's decision to impose a disciplinary action must be based on a reasonable belief that the action is warranted by the facts presented or discovered in the course of the review process.
8. If a respondent fails to respond to a complaint, to a notice of the right to request a hearing, or to a request for information, the Ethics Complaint Review Panel, the Bylaws Committee, or the Board Hearing Panel may make a decision on the complaint solely on the basis of the information it has received.
9. If a respondent seeks to voluntarily resign their ACEP membership after ACEP has received a complaint against that respondent, that request for resignation will not be accepted by ACEP until the complaint has been resolved. For the purposes of this provision, non-payment of ACEP member dues will be interpreted as a request for resignation.

### **III. Chartering Chapters**

Upon petition of any five members of the College or one third of the members within the petitioning jurisdiction, whichever number is greater, the Board may issue a charter for a chapter of the College. No more than one chapter will be chartered in any one state, territory, or commonwealth. The Board of Directors may issue a charter for a government services chapter without geographic restrictions upon petition of five or more active members of the College serving in government medical assignments.

Chapters will be in such form as will be approved by the Board of Directors. Each chapter in a state, territory, or commonwealth in which incorporation is possible will incorporate within one year of receiving its charter.

Each chapter will have power to acquire, lease, own, and convey property; to invest in financial instruments sanctioned by its Board of Directors; to fund and carry on research; to issue publications and distribute information by various electronic means; to establish, conduct, and maintain schools, courses, museums, libraries, and other institutions for study in and teaching of emergency patient care and emergency services; to retain professional legislative analysts; to retain legal counsel; and to use any reasonable means for attainment of objectives to fulfill the mission of the College.

### **IV. Charter Suspension-Revocation**

Any member of the College may file written charges against any chapter with the executive director of the College. Such charges must be signed, and must specify the acts of conduct for which the complaint is made. The executive director of the College must present the charges to the Board of Directors at its next meeting. The Board of Directors will then act upon the charges and will either dismiss them or proceed as hereinafter set forth.

If the Board fails to dismiss the charges it will within 10 days thereafter cause a copy of the charges to be served upon the accused chapter by sending it by registered United States mail to the secretary or other officer of the chapter. The Board will notify the accuser at the same time and in the same manner.

A hearing will be convened not less than 15 days nor more than 90 days after service of charges. The Board will, after having given the accused and the accuser reasonable opportunity to be heard in person or by counsel and to present all evidence and proofs, conclude the hearing and within 30 days render a decision. The affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board present and voting will constitute the decision of the Board, which may either dismiss the charges or take such actions as it deems appropriate. In either event the Board will make known its decision in a written resolution signed by the secretary and president. In the former event the Board will furnish the accused and the accuser with a copy of the resolution. In the latter event its resolution will be read at the next regular meeting of the Board or at a special meeting duly called for that purpose, provided that a copy of the decision will be delivered to the accused in the same manner provided for the service of charges at least 15 days before such meeting. The accused and the accusers will be given reasonable opportunity to be heard at the meeting of the Board of Directors where the decision is read. A two-thirds majority vote of the entire Board of Directors will be required to suspend or to revoke the charter.

On revocation of the charter of any chapter by the Board of Directors, the chapter will take whatever legal steps are necessary to change its name so that it no longer suggests any connection with the American College of Emergency Physicians. After revocation, the former chapter will no longer make any use of the College name or logo.

## **V. Filling Board Vacancies Created by Other Than Removal**

### **General Provisions**

**Nominations:** A slate of one or more nominees for each vacant position will be developed by the Nominating Committee.

**Eligibility:** Eligibility for a vacancy election nomination shall be in accordance with Article IX, Section 2 of the Bylaws.

**Order of Elections:** If there are multiple vacancies with varying lengths of unexpired terms, the longest term will be elected first, then followed in succession to the shortest term.

**Term of Office:** When elected by the Council, the replacement director's term will begin at the conclusion of the Board meeting following the annual meeting at which their election occurs or immediately upon election if elected at any other Council meeting. If elected by the Board, the term shall begin at the conclusion of the Board meeting at which their election occurs. In all instances the term shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term to which they have been elected.

**Election by the Board of Directors (when applicable in accordance with the Bylaws):** When selecting nominees for election by the Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee will give special consideration to unelected nominees from the most recent Board and Council Officer elections. The election may occur at any Board meeting more than 90 days before the annual meeting and shall be by a majority vote of the remaining directors (i.e. total number of directors). The Board shall consider each vacant position separately. Board members may choose to abstain from voting for any particular nominee. If a nominee fails to achieve a majority vote after being considered for all vacant positions, the nominee shall be removed from consideration and additional nominees from the Nominating Committee considered until all vacant positions have been filled. No floor nominations are allowed.

**Election by the Council (when applicable in accordance with the Bylaws):** The election will comply with the usual Council election process as closely as possible except as noted. A special meeting of the Council may be held in accordance with the Bylaws to elect replacement directors. If the election is at the annual Council meeting, the Council will hold the vacancy election following the regular elections and elect the replacement director from the remaining slate of nominees (including Speaker and Vice Speaker nominees when applicable).

## **VI. Criteria for Eligibility & Approval of Organizations Seeking Representation in the Council**

Organizations that seek representation as a component body in the Council of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) must meet, at the time the Council representation is sought, and continue to meet, the following criteria:

- A. Non-profit.
- B. Impacts the practice of emergency medicine, the goals of ACEP, and represents a unique contribution to emergency medicine that is not already represented in the Council.
- C. Not in conflict with the Bylaws and policies of ACEP.
- D. Physicians comprise the majority of the voting membership of the organization.
- E. A majority of the organization's physician members are ACEP members.
- F. Established, stable, and in existence for at least 5 years prior to requesting representation in the ACEP Council.

- G. National in scope, membership not restricted geographically, and members from a majority of the states. If international, the organization must have a U.S. branch or chapter in compliance with these guidelines.
- H. Seek representation as a component body through the submission of a Bylaws amendment.

The College will audit these component bodies every two years to ensure continued compliance with these guidelines.

## **VII. Amendments**

The method of amending the College Manual shall be specified in the College Bylaws.