



General Ethics For Michigan CPAs

Course #9511A

Ethics

3 Credit Hours

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GENERAL ETHICS FOR MICHIGAN CPAS

This course is designed to meet the general ethics requirements for the state of Michigan. It covers the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct and IRS Circular 230.

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

As a result of studying each assignment, you should be able to meet the objectives listed below each individual assignment.

SUBJECTS

Chapter 1: The AICPA Code of Professional Conduct

Chapter 2: IRS Circular 230

Study the course materials from pages 1 to 76

Complete the review questions at the end of each chapter

Answer the exam questions 1 to 15

Objectives:

- To recognize the rules of the Code of Professional Conduct
- To identify the Internal Revenue Service Requirements as outlined in Circular 230

NOTICE

Any case studies or examples relating to any disciplinary actions taken by the Board of Accountancy have been taken directly from a BOA source (e.g. website, newsletters, notices) and were published based on the information available at the time of course development. Subsequent events, actions, withdrawals may have occurred since the publication of this course.

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EXAM OUTLINE

- **TEST FORMAT:** The final exam for this course consists of 15 multiple-choice questions and is based specifically on the information covered in the course materials.
- **ACCESS FINAL EXAM:** Log in to your account and click Take Exam. A copy of the final exam is provided at the end of these course materials for your convenience, however you must submit your answers online to receive credit for the course.
- **LICENSE RENEWAL INFORMATION:** This course qualifies for **3** CPE hours.
- **PROCESSING:** You will receive the score for your final exam immediately after it is submitted. A score of 70% or better is required to pass.
- **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION:** Will be available in your account to view online or print. If you do not pass an exam, it can be retaken free of charge.

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CHAPTER 1: THE AICPA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Chapter Objective

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize the rules of the Code of Professional Conduct.

INTRODUCTION

The Code of Professional Conduct provides guidelines for accounting practitioners in the conduct of their professional affairs. A member of the AICPA must observe all the Rules of Conduct unless an exception applies. The need to observe the Rules of Conduct also extends to individuals who carry out tasks on behalf of an AICPA member. A member may be held responsible for a violation of the rules committed by fellow partners, shareholders, or any other person associated with him who is engaged in the practice of public accounting. The bylaws of the AICPA provide the basis for determining whether a member has violated the Rules of Conduct. If a member is found guilty of a violation, he or she may be admonished, suspended or expelled.

A member of the AICPA also must be aware of Interpretations of the AICPA Rules of Conduct. After public exposure, Interpretations of the AICPA Rules of Conduct are published by the Executive Committee of the Professional Ethics Division. Interpretations are not intended to limit the scope or application of the Rules of Conduct. A member of the AICPA who departs from the guidelines provided in the Interpretations has the burden of justifying such departure.

RULES

The following definitions are used in the Rules of the Code of Professional Conduct:

Practice of public accounting - The practice of public accounting consists of the performance for a client, by a member or a member's firm, while holding out as a CPA(s), of the professional services of accounting, tax, personal financial planning, litigation support services, and those professional services for which standards are promulgated by bodies designated by Council.

However, a member or a member's firm, while holding out as a CPA(s), is not considered to be in the practice of public accounting if the member or the member's firm does not perform, for any client, any of the professional services described in the preceding paragraph.

Professional services - Professional services include all services performed by a member with very few exceptions.

CODIFIED CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The AICPA has codified the Code of Professional Conduct to be more logical and user friendly. The code, rules, interpretations and rulings are essentially the same but have been grouped into functional areas based on the member's area of practice plus a preface that is applicable to all members. (Note: throughout the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct you will see the term "Member." This term relates to you, the CPA, whether or not you are a member of the AICPA.) The three functional areas are:

Part 1: Members in Public Practice

Part 2: Members in Business

Part 3: Other Members (retired, unemployed, etc.)

The part number is followed by two sets of three digit numbers to identify the topic and, when applicable, the subtopic. For example, 1.100.001 relates to Part 1 (members in Public Practice); topic 100 Integrity and Objectivity; and subtopic 001 the Integrity and Objectivity rule.

By grouping all guidance for a particular type of member in one place, the CPA will save much time in researching a situation, as well as (hopefully) reach a more accurate conclusion. However, bear in mind that a member may be covered by more than one category. For example, one could work full time for an employer in industry and work part time during busy season preparing tax returns.

This chapter will focus on Part 1 of the Code of Professional Conduct: Members in Public Practice. Below is a listing of the topics covered in Part 1 followed by a discussion of each topic and selected corresponding interpretations, rulings, and other guidance by topic.

1.000 Conceptual Framework for Members in Public Practice

1.100 Integrity and Objectivity

1.200 Independence

1.300 General Standards

1.400 Acts Discreditable

1.500 Fees and Other Types of Remuneration

1.600 Advertising and Other Forms of Solicitation

1.700 Confidential Information

1.800 Form of Organization and Name

Throughout this course, we will attempt to use the actual AICPA code section references whenever possible. This will allow you to conduct further research on topics of interest to you. However, the source material is very voluminous and in many instances we have omitted entire sections of the code. In other instances we have summarized the material. We believe this approach is both appropriate and beneficial for the CPA seeking an overview or refresher course.

MEMBERS IN PUBLIC PRACTICE

1.000 INTRODUCTION

.01 Part 1 of the Code of Professional Conduct (the code) applies to members in public practice. Accordingly, when the term member is used in part 1 of the code, the requirements apply only to members in public practice. When a member in public practice is also a member in business (for example, serves as a member of an entity's board of directors), the member should also consult part 2 of the code, which applies to a member in business.

.02 Government auditors within a government audit organization who audit federal, state, or local governments or component units thereof, that are structurally located within the government audit organization, are considered in public practice with respect to those entities provided the head of the government audit organization meets at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Is directly elected by voters of the government entity with respect to which attest engagements are performed
- b. Is appointed by a legislative body and is subject to removal by a legislative body
- c. Is appointed by someone other than the legislative body, as long as the appointment is confirmed by the legislative body and removal is subject to oversight or approval by the legislative body

1.000.010 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEMBERS IN PUBLIC PRACTICE

Introduction

.01 Members may encounter various relationships or circumstances that create threats to the member's compliance with the rules. The rules and interpretations seek to address many situations; however, they cannot address all relationships or circumstances that may arise. Thus, in the absence of an interpretation that addresses a particular relationship or circumstance, a member should evaluate whether that relationship or circumstance would lead a reasonable and informed third party who is aware of the relevant information to conclude that there is a threat to the member's compliance with the rules that is not at an acceptable level. When making that evaluation, the member should apply the conceptual framework approach as outlined in this interpretation.

.02 The code specifies that in some circumstances no safeguards can reduce a threat to an acceptable level. For example, the code specifies that a member may not subordinate the member's professional judgment to others without violating the "Integrity and Objectivity Rule" [1.100.001]. A member may not use the conceptual framework to overcome this prohibition or any other prohibition or requirement in the code.

.03 The "Conceptual Framework for Independence" interpretation [1.210.010] of the "Independence Rule" [1.200.001] provides authoritative guidance that members should use when making decisions on independence matters that are not explicitly addressed by the "Independence Rule" and its interpretations.