



The Electrical Safety Authority's Code of Conduct

A Guide to Living our Values





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Message from our Chair

More frequently than ever before we hear about lapses in judgment that have caused severe loss to a person's reputation. It can happen at all levels in a company and it affects a person's self esteem, the relationship they have with their families and their co-workers and often the reputation of the company they work for. Quite often what may seem innocent is judged differently by our co-workers, our clients and our stakeholders. The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) has published this Code of Conduct to help us understand the situations that can get us into trouble and the standards that ESA has in place for personal and corporate ethics.

There isn't a document that can cover every situation and that is not the intention of this document. Instead this document will help us focus on principles that may be helpful in guiding our conduct in the area of ethics.

Some of the primary areas where we all need to exercise care are:

- Respecting the rights of individuals
- Resisting individuals, who through favours, would seek to bias our judgment
- Being fair to all and free of personal bias in the enforcement of our legislated responsibilities
- Being fair and following best practices in our business relationships with our service providers and clients
- Respecting corporate property and resisting the temptation to take that which does not belong to us
- Modeling personal safety on the job
- Delivering the service quality the customer deserves



*“Ethical Business Practices are Core Values at ESA. **Live them and Work them.**”*

Every time we deal with co-workers or clients we must live up to the standard of treating others the way we would want to be treated. It is a way of life and, ultimately, the only way to survive.

Taking the time to read this booklet will provide you with the proper grounding in how we must conduct business every day we represent the ESA. I hope that this booklet is helpful and that our mutual commitment to following these standards is going to enhance the personal and corporate esteem that others have for us.

John Wiersma
Chair



Introduction – Chief Executive Officer

Why Ethics matter.

Every individual at the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) wants to work for an organization they feel proud to be part of. This feeling is impacted by how we treat one another internally as well as how the organization conducts itself externally.

The Code of Conduct is designed not as a book of rules to be followed but as a code of “good practise” for carrying out our everyday activities. In simple terms, ethical conduct can be considered by asking three key questions:

Is it legal?
Is it fair?
Is it “right?”

We hope as you read through each of the sections in the guide, you can apply these questions and confirm that you are part of a team committed to an ethical workplace.

The Code of Conduct is organized around the following topics and in several cases examples have been included to help you interpret the application of the Code of Conduct to situations you might face in your position at ESA:

- ✓ *Overview of the Values of ESA*
- ✓ *Doing what is right, fair and honest*
- ✓ *Working to the letter of the law*
- ✓ *Respect for yourself and others*
- ✓ *Avoiding conflicts of interest*
- ✓ *Dealing with communications and confidentiality*
- ✓ *Personal conduct*
- ✓ *Living the Values and Principles of the Code of Conduct.*

If you have any questions or ideas for improvement I ask you to please share them by communicating them to your manager or the Corporate Secretary and General Counsel.

I am confident that by working together, guided by the principles of the Code of Conduct we can be an organization seen by others as a model of integrity in business.

Bob Stelzer
President and CEO



The purpose of this Code.

The Code of Conduct provides a framework within which all of our day-to-day activity takes place. It is driven by our Mandate as well as our Values; it also supports and complements our procedures as well as the various laws that apply to our operations. Finally, the Code of Conduct provides our Board of Directors and our stakeholders with a concrete statement of standards of conduct against which our actions can be measured.

Who does the Code apply to?

The Code of Conduct applies to all employees, directors, and other associates who work as part of the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA). This includes other “partners” of ESA such as consultants, agents and other suppliers who will be seen as part of the ESA team.

The Code of Conduct provides standards for ethical behaviour when dealing with other people – from employees, to customers, suppliers, government authorities and agencies and the general public. It deals with ESA both as a distinct organization and as a part of the society in which it operates.

What if someone violates the Code?

Compliance with our standards as outlined in the Code of Conduct is considered important, therefore actions that violate the Code of Conduct are considered serious. In order to protect the reputation and good name of ESA and all of its workers, ESA may be required to take action ranging from discipline of an individual through to termination depending on the seriousness of the issue.

In addition, if employees or others violate the Code of Conduct in areas where legal requirements are impacted they may also have personal legal liability.

Taking the test.

- ✓ *How do I feel about the action I have taken? Was it “right”?*
- ✓ *Was my decision fair and equitable to those concerned?*
- ✓ *Have I used my personal position for undue influence or benefit?*
- ✓ *How would I feel about this action if it “got out”?*
- ✓ *How about if I read about it in the paper? What would I feel?*
- ✓ *What if I had to tell my children or a close friend about what I did?*
- ✓ *How would I feel if I had been on the receiving end of this decision?*
- ✓ *Can I stand in someone else’s shoes and see the decision from another perspective?*
- ✓ *Was my action within the letter of the law, as well as being fair and equitable?*



The values of ESA

The Code of Conduct is based on the Organizational Values of ESA. These are:

ESA Organizational Values.	
Safety	Quality Service
This is the driving principle in everything we do. ESA exists to protect the public of Ontario from electrical hazards in their homes, workplaces and leisure activities.	While ESA's mandate is a regulatory one, we believe safety objectives are achieved primarily by providing exemplary service.
Financial Viability	Respect for the individual.
We operate in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure ESA has the resources to fulfill its safety mandate without imposing an undue burden on any regulated sector.	The public, our stakeholders, customers, employees and our critics all make a valuable contribution to our organization. Every contact should be respectful of the individual.

In many cases our conduct can be assessed against one or more of our Values; if we are in doubt of a particular decision, one of the key tests is how are our Values affected?

- ✓ *Is the action fully in support of our commitment to public electrical safety?*
- ✓ *Would the action be considered respectful to our public?*
- ✓ *Is the action supportive of our financial viability and sustainability?*
- ✓ *Does the action demonstrate respect for the individual?*

It will be easy to see that in some cases a potentially unethical action could seem positive as measured against one Value but still be unethical.

An ESA employee could save the company money. The employee backed an ESA vehicle into a parked car. Nobody witnessed the incident. The employee can save ESA money by not reporting the incident. The company wouldn't have to pay for the repairs.

Would the answer be different if there was a witness to the incident?



Doing what is right, fair and honest

In order to build and maintain a reputation as a “preferred place to work” everyone at ESA must strive to ensure that trust, honesty and integrity are evident in everything we do and every decision we make.

Every time we have contact and work together with each other internally; every time we have contact with an external organization – be it an attendee at a training course, a homeowner, a contractor, a site electrician or a maintenance manager at an industrial plant. Every time we deal with suppliers, our sub-contractors or other agencies – every situation is a “moment of truth” in our ability to deliver on our commitment to be special.

The products and services that we offer must focus on “adding value” for our customers – whether it is improving safety, efficiency or effectiveness. We must deliver them with integrity.

In our public dealings our statements must be accurate, truthful and not misleading. If we are asked to investigate problems that have occurred our response must be balanced and free from bias – based on the facts of the situation. In our regulatory dealings we must always respect all applicable codes, standards and legislation and strive for consistency in interpretation.

Most of all, we must ensure we do not use our regulatory mandate to gain an unfair competitive advantage.

Be guided by the principle - if something feels wrong it probably is wrong. If you are uncertain about a situation ask a co-worker or seek advice elsewhere. It is better to think about an action before than regret a decision afterwards.

Working to the letter of the law

Every person governed by this Code of Conduct must become familiar with and adhere to the laws and standards that apply to their work. In many cases we cannot do our job without this knowledge.

If you are ever uncertain as to legal requirements or how they apply to ESA you should discuss the matter with your manager or the Corporate Secretary and General Counsel. If your question is related to Code interpretation or a technical matter it should be discussed with a Technical Advisor, Code Engineer or the Chief Engineer.



Respect for yourself and others

Safety and Health.

ESA is committed to safety as a core value in the way that we deliver our services and conduct our work on behalf of our clients. This commitment extends to everything that we do within our organization. Each of us must at all times be aware of working conditions and do nothing to jeopardize our own safety or that of anyone else.

It is each employee's responsibility to be aware of and comply with ESA's Health and Safety Policy, Program and Procedures. The incident reporting system must be used to ensure all health and safety issues are addressed promptly and effectively.

Diversity, Discrimination and Harassment.

Today's workplace reflects a society of people from different backgrounds. At ESA we value the background, experience and unique skills and abilities of each individual and are committed to maintaining a workplace that reflects and supports this diversity.

At ESA we will not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination against any group or individual whether employees, customers, suppliers, job applicants or others we may deal with in the course of our employment. This specifically includes race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or any physical or mental impairment. All are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Recognizing the importance of this principle, ESA's Board of Directors approved a Policy on Diversity and Mutual Respect which managers are required to review with their staff annually.

Any behaviour that demeans, threatens or humiliates a person or group of people is considered harassment.

A General Manager gets a call from a large CSS customer who is concerned that the new inspector assigned to the account may not "...fit in – if you know what I mean – my maintenance folks would feel much more comfortable with a man. Maybe the guy we used to have could be put back on the inspection...?"

When the General Manager thinks about this year's budget and the amount of the revenue from this client that may be at risk it is difficult not to agree to the customer's request. On the other hand the request clearly violates the law and the Code of Conduct. The General Manager knows that the right decision is to work the issue through with the client and try and show how it is not in either ESA's or the client's own interest to make a change on the basis of this kind of discrimination.



Protecting our Environment.

Future Generations will judge us on how well we have looked after the world they inherit. How will they rate us?

We have the opportunity to make important contributions to the quality of the environment – whether by supporting recycling programs in the office, or ensuring our vehicles are maintained to minimize harmful emissions. Everyone at ESA has a role to play in protecting the environment and supporting the principles of sustainable development.

Continual development and learning.

ESA reflects the talents, skills and capabilities of its workforce. In many ways this is our competitive advantage and the only way that we can survive, grow and prosper.

Every employee contributes to improvement and innovation in the organization. Learning is not restricted to formal training and education. It is also achieved through being open to new ideas, trying new approaches, learning new skills and sharing and communicating what we know. ESA is committed to being a learning organization by using these approaches in our everyday work.

A very knowledgeable supervisor has been asked to be involved in a team to look at changing the work processes. The supervisor is concerned that this may involve some risk as it will mean working in unfamiliar areas with people outside the supervisor's current work group.

The manager wants this supervisor to succeed so together they develop a secondment plan where the supervisor's old job will not be guaranteed but the supervisor will be supported in the project team. In addition, ESA commits to the supervisor that once the project is finished and the supervisor has contributed to the skills development of other project team members, there will be another career opportunity within ESA.



Respecting property.

On a daily basis many ESA employees will come into contact with property belonging to others. This property may be owned by ESA, by clients or others. We should treat this property with the care we would expect for our own property. If an employee accidentally damages property while performing employment responsibilities, the employee is expected to acknowledge responsibility, and notify his or her supervisor so corrective action can be taken.

In addition, every ESA employee who uses company property including vehicles, office or communications equipment is expected to treat the property with care and not to use it in any way prohibited by an ESA policy or for personal gain.

Treatment of our Customers and Clients.

Our Values identify our customers as being very important – both in terms of protecting public safety and in the way in which our services should reflect and satisfy their needs.

Providing a Quality Service.

ESA is committed to following through on its service and quality commitments to customers. This means making commitments we can keep and delivering on these commitments. Interacting with our clients on an ethical, open and honest basis is critical to providing a quality service.

Our customers and clients will judge us and value us based on every one of our interactions with them. As a team we are committed to building our reputation as a quality organization delivering services that add value for the customer.

Ensuring Fair Competition.

ESA is committed to operating within its' mandate and in a marketplace that supports fair competition. To achieve this, no employee of ESA should use the organization's legislative mandate or any powers of approval or compliance to create a situation that is viewed as being unfair to others competitors.

An inspector carries out a routine inspection of an expansion in a manufacturing facility. In the course of the inspection, the inspector comes across a piece of equipment that has been installed and is ready for use. However the equipment was custom manufactured by a US based supplier and does not have any approval label.

The inspector tells the customer that ESA has a product approvals service and a temporary approval for service can be granted. However if the customer wants to use another approvals authority, then the inspector will have to withhold approval to energize the system. The General Manager hears about this and has to let the inspector know that while the intent may have been good, this type of leverage is unfair competition.

Handling Complaints.

Everyone who deals with ESA has the right to expect good service and to have access to a process for addressing concerns without fear of reprisal. Complaints should be taken seriously and used as learning experiences. Even if a complaint is unfounded it can be seen as an opportunity to build a positive relationship. ESA has a Complaints Policy and Procedure and every employee is expected to support its use.



Avoiding conflicts of interest

It is essential to identify situations, which are or could be seen as giving an individual personal benefit in addition to or at the expense of ESA. ESA will be judged on the basis of how its employees conduct themselves in such situations.

While conflict of interest situations are most likely to occur when dealing with customers or suppliers there are a variety of situations that should be considered. If ever you have doubts about the appropriate course of action discuss it with your manager or the Corporate Secretary and General Counsel.

Dealing with suppliers.

Suppliers will be selected on the basis of fair competition, ability to perform the work required to the standards and specifications expected and a business reputation consistent with ESA's Values. Prejudice, preferential treatment or potential personal gain to any individual must never be factors in choosing suppliers. Employees who deal with suppliers must act with complete objectivity.

No special conditions or benefits will be sought from suppliers that in any way impact the supplier's ability to operate in a free market; nor will any ESA employee use supplier relationships to solicit gifts or other benefits as a condition of doing business with any supplier.

Acceptance of gifts.

Every ESA employee must be cautious about accepting any gifts from customers or suppliers. Such action can easily be misinterpreted both internally and externally and lead to a feeling of obligation between the two parties that extend beyond the objective business decision making process.

The nature of the relationship with ESA, the value of the gift and the circumstances in which it is offered must all be considered. Such situations could range from the offer of a bottle of alcohol to an inspector by a customer, to the offer of a state-of-the-art computer to a senior executive by a hardware supplier. It is not good practice for employees to accept gift(s) from customers during their employment with ESA. As a general rule any offer of a gift from a customer should be declined. With the exception of gifts of nominal value, gifts from suppliers should also be declined. However, if an employee does decide to accept a gift(s), the total value of the gift(s) must not exceed \$15 in cash value unless approved by their manager. Under no circumstances should a gift(s) be accepted where there is a possibility where the acceptance of the gift(s) could be construed as influencing a business decision of the employee. In general, employees should pay, rather than accept lunches from customers.

An ESA manager is looking for consulting services and a supplier who is tendering on the contract offers an expense paid trip to Florida which includes a one-hour meeting with a Florida based client of the consultant during the visit. The account representative explains that there are no strings attached, it is just a trip that has come up.

The ESA manager thinks this through and in spite of a desire to visit Florida in the winter, declines the offer.



Business Entertainment.

ESA employees will have the opportunity to entertain or be entertained by customers, suppliers or business partners. While this is often an important part of relationship building, employees should use prudent judgement in both the decision to do this, and the level of expense incurred for the entertainment.

ESA employees should ensure that in offering or accepting meals, drinks social or recreational outings or trips, there is a genuine business benefit to ESA and the value of the entertainment is appropriate given the circumstances.

Outside employment or business activity.

ESA employees should consider and avoid potential conflicts of interest in decisions to engage in outside business or employment activities. While an ESA team member, the employee's focus and commitment must be ESA. No employee should be involved in outside employment or a business if the employment or business competes directly or indirectly with a product or service offered by ESA or the activity would or could be seen as influencing a business decision of ESA or an ESA employee. Company property or supplies should not be used for such purposes nor should non-ESA work be performed on company time. If you have any doubt about a particular situation talk to your manager.

A company that provides training services to ESA asks an ESA employee to join their Board of Directors. They believe the employee's knowledge and skills would be of benefit to the training company and assure the employee there would be no pressure to influence ESA decisions on continued use of the company as a supplier to ESA. The employee genuinely believes this to be the case but declines the invitation. It could be seen as a conflict of interest even with the best of intentions.

Participating in other outside activities.

ESA encourages employees to participate in their communities and to contribute their time and effort for worthy causes. Employees should discuss such involvement with their Manager to obtain guidance if there is a question about the time commitment or nature of the organization. In participating in such activities ESA employees should make it clear they are doing so as individuals and not as representatives of ESA.

In addition, employees should not allow themselves to be committed to providing either financial or any other support on behalf of ESA.



Participating in industry associations and other business related activities.

In some cases specific ESA employees may be either asked by their manager or volunteer to participate in an industry or trade association related to ESA's business.

While ESA is committed to supporting such organizations, employees carrying out this role should ensure that they exercise caution in presenting positions or making commitments without discussion with their manager.

Both the sponsoring manager and the employee must ensure that a clear position is developed on behalf of ESA for such discussions, and that internal communications are maintained within ESA based on the feedback from such discussions.

Access to information and maintaining confidentiality

ESA employees have access to large amounts of information – some of which could be of value to external individuals or organizations. Being in a position of trust, all employees are expected to treat all such information as confidential unless the information is otherwise public.

Guidelines for general access to information are covered by ESA's Access and Privacy Code and internal procedures. If in doubt employees should consult their manager or the Corporate Secretary and General Counsel for guidance. As a general guideline, unless it is clear from ESA policies and procedures that information can be disclosed, be led by the tendency to be reserved and prudent in what you disclose.

An ESA employee is responsible for the Authorized Contractor Program and monitoring the level of defects and compliance of contractors with ACP requirements.

–A friend tells the employee of plans for a renovation which involves electrical work and asks the employee about ESA's experience with a particular contractor. The employee knows that the contractor has an unsatisfactory record and is about to be suspended from ACP.

Bearing in mind the obligation to respect confidentiality, while at the same time wanting to ensure public safety, the employee suggests the friend look at two or three alternative contractors. The employee makes some suggestions about where to look, what questions to ask contractors and also suggests each contractor be asked to provide a few references.



Appropriate personal conduct

Throughout this Code of Conduct, we have tried to focus on using “good sense”. The subject of ethics is a difficult one and it is impossible to set absolute rules about how everyone should act in every possible situation on a daily basis. In some cases there will be ESA policies and procedures which will provide guidance. If there are not, the onus is on you to consider the issue in light of ESA’s Values.

To be and to be seen as a well-run and well-respected organization, we need to be consistent and self “policing” when it comes to issues related to conduct.

To support this expectation, it is important that individual conduct be seen as reflecting on ESA as an organization. This means raising concerns and issues with co-workers and managers if we are personally unsure of a situation and need guidance for our own conduct or have concerns about the conduct of another person which is inconsistent with this Code.

Living our commitment.

As a closing note there are two requests we ask of everyone.

First – get advice...

Our Code of Conduct is an important part of becoming and sustaining the kind of organization we all want to be. If you have ANY questions about Code of Conduct issues PLEASE raise them with your manager or the Corporate Secretary and General Counsel. Where appropriate such discussions will be held in confidence.

...and finally...

Every year we will be asking all employees to attend a meeting where the Code of Conduct and their obligations are reviewed. This action will affirm our commitment to these standards.

