

Field Services Alliance Code of Ethics

Introduction

The motto of the field services professional is, “We aim to be useful.” [Rueben Gold Thwaites, Wisconsin, 1904] In a spirit of helpfulness and kindness to clients, field services professionals assume certain responsibilities relative to their conduct in carrying out their duties. Clients of field services professionals include historical organizations and museums, as well as archives, libraries, and many other cultural institutions. Since success in fulfilling professional duties is highly dependent on cooperative human interaction built on trust, field services professionals shall strive to maintain the principles described below.

I. ***Service First***

- a. Field services professionals exist to serve clients. Commitment to helpfulness as the highest standard of service should be reflected in our every action.
- b. Field services professionals shall patiently and respectfully advise of any and all options relative to the situation that their client ought to consider.
- c. Field services professionals should evaluate options based on their experience, but should not pressure a client to accept that advice.
- d. If advice, technical information, visits, or other aid is promised, the field services professional shall render it in as timely a manner as possible.
- e. Field services professionals shall render assistance with due diligence to promote client satisfaction and success.
- f. Field services professionals shall make every effort to acquire and maintain knowledge of commonly accepted standards and best practices to adequately advise their clients.

II. ***Respect Always***

- a. Clients often do not have the resources to exemplify accepted standards and best practices. Therefore it is incumbent on the field services professional to find ways that are within the means of their client to best satisfy most of the standards and best practices.
- b. Field services professionals shall not render advice without first being requested, unless unsolicited advice will mitigate imminent danger to the public, the client, or the client’s property, reputation, or mission.
- c. Respect for the client also means that confidence be kept in accordance with Section III.
- d. Field services personnel should not withhold or otherwise limit services to a requesting client on any grounds.

III. ***Confidentiality***

- a. Field services professionals are to be absolutely trustworthy with all matters of importance, both public and private, with respect to their clients.
- b. In the course of fulfilling their duties, field services professionals may become privy to information potentially prejudicial to the well being of their clients. Sensitive information is, but not limited to:
 - i. Direct contact information for client committees and board;
 - ii. Direct contact information on client mailing lists;
 - iii. Specific pay for employees of client organizations;
 - iv. Pending actions of client committees and board;
 - v. Appraised values or specifics of client holdings;
 - vi. Client security protocols;

- vii. Client financial data; and,
- viii. Locations of client archaeological sites and Traditional Cultural Properties.
- c. Disclosure of information noted above may be shared in general ways, such as ranges, averages, and medians for statistical comparison. Other disclosure may occur without any way to identify the client.

IV. ***Conflicts of Interest***

- a. Contract Work: Since field services professionals are compensated by their employers for the purpose of providing service to clients, the Field Services Alliance does not support taking contract work from clients as defined by the field services professional's employer.
- b. Collecting: Since field services professionals work closely with those who hold in public trust objects of cultural value, the Field Services Alliance does not support its members collecting or competing for collections similar or of interest to clients.
- c. Impartiality: The field services professional should consider how any situation meets commonly accepted standards and best practices without favoring either his/her employer or his/her client.
- d. Field services professionals shall not accept gifts from client organizations. Field services professionals may accept items for his/her employer's collection.

V. ***Emergency Situations***

No set of guidelines can adequately predict sudden changes or specific emergencies that may threaten the client's well being. In an emergency, field services professionals should make every reasonable effort to help their clients and strive to follow the principles set out in this document.

VI. ***Adoption and Amendments***

- a. This document will stand adopted after a vote at a member meeting of the Field Services Alliance.
- b. Any member of the Field Services Alliance may propose amendments. The chair of FSA shall place the proposal on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the FSA, and recommend a committee examine the proposal. A report of recommendations shall be due two months prior to the annual meeting at which time the membership would vote on the proposed amendment.