



NATIONAL SOCIETY OF CONSULTING SOIL SCIENTISTS, INC.

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CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTING SOIL SCIENTISTS

The National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists, Inc. (NSCSS) has adopted the following Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Guidelines for Consulting Soil Scientists.

Preamble

Consulting Soil Scientists are committed to the application of all disciplines of professional soil sciences for clients on a fee basis. In fulfilling this commitment, Consulting Soil Scientists work with people, programs, government and academic institutions, and businesses. Consulting Soil Scientists may be called upon to provide exploration, assessment, information, evaluation, and other services. Moreover, Consulting Soil Scientists must adhere to ethical standards of professional conduct and must ensure that the standards are enforced vigorously. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Guidelines, henceforth referred to as the Code, is designed to facilitate these goals.

The primary obligation of Consulting Soil Scientists is to their clients, defined in this Code as people, programs, government and academic institutions, and businesses which have received contracted services from Consulting Soil Scientists. The basic objective of the Code is to protect the public by specifying and enforcing ethical and professional behavior expected of Consulting Soil Scientists. Accordingly, the Code consists of two kinds of standards: Canons and Rules of Professional Conduct.

That Canons are general standards of an aspirational and inspirational nature reflecting the fundamental spirit of professionalism. They are maxims which serve as models of exemplary professional conduct. The Canons also express general concepts and principles from which more specific Rules are derived. Unlike the Canons, the Rules are more exacting standards that provide guidance in specific circumstances.

Consulting Soil Scientists who violate the Code are subject to disciplinary action. A Rule violation is interpreted as a violation of the applicable Canon and the general principles embodied thereof. The NSCSS reserves the right to suspend or to revoke the membership privilege and to assign penalties for a Rule violation. Disciplinary penalties are imposed as warranted by the severity of the offense and its attendant circumstances. All disciplinary actions are undertaken in accordance with the herein published procedures and penalties.

When there is reason to question the ethical propriety of specific behaviors or professional conduct, persons are encouraged to refrain from engaging in such behaviors until the matter has been clarified. Consulting Soil Scientists who need assistance in interpreting the Code should request in writing an advisory opinion from the NSCSS Board of Directors. (See Article XI.B.4.)

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Guidelines for Consulting Soil Scientists

Canon 1 – MORAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS

Consulting Soil Scientists shall behave in a legal, ethical, and moral manner in the conduct of their profession, maintaining the Integrity of the Code and avoiding any behavior which would cause harm to the public or the environment.

Rules of Professional Conduct

- R1.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will obey the laws and statutes in the legal jurisdiction in which they practice and are subject to disciplinary action for any violation, to the extent that such violation suggests the likelihood of professional misconduct.
- R1.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will be thoroughly familiar with, will observe, and will discuss with their clients the limitations of their services, or benefits offered to clients so as to facilitate honest and open communication and realistic expectations.
- R1.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will be alert to parameters relevant to their practices and to disparities between mandated ethical and professional standards and the Code. Where such disparities exist, Consulting Soil Scientists will follow the mandates and will formally communicate any disparities to the NSCSS Board of Directors.
- R1.4 Consulting Soil Scientists will not engage in any act or omission of a dishonest, deceitful, or fraudulent nature in the conduct of their professional activities. They will not allow the pursuit of financial gain or other personal benefits to interfere with the exercise of sound professional judgment and skills.
- R1.5 Consulting Soil Scientists will understand and abide by the Canons and Rules of Professional Conduct which are prescribed in the Code.
- R1.6 Consulting Soil Scientists will not advocate, sanction, participate in, cause to be accomplished, otherwise carry out through another, or condone by any act which Consulting Soil Scientists are prohibited from performing by the Code.
- R1.7 To protect public confidence, Consulting Soil Scientists will avoid public behavior that clearly is in violation of accepted moral, ethical, and legal standards.
- R1.8 Consulting Soil Scientists will respect the rights and reputation of any institution, organization, or firm with which they are associated. In those instances where they are critical of policies, they attempt to effect change by construction action within organizations.
- R1.9 Consulting Soil Scientists will refuse to participate in employment practices which are inconsistent with the moral, ethical, or legal standards regarding the treatment of employees or the public. Consulting Soil Scientists will not condone practices which result in illegal or otherwise unjustifiable discrimination on any basis in hiring, promotion, or training.

Canon 2 – CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Consulting Soil Scientists shall respect the integrity and protect the welfare of the public and the environment.

Rules of Professional Conduct

- R2.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will make clear to clients, the purposes, goals, and limitations affecting the consulting relationship.
- R2.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will not misrepresent their role or competence to clients. Consulting Soil Scientists will provide information about their credentials, if requested, and will refer clients to other specialists as the needs of clients dictate.
- R2.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will continually be cognizant of their own needs, values, and of their potentially influential position. They will make every effort to avoid dual relationships that could impair their professional judgments.
- R2.4 As consultants or expert witnesses, Consulting Soil Scientists have an obligation to provide unbiased, objective opinions.
- R2.5 Consulting Soil Scientists will avoid initiating or continuing consulting relationships if it is expected that the relationships can be of no benefit to clients, in which case Consulting Soil Scientists will suggest to clients appropriate alternatives.

Canon 3 – PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Consulting Soil Scientists shall act with integrity in their relationships with colleagues, other organizations, agencies, institutions, referral sources, and other professions so as to facilitate the contribution of all specialists toward achieving optimum benefit for the public and the environment.

Rules of Professional Conduct

- R3.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will ensure that there is fair mutual understanding of the agreed upon services.
- R3.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will secure from other specialists appropriate reports and evaluations, when such reports are essential for the completion of the agreed upon services.
- R3.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will not discuss in a disparaging way with clients the competency of others without valid substantiation.
- R3.4 Consulting Soil Scientists will not condone or engage in sexual harassment, defined as deliberate or repeated comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature unwanted by recipients.
- R3.5 Consulting Soil Scientists who know of an ethical violation by another Consulting Soil Scientist will informally attempt to resolve the issue with the person when the misconduct is of a minor nature. If the violation does not

seem amenable to an informal solution, or is of a more serious nature, the consulting Soil Scientist will bring it to the attention of the NSCSS Board of Directors.

- R3.6 Consulting Soil Scientists possessing information concerning an alleged violation of this Code, will, upon request, reveal such information to the NSCSS Board of Directors.
- R3.7 Consulting Soil Scientists who employ or supervise others will provide appropriate working conditions, timely evaluations, constructive consultations, and opportunities for experience.
- R3.8 Consulting Soil Scientists will make no claim to unique skills or devices not available to others in the profession unless the special efficacy of such unique skills or devices has been demonstrated by scientifically accepted evidence.

Canon 4 – PUBLIC STATEMENTS/FEES

Consulting Soil Scientists shall adhere to professional standards in establishing fees and promoting their services.

Rules of Professional Conduct

- R5.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will inform clients at the onset of the consulting relationship of the limits of confidentiality.
- R5.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will not forward to another person, agency, or potential employer, any confidential information without the appropriate written permission of others.
- R5.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will safeguard the maintenance, storage, and disposal of the records of others so that unauthorized persons shall not have access to these records. All persons who must have access to these records will be thoroughly briefed concerning the confidential standards to be observed.
- R5.4 Consulting Soil Scientists will provide prospective employers with only job relevant information about others and will secure the appropriate permission of others for the release of any information which might be considered confidential.
- R5.5 Consulting Soil Scientists will not improperly appropriate or otherwise seek to profit from the improper appropriation of proprietary assets of others, including, but not limited to, designs, techniques, protocol, and lists of clients, or supplies.

Canon 6 – INTERPRETATION AND ASSESSMENT

Consulting Soil Scientists shall endeavor to use the best available knowledge and techniques in the agreed upon work.

- R6.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will recognize that different projects demand different levels of competence. Consulting Soil Scientists will recognize the limits of their expertise and competence and perform only those functions for which they are knowledgeable and competent.
- R6.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will consider carefully the appropriateness of procedures when selecting them for use in a given situation.
- R6.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will ensure that their limitations are not exceeded.
- R6.4 Consulting Soil Scientists will make known the purpose of and the explicit use of the results to clients.

R6.5 Consulting Soil Scientists will recognize that procedures and reports may become obsolete. They will make every effort to avoid and prevent the misuse of obsolete information.

Canon 7 – RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Consulting Soil Scientists shall assist in efforts to expand the knowledge of the soil science profession.

Rules of Professional Conduct

R7.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will ensure that data for research meeting rigid standards of validity, honesty, and protection of confidentiality.

R7.2 Consulting Soil Scientists making presentations in the course of their professional activities will confine the content to that which can be disguised to ensure full protection of the identity of others unless prior approval is granted.

R7.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will assign credit to those who have contributed to publications in proportion to their contribution.

Canon 8 – COMPETENCE

Consulting Soil Scientists shall establish and maintain their professional competencies at such a level that their clients receive the benefit of the highest quality of services the professional is capable of offering.

Rules of Professional Conduct

R8.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will function within the limits of their defined role, training, and technical competency and expertise, and will accept only those projects for which they are professional qualified.

R8.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will continuously strive through reading, attending professional meetings, and taking courses of instruction to keep abreast of new developments, concepts, and practices that are essential to providing the highest quality of services to their clients.

R8.3 Consulting Soil Scientists, recognizing that personal problems and conflicts may interfere with their professional effectiveness, will refrain from undertaking any activity in which their personal problems are likely to cause or result in inadequate performance.

R8.4 Consulting Soil Scientists who are educators will perform their duties based on careful preparation so that their instruction is accurate, up-to-date, and scholarly. They will ensure that statements in catalogs, bulletins, and course outlines are accurate, particularly in terms of subject matter covered, bases of evaluating and grading, and nature and purpose of classroom and laboratory or practical experiences. They will maintain high standards of knowledge and skill by presenting information fully and accurately, and by giving appropriate recognition to alternative viewpoints.

Canon 9 – REGISTRATION OF CONSULTING SOIL SCIENTISTS

Consulting soil Scientists holding the Registered Professional Soil Scientist (RPSS) designation shall honor its integrity and respect the limitations placed upon its use.

Rules of Professional Conduct

- R9.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will use the Registered Professional Soil Scientist (RPSS) designation only in accordance with this code.
- R9.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will not attribute to the mere possession of the designation, depth or scope of knowledge, skill, and professional capabilities greater than those demonstrated by achievement of the designation.
- R9.3 Consulting Soil Scientists will not make unfair comparisons between a person who holds the designation and one who does not.

Canon 10 – SOCIETY CONDUCT

Consulting Soil Scientists shall represent the National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists in a moral, ethical, and legal manner.

Rules of Professional Conduct

- R10.1 Consulting Soil Scientists will not write, speak, or act in ways that may lead others to believe that they are officially representing the NSCSS unless such permission has been granted by the NSCSS Board of Directors.
- R10.2 Consulting Soil Scientists will not initiate or support the candidacy of an individual for registration by the NSCSS Board of Directors if the individual is known to engage in ethical or professional practices which violate this Code.

Acknowledgement

Portions of this code are derived from the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors.

DECLARATION OF COMPLAINT: ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Two copies of this Declaration of Complaint, together with a brief statement about the complaint, should be filed with the NSCSS Board of Directors.

I, _____, hereby file a complaint for consideration by the NSCSS Board of Directors.

Name of Accused

Street Address

City

State

Zip

I charge the above party with demonstrating unethical conduct through a violation or violations of the Code of Ethics.

I understand that the accused will receive a copy of this statement. I also understand that all submissions of evidence and testimony will be kept confidential by the NSCSS Board of Directors.

Signature

Date Complaint Filed

Street Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone Number (Day)

Telephone Number (Evening)

DATA TO BE FURNISHED BY THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant must provide the following information related to the complaint in a separate statement to be attached to this official Declaration of Complaint form.

1. **Statement of complaint**

This should be a brief statement, identifying the conduct complained about and stating the part of the Code of Ethics alleged to have been violated. It need not include all the evidence the complainant is prepared to present but should serve as a clear and complete statement of the charges being made against the accused.

2. **Action taken to press the complaint through other channels**

The statement should identify any other actions taken to seek redress in this matter. State licensure laws may provide a channel for filing a complaint of unethical or unprofessional conduct; if such a complaint has been filed, state what has been done and what the outcome has been, including any background materials.

3. **Source of evidence**

The complainant should list individuals who may be in a position to substantiate the facts and should list any documentary sources of information that support the complaint. Presentation of these witnesses and documents is the responsibility of the complainant. The NSCSS Board of Directors will not be required to arrange their availability.