



Membership General Code of Conduct

The Officers, Board Members and numerous journalist members, have worked hard over the years to build a positive reputation and influence for the IFWTWA within the industry we serve, but as we all know a reputation is a fragile thing – unprofessional behavior by only one or a few members can damage what we’ve worked hard to build and maintain.

Whether expressly stated or not, you are perceived by others as a representative of the IFWTWA, therefore the IFWTWA requires that members adhere to our General

Code of Conduct, which include – but is not limited to – the regulations outlined below:

1. **Journalistic integrity:** Your written or broadcast content should be accurate, factual, and free of bias or prejudice. If you are producing a review, you may naturally express your opinion provided that you clearly state that it is your personal opinion, and that you are not expressing such opinion in the capacity of representing the organization or its members.
2. **Plagiarism, Representation:** Plagiarism or representation of first-hand knowledge when there has been none, or fraudulent use of a byline, is unacceptable.
3. **License and Copyright standards:** Members are expected to adhere to laws concerning licensed and copyrighted materials, which include – but are not limited to – the following:
 - a. Members must own the rights for all content including images and videos used in articles with their bylines. This can include original images and videos produced by the member, or non-original materials for which written usage/ publication rights have been obtained from the copyright holder.
 - b. The member assumes all responsibility and liability for such materials used in published work, including materials published in FWT.
 - c. If, in a copyright dispute, the member is found to not have rights to use copyrighted materials in his or her bylined work, the member shall immediately remove the disputed material from any online platforms.
 - d. Copyright infringement cases in which the member is found to be at fault may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of IFWTWA, and may include expulsion.
4. **Compensation (aka “comps”):** Members shall avoid compromising recognized journalistic ethics when receiving complimentary food, travel, lodging, admission to events/activities/attractions, gifts, and/or related items. Professional courtesies (which may include, but is not limited to, the aforementioned) from any entity that the member knows beforehand he or she cannot or will not be disclosing in any resulting media (including articles, blog posts, videos, etc.) shall not be solicited nor accepted. In the event of receiving fully-disclosed “comps,” unless the host has specifically indicated otherwise, the recipient shall tip as though he or she were paying the bill.
5. **Common Courtesy:** At all times, particularly with respect to the mores of other cultures, members shall treat their colleagues, host countries, and hosts with common courtesy, such courtesies including “thank you” correspondence, ample notice in the event of cancellations, and forwarding evidence of media treatment to the subject host.
6. **Sexual harassment:** Members shall not engage in unwanted or inappropriate comments or actions of a sexual nature towards other members, event/trip hosts, or anyone else.
7. **Professional associates:** Anyone other than a fellow professional directly involved in the story shall not accompany a member to an event or on a media trip, nor shall they be included when receiving “comps” such as travel, lodging, meals, and services unless the host extends an [unsolicited] invitation and/or approves the inclusion. If approved, accompanying individuals are held to the same standards as the member.

8. Additional special requirements: In addition to the above General Code of Conduct and IFWTWA bylaws, members who attend industry events and/or media trips are expected to abide by the Event and Media Trip Code of Conduct, as well as any supplemental instructions and guidelines issued for individual events or trips.
9. Infractions: If hosts for any events or trips complain about an IFWTWA member's conduct, the Board will consider such accusations and bring them to the member's attention. If it is determined, that there has been blatant misuse of the IFWTWA affiliation and card, the consequences specified below could apply.
10. Confidentiality and Proprietary Information: Members shall consider all correspondence from IFWTWA as confidential and proprietary, and shall not distribute or share such correspondence or any of its contents to non-members. This includes Press Pass and invitations to events intended for IFWTWA members only. Further, members shall keep all Association legal matters, personnel or personal matters, contractual negotiations, ethics charges and hearings, and other proprietary information confidential. Members shall abide by IFWTWA's policy of its database as confidential.
11. Professional Industry Conduct: When members engage in a formal contract for services or products with other persons in the publishing industry, whether that person is a member of IFWTWA or not, the member shall honor all terms of that contract. Breach of any professional contract for services or products can reflect negatively on IFWTWA and damage the reputation of the member and the organization.
 - a. Any complaints of breach of professional contract against a member must include all relevant documentation supporting the complaint. At the IFWTWA Board of Director's discretion, such complaints shall be thoroughly considered by the board and, if available documentation supports the complainant's claim, the board shall determine and execute disciplinary action against the accused member as specified in the bylaws, including but not limited to suspension of member privileges or expulsion.
 - b. If available documentation does not support the complainant's claim, the complaint shall be dropped with no disciplinary action against the member.
 - c. Because industry conduct complaints can severely damage a member's professional reputation, the Board of Directors shall exercise the utmost discretion in handling all professional industry conduct complaints. All related documentation and communications are proprietary between the Board of Directors and the accused member on a need to know basis.
 - d. The Board of Directors shall determine, on a case by case basis, whether a professional industry conduct complaint has merit and whether the board shall consider it or not.
 - e. The Board of Directors, at their discretion, may consider professional industry conduct complaints and take subsequent action as outlined in this clause that predate the implementation date of this clause.

By reading the above Code of Conduct, members understand and agree that failure to adhere to them can result in IFWTWA's Board revoking the privilege of attending future events and/or trips for up to 12 months or can cause immediate loss of membership, depending on the severity of the infraction(s).