



Code of Professional Conduct

As an organization of media professionals dealing specifically with food, wine and travel, the IFW&TWA recognizes the necessity of the strongest adherence by its membership to the highest standards of ethics, professionalism and courtesy. Membership in the IFW&TWA requires that all members, in order to preserve and foster the organization's reputation in the hospitality industry, shall abide by these standards of professional conduct. The IFW&TWA hereby asserts its right to set certain recognized standards in these areas and to enforce adherence by its membership. Failure to abide by the letter and spirit of this code may result in disciplinary action, including censure, suspension or expulsion from the association.

Areas of specific concern include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Objectivity, Accuracy:** Food and travel journalism must be accurate and free of bias or prejudice, avoid gratuitous criticism, and be reasonable, objective, and accurate.
2. **Discounts and "Comps:"** Members shall make every effort to avoid compromising recognized journalistic ethics when receiving discount and/or complimentary food, travel, lodging or related items ("comps").
3. **Courtesy and Respect:** At all times, and particularly with respect to the mores of other cultures, members shall treat their colleagues and people in host cities and countries with courtesy and respect. Members shall be culturally sensitive in their conversations and actions as applies to issues of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. We urge such examples of common courtesy towards hosts as: "thank you" correspondence, ample notice in the event of cancellations, paying for cancellation costs incurred because of the member's cancellation, and forwarding evidence of media clips to the host.
4. **Attendance and Scheduling:** When a member signs up for a conference or destination seminar, attendance at all events is expected, unless there are special circumstances and permission has been granted by the host or the person in charge has been notified. Members are also expected to strictly adhere to the schedule arranged by the host and the association and not be late or fail to appear, which impacts the host's schedule and is disruptive to the hosts and other members.
5. **Tippling:** In the event of receiving food, lodging or the services of a bus driver or tour guide as "comps," unless the host has specifically indicated otherwise, the recipient shall tip as though he or she were paying the bill (15% to 20% is recommended). Members are also expected to contribute their fair share (typically \$1 to \$3 per day per group member) for local guides, bus drivers, and national guides). This is an obligation of attendees at conferences, travel destination seminars or at any IFW&TWA sanctioned events and a common courtesy expected of any traveler. Members are encouraged (but not required) to participate in voluntary efforts to take a collection to obtain a thank you gift for the host(s).
6. **Dress Code:** Members shall follow appropriate dress code in compliance with the hosts' requirements and with the accepted local standards of attire. Examples include: wearing conservative attire (no shorts, tee-shirts, bare midriffs, etc.) at churches, mosques, synagogues and other religious locales; wearing a sports coat or sports coat and tie and evening wear for women at resorts and restaurants where such attire is the norm.
7. **Plagiarism, Representation:** Plagiarism or representation of first-hand knowledge when there has been none, or fraudulent use of a byline, is unacceptable. Misrepresentation of one's membership status or credentials is a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action, as previously described.
8. **Compensation:** Professional courtesies from a host for whom the recipient knows he or she cannot provide media exposure shall not be accepted, subject to the reasonable expectation of future exposure, unless the donor is made aware of such a situation.
9. **Dining:** As guests, members should order only a reasonable, representative sample of food or spirits. Members should also take into consideration what other members are ordering so that the overall tab for the group is not excessive and/or inappropriate.
10. **Alcohol Consumption and Smoking:** Those members who drink alcohol should do so in moderation, and only when or where permitted by the host. As a courtesy to other members, smoking shall be avoided in confined areas (even if permitted by law) such as tour buses and vans.

11. **Special Diets:** Members who are vegans, vegetarians, or on any other special diets should notify the association in advance and indicate those needs on the registration form of any media trip. Hosts may request that members with special dietary requirements pay for the costs of the special needs, or make other more compatible arrangements.
12. **Grievances, Special Requests:** At all organization events, members shall avoid making critical comments about hosts. Members should not address grievances or special requests of any kind to sponsors or hosts. Any reasonable requests or legitimate criticisms should be directed to the association coordinator for that event for appropriate action.
13. **Professional Associates:** Anyone other than a fellow professional directly involved in the story shall not be included when receiving a discount or “comp” without approval by the host or unless offered by the host.
14. **Identification and Professionalism:**
 - a. Members shall keep business cards and their IFWTWA press identification on hand to make available to the hosts.
 - b. Members shall be courteous and attentive during property tours and conduct themselves as working professionals at all times.
15. **Preparation for Trips:** Members are expected to adequately prepare for trips, with suitable clothing and other needs (such as sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.), as well as the necessary funds for their personal and incidental expenses and tips.
16. **Drug Use:** Members who engage in illegal drug use (including abusing prescription drugs) will be subject to disciplinary action as previously described.
17. **Sexual Harassment:** Members shall not engage in unwanted or inappropriate comments or actions of a sexual nature towards members, hosts or anyone else.
18. **Application Process:**
 - a. In order to qualify for an IFW&TWA media trip, members must submit the registration forms and other requested documents (clips, bios, etc.) by the deadline given.
 - b. Members must submit an insurance waiver prior to departure.
 - c. Members will not be permitted to bypass the association and deal directly with the hosts.
 - d. Unless by prior arrangement or agreement, members who do not pay media trip conference fees, cancellation fees, change fees, or any other personal expenses incurred, will be deemed in violation of our Code of Conduct policy (and the bylaws) and will be subject to such disciplinary action as previously described.
19. **Thefts, Damages, Etc.:** Members who misappropriate or damage host or association property, or that of other members, will be subject to disciplinary action as previously described.
20. **Special Health Needs:** In recognition that there are members with disabilities and/or health problems that must be accommodated, the association will make every effort to do so. However, members are expected to be in good enough health to travel and to participate in the scheduled events of a given trip. Members should determine in advance if they are up to the challenges of such scheduled activities as hiking, rafting, horseback riding, etc. Members with special needs are expected to notify the association and the host in advance to best facilitate the accommodation of their needs. Members with serious medical conditions and/or illnesses that could put themselves or others at risk should not participate in our media trips.
21. **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Members shall keep legal matters, personnel matters, contractual negotiations, ethics charges and hearings, and any other proprietary information strictly confidential, and are prohibited from making any unauthorized disclosures of same. Members shall abide by the association’s policy for use of the official membership database. Breaches of the association’s Privacy, Confidentiality, and Database policy may result in disciplinary action as previously described.
22. **Other Items:** In addition to the above Code of Conduct and the association’s bylaws, members are also expected to abide by supplemental instructions and guidelines issued for individual trips, laws and regulations, and follow the direction of the host and/or association’s group leader.