

## **Relevant Extracts from Code of Ethics**

### ***Ethical Conflict Resolution***

- 100.17 A professional accountant may be required to resolve a conflict in complying with the fundamental principles.
- 100.18 When initiating either a formal or informal conflict resolution process, the following factors, either individually or together with other factors, may be relevant to the resolution process:
- (a) Relevant facts;
  - (b) Ethical issues involved;
  - (c) Fundamental principles related to the matter in question;
  - (d) Established internal procedures; and
  - (e) Alternative courses of action.

Having considered the relevant factors, a professional accountant shall determine the appropriate course of action, weighing the consequences of each possible course of action. If the matter remains unresolved, the professional accountant may wish to consult with other appropriate persons within the firm or employing organization for help in obtaining resolution.

- 100.19 Where a matter involves a conflict with, or within, an organization, a professional accountant shall determine whether to consult with those charged with governance of the organization, such as the board of directors or the audit committee.
- 100.20 It may be in the best interests of the professional accountant to document the substance of the issue, the details of any discussions held, and the decisions made concerning that issue.
- 100.21 If a significant conflict cannot be resolved, a professional accountant may consider obtaining professional advice from the relevant professional body or from legal advisors. The professional accountant generally can obtain guidance on ethical issues without breaching the fundamental principle of confidentiality if the matter is discussed with the relevant professional body on an anonymous basis or with a legal advisor under the protection of legal privilege. Instances in which the professional accountant may consider obtaining legal advice vary. For example, a professional accountant may have encountered a fraud, the reporting of which could breach the professional accountant's responsibility to respect confidentiality. The professional accountant may consider obtaining legal advice in that instance to determine whether there is a requirement to report.
- 100.22 If, after exhausting all relevant possibilities, the ethical conflict remains unresolved, a professional accountant shall, where possible, refuse to remain associated with the matter creating the conflict. The professional accountant shall determine whether, in the circumstances, it is appropriate to withdraw from the engagement team or specific assignment, or to resign altogether from the engagement, the firm or the employing organization.

## **SECTION 220**

### **Conflicts of Interest**

- 220.1 A professional accountant in public practice shall take reasonable steps to identify circumstances that could pose a conflict of interest. Such circumstances may create threats to compliance with the fundamental principles. For example, a threat to objectivity may be created when a professional accountant in public practice competes directly with a client or has a joint venture or similar arrangement with a major competitor of a client. A threat to objectivity or confidentiality may also be created when a professional accountant in public practice performs services for clients whose interests are in conflict or the clients are in dispute with each other in relation to the matter or transaction in question.
- 220.2 A professional accountant in public practice shall evaluate the significance of any threats and apply safeguards when necessary to eliminate the threats or reduce them to an acceptable level. Before accepting or continuing a client relationship or specific engagement, the professional accountant in public practice shall evaluate the significance of any threats created by business interests or relationships with the client or a third party.
- 220.3 Depending upon the circumstances giving rise to the conflict, application of one of the following safeguards is generally necessary:
- (a) Notifying the client of the firm's business interest or activities that may represent a conflict of interest and obtaining their consent to act in such circumstances; or
  - (b) Notifying all known relevant parties that the professional accountant in public practice is acting for two or more parties in respect of a matter where their respective interests are in conflict and obtaining their consent to so act; or
  - (c) Notifying the client that the professional accountant in public practice does not act exclusively for any one client in the provision of proposed services (for example, in a particular market sector or with respect to a specific service) and obtaining their consent to so act.
- 220.4 The professional accountant shall also determine whether to apply one or more of the following additional safeguards:
- (a) The use of separate engagement teams;
  - (b) Procedures to prevent access to information (e.g., strict physical separation of such teams, confidential and secure data filing);
  - (c) Clear guidelines for members of the engagement team on issues of security and confidentiality;
  - (d) The use of confidentiality agreements signed by employees and partners of the firm; and
  - (e) Regular review of the application of safeguards by a senior individual not involved with relevant client engagements.

- 220.5 Where a conflict of interest creates a threat to one or more of the fundamental principles, including objectivity, confidentiality, or professional behavior, that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through the application of safeguards, the professional accountant in public practice shall not accept a specific engagement or shall resign from one or more conflicting engagements.
- 220.6 Where a professional accountant in public practice has requested consent from a client to act for another party (which may or may not be an existing client) in respect of a matter where the respective interests are in conflict and that consent has been refused by the client, the professional accountant in public practice shall not continue to act for one of the parties in the matter giving rise to the conflict of interest.

## SECTION 310

### Potential Conflicts

- 310.1 A professional accountant in business shall comply with the fundamental principles. There may be times, however, when a professional accountant's responsibilities to an employing organization and professional obligations to comply with the fundamental principles are in conflict. A professional accountant in business is expected to support the legitimate and ethical objectives established by the employer and the rules and procedures drawn up in support of those objectives. Nevertheless, where a relationship or circumstance creates a threat to compliance with the fundamental principles, a professional accountant in business shall apply the conceptual framework approach described in Section 100 to determine a response to the threat.
- 310.2 As a consequence of responsibilities to an employing organization, a professional accountant in business may be under pressure to act or behave in ways that could create threats to compliance with the fundamental principles. Such pressure may be explicit or implicit; it may come from a supervisor, manager, director or another individual within the employing organization. A professional accountant in business may face pressure to:
- Act contrary to law or regulation.
  - Act contrary to technical or professional standards.
  - Facilitate unethical or illegal earnings management strategies.
  - Lie to others, or otherwise intentionally mislead (including misleading by remaining silent) others, in particular:
    - The auditors of the employing organization; or
    - Regulators.
  - Issue, or otherwise be associated with, a financial or non-financial report that materially misrepresents the facts, including statements in connection with, for example:
    - The financial statements;
    - Tax compliance;
    - Legal compliance; or
    - Reports required by securities regulators.
- 310.3 The significance of any threats arising from such pressures, such as intimidation threats, shall be evaluated and safeguards applied when necessary to eliminate them or reduce them to an acceptable level. Examples of such safeguards include:
- Obtaining advice, where appropriate, from within the employing organization, an independent professional advisor or a relevant professional body.
  - Using a formal dispute resolution process within the employing organization.
  - Seeking legal advice.