

City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials and Members of Appointed Commissions and Committees

Statement of Purpose

The citizens and businesses of Costa Mesa are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government which has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. The City of Costa Mesa's strong desire to fulfill this mission therefore requires that:

- public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government;
- public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
- public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

To this end, the Costa Mesa City Council has adopted this Code of Ethics and Conduct for elected officials and members of appointed boards, commissions, and committees to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

1. Act in the Public Interest

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people of Costa Mesa and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims and transactions coming before the Costa Mesa City Council, boards, commissions, and committees.

2. Comply with the Law

Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of California, and the City of Costa Mesa in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and California constitutions; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government; and City ordinances and policies.

3. Conduct of Members

The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, boards, commissions, and committees, the staff or public.

City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials and Members of Appointed Commissions and Committees

4. Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council and boards, commissions, and committees governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City staff.

5. Conduct of Public Meetings

Members shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.

6. Decisions Based on Merit

Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

7. Communication

Members shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Council or boards, commissions, and committees which they may have received from sources outside the public decision-making process.

8. Conflict of Interest

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In accordance with the law, members shall disclose investments, interests in real property, sources of income, and gifts; and they shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist.

9. Gifts and Favors

Members shall comply with the requirements of the Political Reform Act relating to the acceptance and reporting of gifts.

City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials and Members of Appointed Commissions and Committees

10. Confidential Information

Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning City property, personnel or proceedings of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal interests.

11. Use of Public Resources

Members shall not use public resources not available to the public in general, such as City staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes. Members shall not utilize the City's name or logo for the purpose of endorsing any political candidate or business.

12. Representation of Private Interests

In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any board, commission, committee, or proceeding of the City, nor shall members of boards, commissions, and committees appear before their own bodies or before the Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies.

13. Advocacy

Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council, board, commission, or committee to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City of Costa Mesa, nor will they allow the inference that they do.

14. Policy Role of Members

Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of Costa Mesa city government as outlined in the City's policies and procedures and follow Costa Mesa Municipal Code Section 2-6.208 with respect to the City Manager's relationship with the City Council. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards, commissions, and committees and City staff. Except as provided by the City ordinance, members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials and Members of Appointed Commissions and Committees

15. Independence of Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, commissions, and committees to the public decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their position to influence unduly the deliberations or outcomes of board, commission, and committee proceedings.

16. Positive Work Place Environment

Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with City employees and treat employees professionally. Members shall refrain from publicly criticizing any employee, and refrain from creating the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

17. Implementation

As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the City, the Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for City Council, applicants to boards, commissions, and committees and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they have read and understood the City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct.

18. Compliance and Enforcement

The Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for members of the Costa Mesa City Council, boards, commissions, and committees. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government. During a meeting, the chairs of boards, commissions, and committees, the Mayor, City Attorney, and staff have the additional responsibility to intervene when members' actions appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethics. The City Council may impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with the City's ethical standards, such as reprimand, formal censure, loss of seniority, or removal from appointive office.

Term: _____

**City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct
for Elected Officials and Members of
Appointed Commissions and Committees**

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

As a member of the Costa Mesa City Council or of a Costa Mesa board, commission, or committee, I agree to uphold the Code of Ethics and Conduct for elected and appointed officials adopted by the City Council and conduct myself by the following model of behavior. I will:

- Recognize the worth of individual members and appreciate their individual talents, perspectives and contributions;
- Help create an atmosphere of respect and civility where individual members, City staff and the public are free to express their ideas and work to their full potential;
- Conduct my personal and public affairs with honesty, integrity, fairness and respect for others;
- Respect the dignity and privacy of individuals and organizations;
- Keep the common good as my highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit;
- Avoid and discourage conduct which is divisive or harmful to the best interests of Costa Mesa;
- Treat all people with whom I come in contact in the way I wish to be treated.

I affirm that I have read and that I understand, accept and support the City of Costa Mesa Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Name

Council, Commission, Committee, Board

(Print Name)

Signature

Date