

K9 Search OK Membership Code of Conduct

K9 Search OK, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the “Corporation”) is a nonprofit corporation. The purpose of the Corporation is to: 1) furnish trained volunteers for search for the benefit and welfare of the community, 2) organize and support the continuing education and training of volunteers, dog teams and support personnel in accepted search and rescue methods, and 3) increase public awareness of search and rescue trained volunteers and dog teams by providing informational and educational programs and demonstrations to institutions, agencies and community organizations.

The Corporation has adopted the following Membership Policies, which address the Corporation’s expectations for Membership conduct and behavior. This *K9 Search OK Membership Code of Conduct* document is intended to provide guidelines to the Board of Directors of the Corporation (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”) and Corporation Members (hereinafter referred to as “Members”). Variation from such guidelines shall not create any liability on behalf of the Corporation or any member of the Board. The Corporation reserves the right to modify, change, or amend such committees or policies at any time for any reason by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Board.

1. CORE VALUES

As a Member of the Corporation, I acknowledge and commit to honor to the best of my ability the following values:

- a. I have a moral obligation to the missing or injured and to the agencies, volunteer organizations and other Members with whom I work. I shall endeavor to guard their interests honestly and deal with them fairly, wisely and in an efficient, proper manner. I shall behave honestly in all matters, respect privileged communication, avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest and deal with others courteously and politely.
- b. I shall continuously work to raise the standards of performance of search and rescue to the highest attainable levels without regard to race, sex, religion, cultural background, economic, or social condition in service to humanity.
- c. I have an obligation to advance the knowledge and skills of search and rescue so that I can serve the needs of the missing or injured. I shall strive to improve my own knowledge and skills; support others by sharing my experiences; and strive to keep myself fully informed of new developments in the profession.
- d. I will support the mission of the Corporation, and shall at all times conduct myself in an ethical and prudent manner worthy of my profession.
- e. I shall not engage in any illegal, unethical, or malicious conduct.
- f. I will adhere to all rules and policies in the Standard Operating Procedures, Policies, and by-laws of the Corporation. I understand that failure to comply may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.

2. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

A personal and organizational commitment to integrity in all circumstances benefits each individual as well as the organization. We therefore:

- a. Strive to meet the highest standards of performance, quality, service and achievement in working towards the Corporation’s purpose.
- b. Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication, and minority opinions are valued.
- c. Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.
- d. Respect the dignity of others. I realize behavior that constitutes harassment or abuse is unacceptable. I will refrain from using profane, insulting, harassing, or otherwise offensive language while at searches, training, meetings, and other team events.
- e. Will not misrepresent the intentions, capabilities, certifications, or mission of myself or of the team.
- f. Will not provide training, instruction, certifications, or anything that could reasonably be construed as expert advice while representing the Corporation unless I am certified, trained, and expressly authorized to do so.

3. INCLUSION

The Corporation is an equal opportunity organization and is committed to the principle of inclusion. We therefore:

- a. Value, champion and embrace inclusion in all aspects of Corporation activities and respect others without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, or status as a qualified disabled or handicapped individual.

- b. Refuse to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.
- c. Will work to cultivate the support and cooperation of other agencies, families, and the public during Corporation operations.
- d. Shall not participate in any sexual harassment or hazing of another member, client, or customer. I will promptly report any perceived incident of sexual harassment to a member of the Board.

4. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We must avoid any activity or outside interest that conflicts or appears to conflict with the interests of the Corporation, including involvement with a current or potential vendor, partner agency, or general citizen. To avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest that could tarnish our reputation as well as undermine the public's trust, Corporation staff and Members must:

- a. Ensure that outside employment and other activities do not adversely affect the performance of Corporation duties or the achievement of its purpose.
- b. Ensure that we will not use our position for private gain, for the endorsement of any product, or for the private gain of any service or enterprise, friends, family members, or persons with whom the staff or volunteer is affiliated.
- c. Ensure that we choose vendors without the influence of family members or friends or are affiliated with, employ, or are employed by a person with whom they have a relationship that would create a potential or real conflict of interest.
- d. Ensure that travel, entertainment, and related expenses are incurred on a basis consistent with the purpose of the Corporation and not for personal gain or interests.
- e. Refrain from influencing the selection of staff, consultants, or vendors who are relatives or friends or affiliated with, employ or employed by a person with whom they have a relationship that adversely affects the appearance of impartiality.
- f. Will avoid appearances of impropriety. It is our duty to disclose all potential and actual conflicts of interest.
- g. Will accept no gift, gratuity, or loan in exchange for services performed while representing the Corporation, unless approved by the Board.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Confidentiality is a hallmark of professionalism and required by state and federal laws. We must therefore:

- a. Ensure that we maintain confidentiality at all times and protect personal identifying information, medical information, and any other information designated as personal, privileged, sensitive, confidential, or otherwise related to any aspect of our members, subjects of our search, and also including law enforcement operations, tactics, means or methods. The duty to protect this information is perpetual absent express approval or authorization through the appropriate chain of command, even after affiliation with the organization ends.
- b. Ensure that no confidential, privileged, or nonpublic information is disclosed inappropriately.
- c. Refrain from use of information acquired in the course of work for personal gain.
- d. Respect the privacy rights of all individuals in the performance of their duties.
- e. Respect the privacy of others and private information.
- f. Recognize that all information, whether hard copy or electronic, is the property of the Corporation and may not be copied or removed without express permission of the Board of Directors.
- g. Respect the privacy of and safeguard the confidentiality of information concerning any deployments.
- h. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of information that a donor reasonably would expect to be private
- i. Respect and hold in confidence all information regarding a Corporation deployment unless otherwise authorized. The rights and concerns of the subject(s) and their families are our primary concerns.
- j. Any breach of confidentiality, intentional or unintentional release of confidential information or case-sensitive information may result in the immediate termination of membership.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

In order to ensure proper financial practices and the safety of staff and Members, staff and Members must:

- a. Maintain accurate financial records and report our financial results in an accurate and timely manner.

- b. Be honest and faithful fiduciaries and protect the funds entrusted to us.
- c. Use the resources, equipment and material of the Corporation only for the necessary performance of our duties.
- d. Comply with all limitations on incurring expenses in the course of authorized activities for the Corporation and will not seek or receive reimbursement for expenses not incurred.
- e. Provide members and staff with a confidential means to report suspected financial impropriety or misuse of the Corporation's resources.
- f. Always place the safety and welfare of a subject, our team, and my safety above all else. I will refuse to participate in unethical or unsafe procedures.
- g. Never self-deploy (attend other Search and Rescue deployments or events as a Corporation representative unless approved). I will not freelance or initiate an activity or task outside of the objectives and instructions given in Corporation deployments.
- h. Be professional while in uniform. I will comply with uniform guidelines at all deployments. I will not wear my uniform or intentionally represent the Corporation at functions, events, or in groups unless authorized.
- i. Not alter or embellish the Corporation uniform without authorization.
- j. Maintain accountability for the duration of my deployment.
- k. Only use emergency lights or sirens when responding to an incident when specifically instructed by K9 Search OK Chief of Party or in a life safety situation. Both member and vehicle must meet EVOC qualifications.
- l. Be prepared mentally, physically and emotionally for the duty to which I'm called.

7. WEAPONS

Anyone seeking permission to carry weapons during a Corporation event or deployment is to be advised that the Corporation cannot give such permission. The Corporation does not prohibit legal weapons, but the Corporation accepts no responsibility or liability for injury or damages to anyone as the result of possession of a weapon by a Corporation Member or volunteer. The responsibility or liability for injury or damages to anyone as a result of an individual's possession of a weapon remains with the individual. Members and employees must obey all federal, state, and local laws in regards to weapons carry during Corporation or deployments. When supporting a served agency, Members and volunteers members must also adhere to the policies of the served agency. The Corporation does not expect volunteers to participate in a dangerous activity that may warrant the use of a weapon or to place themselves in what they perceive to be a dangerous or unsafe environment. Volunteers should avoid or cease participating in any Corporation activity or deployment under circumstances which make them uncomfortable. As is state law and as a result of our routine interaction with law enforcement, it is the duty of any individual that may be carrying a weapons to immediately inform law enforcement and obey with any requests law enforcement may have with regards to carrying weapons.

8. USE OF VEHICLES

Members may be required to use their personal vehicles while conducting Corporation business. When using a vehicle for Corporation business purposes, members shall adhere to the following practices:

- a. Maintain a valid drivers license, insurance, and adhere to all other legal requirements necessary for the operation of a vehicle.
- b. When driving to or from a deployment, observe traffic laws and safe operation of your car.
- c. If you are excessively physically fatigued after a deployment, do not drive. Catch a ride with another member or sleep and drive home after resting and recovering.
- d. Use of a cell phone while driving should be minimized to no more than is needed to assure correct directions or respond to instructions from the Team Command. We strongly encourage you to pull off in a safe place to take and/or make calls while driving to or from a deployment, training or any other Corporation activity.

9. TRANSPARENCY

We will:

- a. Communicate openly and candidly about our activities and operations, within the realm of confidentiality.

- b. Provide members of the public who express an interest in the affairs of the organization with a meaningful opportunity to communicate with an appropriate representative of the Corporation.
- c. Make available for public inspection a copy of our annual report and most recent IRS form 990 filings, as well as a copy of our exempt status application.
- d. Recognize that I hold a position of public trust that carries an inherent personal commitment and my actions reflect upon that. I agree to disclose any felony convictions and/or conviction of any laws of moral turpitude.

10. GOVERNANCE

We will:

- a. Govern carefully and honestly to advance the purpose of the Corporation.
- b. Strive for excellence and professionalism in all Corporation related activities.
- c. Commit ourselves to the purpose of the Corporation and competently, efficiently, and professionally perform the duties and tasks we assume.
- d. Fully and candidly discuss issues entrusted to us and respect others' viewpoints.
- e. Endeavor to be active listeners and learners, embracing opportunities for others to express their ideas.

11. DUTY

We will:

- a. Seek guidance from other Members or the Board concerning breaches of the Membership Code of Conduct.
- b. Report potential or actual breaches of the Membership Code of Conduct.
- c. Treat reports of potential or actual breaches of the Membership Code of Conduct or laws as confidentially and respectfully as possible.
- d. Comply with instructions from leadership, whether at the organizational level or in the field under the Incident Command System (ICS). However, I also understand that I not only have the right but the duty to bring to another leader's attention if I witness or experience anything that is unsafe, unethical, illegal, or unprofessional.

12. MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Members shall adhere to the following policies with respect to media and social media:

- a. I will not speak to the media regarding specific cases or searches unless specifically tasked to do so by command staff. Direct all media inquiries to the Command Staff.
- b. I will not electronically transmit deployment-related images and data without prior permission from the Command Staff.
- c. While in uniform, I will not electronically transmit any inappropriate, compromising, or unethical situations. If you are unsure, ask for approval from Command Staff. The term "Corporation Uniform" refers to any article of clothing or item that has the Corporation name, logo, or emblem.
- d. As a representative of the Corporation I will be respectful as to what I post and share electronically.
- e. While representing the Corporation I will refrain from public criticisms of fellow members, clients, other responding agencies, other search teams, and public officials. This includes personal online and electronic communications.

13. POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS

The Corporation encourages individual participation in civic affairs. However, as a nonprofit organization, the Corporation may not contribute to any candidate for public office or political committee and may not intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. In addition, an employee may not endorse a particular candidate or political party on behalf of the Corporation. You may not wear a uniform to a candidate's political functions or do anything else which would or could create the appearance of the Corporation endorsing or supporting a candidate.

14. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Anyone who knows or suspects a violation of these Membership Policies must immediately report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") or Chairman of the Board. If an individual is uncomfortable reporting the matter to

the CEO or Chairman of the Board, he or she may contact any officer of the Board of Directors. When investigating reports, the Corporation will adhere to the following procedures:

- a. In conducting investigations of reports, the Corporation will respect a request for confidentiality and/or anonymity to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate review and investigation.
- b. The Chairman of the Board will determine whether the matter will be investigated and, if so, what issues should be investigated and who should conduct the investigation. If the report involves alleged conduct by the Chair of the Board, the Executive Committee without the Chair's participation will make these decisions.
- c. The Executive Committee has the authority to enter into contracts with outside legal, accounting, or other advisors for services related to investigations ordered by the Chair.
- d. Results of investigations conducted pursuant to this document shall be reported to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall, in its sole discretion, determine if there has been a violation of the Membership Code of Conduct. If the Executive Committee determines that there has been a violation, they will take appropriate corrective and remedial action, including but not limited to disciplining the offender.
- e. The Corporation considers Membership Code of Conduct violations to be major offenses that, depending on the circumstances, may result in suspension or termination.
- f. The Corporation forbids retaliation against any employee, volunteer, or Board Member who reports a suspected violation of the Membership Code of Conduct in good faith or who participates in good faith in an investigation of such a report. No employee, volunteer, or Board Member is authorized or permitted to retaliate or take any adverse employment action whatsoever against anyone for reporting in good faith a suspected violation of the Membership Code of Conduct. Any individual who feels that he or she has been retaliated against in violation of this document is responsible for reporting the retaliation in the same manner as suspected violations of the Membership Code of Conduct.
- g. Any individual who engages in retaliation prohibited by this document will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

15. GLOSSARY

- a. "Confidential Information" is the non-public, proprietary, private, or secret information preserved by the Corporation, including donor identity and information. Nonpublic Information is any business, financial, or personal information that is not widely known or publicly available.
- b. "Donor" is an individual or entity which makes a charitable cash or in-kind contribution to the Corporation.
- c. "Employee" is anyone who acts in a paid staff capacity on a full, part-time, or temporary basis.
- d. "Family Member" is defined as spouse, domestic partner, parent, son or daughter, brother or sister, grandparent or grandchild, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, guardian or ward, step, half, or in-law relation, a person living in one's household, and/or any other person with such a close bond as to suggest a conflict of interest in the relationship (for example, fiancée).
- e. "Gift" is any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other item having significant monetary value. It includes services as well as gifts of training, transportation, local travel, lodgings and meals, whether provided in-kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reimbursement after the expense has been incurred.
- f. "Privileged Information" is a communication protected from disclosure by legally recognized privileges such as attorney-client, doctor-patient, and others.
- g. "Vendor" is an individual or entity that provides services to the Corporation for a fee.
- h. "Volunteer" are those individuals who perform duties without compensation.

THIS K9 SEARCH MEMBERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT IS ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Bradley Don Morris, President

Kenneth Baucum, Secretary