

## Code of Professional Ethics

For ACF Certified Cooks, Chefs, Pastry Chefs and Educators



American Culinary Federation, Inc.  
180 Center Place Way  
St. Augustine, FL 32095  
Toll-free: (800) 624-9458  
Fax: (904) 825-4758  
[www.acfchefs.org](http://www.acfchefs.org)

### About ACF

Known as "the authority on cooking in America," the American Culinary Federation (ACF) represents more than 21,000 members in 230 chapters across the United States. It is ACF's mission to make a positive difference for culinarians through education, apprenticeship and certification, while creating a fraternal bond of respect and integrity among culinarians everywhere.

### ACF Professional Certification

ACF certification is a symbol of professionalism and helps steer culinary careers to the next level.

The food industry demands qualified employees with proven experience and ACF fills that need.

With thousands of chefs competing in the job market, ACF certification proves your quality as a professional culinarian.

ACF is the only certifier of Master Chefs and Master Pastry Chefs in the United States. These CMCs and CMPCs are highly regarded chefs in the industry, and are employed by some of the most respected foodservice establishments in the country.

### What ACF certification means:

- It demonstrates initiative to take charge of your professional development and career.
- It provides concrete markers of skill development and culinary expertise.
- It verifies that professional cooks, chefs, and pastry chefs have demonstrated the knowledge and skill required for elevated culinary positions.

Certification is open to all culinarians, including cooks, chefs, pastry chefs, bakers, culinary educators and administrators regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

### ACF Certification Commission (ACFCC)

The ACF certification program is structured in ways that are appropriate for the food service and hospitality profession, occupation, role, or skill, and governed by the Certification Commission that ensure, autonomy in decision making over essential certification activities.

The ACF Certification Commission includes individuals from the certified population, as well as voting representation from consumer and public members. The roles of the Commissioners are to represent all stakeholders, provide strategic direction, ensure objectivity and credibility, provide guidance to and review the reports of the subcommittees, and approve the final certification criteria and processes.

### The ACF Certification Code of Professional Ethics

#### 1. Preamble

The American Culinary Federation and the Certification Commission developed the following Certification Code of Ethics to provide guidance to professional cooks and chefs in their professional practice and conduct. The actions, behaviors, and attitudes of our members and certificants are consistent with the ACF commitment to hospitality, foodservice and public service. This certification code of ethics sets forth the fundamental

principles and is considered essential to this purpose. Every individual who is a full member and/or certified by the American Culinary Federation shall abide by this certification code of ethics. Any action that violates the purpose and principles outlined by the certification code of ethics shall be considered unethical.

## 2. Basic Beliefs

We recognize the importance of the following beliefs that guide our practice and provide context for our ethics:

- The services we provide contribute to the health and well being of society.
- Our education and certification qualify us to serve the public by applying safe food practices, nutritional acumen, healthy and quality food service techniques to everything we produce and serve the dining public.
- Individuals who have intrinsic food concerns, such as allergies, intolerances, or specific diet restrictions are responsible for their own health, and are entitled to make choices regarding their health; yet the certified cook and chef will be able to support all menu claims when they regard to a person's health, digestion or well being.
- Professional cooking careers are an essential component of overall hospitality and foodservice and we function interdependently with other hospitality providers.
- All people should have access to quality hospitality and food services.
- We are individually responsible for our actions and the quality of professional services that we provide.

## Code of Ethics

As a certificant of the American Culinary Federation, I pledge myself to:

- Conduct myself with honesty, integrity and fairness.
- Strive to provide all services competently.
- Provide professional service in a manner that does not discriminate against others on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed religion, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.
- Not engage in sexual harassment, disrespectful or

abusing behavior in connection with professional duties.

- Show professional respect for all who work with or in supervision with myself.
- Strive to provide objective evaluations of performance for employees and coworkers, apprentices, students, professional association members, and/or peers and to avoid bias in any kind of professional evaluation of others.
- Be alert to situations that might cause a conflict of interest or have the appearance of a conflict and provides full disclosure when a real or potential conflict of interest arises.
- Not to promote or endorse products in a manner that is false or misleading.
- Not engage in substance abuse that could adversely affect my job performance or endanger co-workers.
- Strive to comply with all applicable laws and regulations concerning the culinary profession including local, state, and federal statues that promote public health and safety.
- Collaborate with others to create a work environment that minimizes risk to the personal health and safety of our colleagues.
- Support the efforts of other professional cooks and chefs to learn new and innovative culinary techniques and improve my knowledge and skills.
- Not to discriminate in making employment decisions regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.
- Not knowingly misappropriate, divert or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment belonging to others for personal gain or advantage.
- Not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or professional peer.
- Accurately represent my professional training and qualifications and not knowingly permit, aid, abet or suffer the misstatement of my training and qualifications by others.
- Not to plagiarize on another person's printed, audio or visual recordings or using presenting them publicly as original materials, including cook books that may not be governed by standard copyright laws and restrictions.

## Ethics Review and Disciplinary Action

### Preamble

The ethics enforcement procedures are intended to permit a fair review of alleged violations of the ACF Certification Code of Ethics or other egregious conduct in a manner that protects the rights of individuals while promoting understanding and ethical behavior. The Certification Commission has the authority to impose discipline, including removal of certification where appropriate, and to delegate such decisions to the Review Panel.

### 1. Complaint

A complaint that an ACF-certified culinary professional has allegedly violated the ACF Certification Code of Ethics must be submitted in writing to the Certification Commission Executive Committee. The complainant need not be a member of the American Culinary Federation or certified by the ACF.

The complaint must be in writing and contain details of the alleged activities; the basis for complainant's knowledge of these activities; names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all persons involved or who might have knowledge of the activities; and whether the complaint has been submitted to a court or an administrative body. The complaint must also cite the section(s) of the ACF Certification Code of Ethics allegedly violated. The complaint must be signed by the complainant(s). Anonymous complaints will not be accepted, but the Commission may self-initiate complaints based on any factual information.

### 2. Preliminary Review of Complaint

The Certification Commission Executive Committee and appropriate certification staff will review the complaint to determine if all the required information has been submitted by the complainant and whether the complaint is valid and actionable. The Executive Committee will not review frivolous or inconsequential matters, or any personal or commercial disputes; the conduct of the certificant is the sole factor for consideration.

If a complaint is made regarding an alleged violation of the ACF Certification Code of Ethics or other

actionable conduct and a similar complaint is already under consideration regarding the same individual by a state licensure board of examiners, an administrative body, law enforcement authorities, or a court of law, the Certification Commission Executive Committee will generally not process the complaint until a final determination has been issued.

### 3. Response

If it is determined that the complaint is valid and actionable, the Chair of the Certification Commission or its certification staff liaison will notify the respondent (person against whom the complaint is made) and that individual's employer, if applicable, that a complaint has been made and that a Review Panel will be established to investigate and reach a determination. The complainant shall also be notified that the complaint is being reviewed, but the complainant is not notified of the results unless the complaint is dismissed or public disciplinary action is taken.

The notices will be sent from the staff via certified mail, return-receipt requested or other verifiable means of delivery. The respondent will be sent a summary of the complaint, the ACF Certification Code of Ethics, a copy of these procedures, and a response form.

The respondent will have thirty (30) days from receipt of the notification in which to submit a written response. The response must be signed by the respondent.

If the Certification Commission Executive Committee does not receive a response, the Commission Chair or his/her designee will attempt to contact the respondent by telephone. If contact with the respondent is still not made, a written notice will be sent. Failure to reach the respondent will not prevent a Review Panel from proceeding with the investigation or reaching a decision.

### 4. Review Panel

The Certification Commission Executive Committee shall appoint a Review Panel of at least five individuals who may or may not be members of the Commission, including one member to represent each of the four ACF regions and one member to represent the public interest. The Commission shall also appoint one of the Review Panel members to serve as Chair. No one with a conflict

of interest shall participate in any matter addressed by the Review Panel.

This Review Panel is charged with investigating and making an appropriate determination with respect to valid and actionable complaints. At least two members of the Review Panel will handle the investigation and make a recommendation to the full Panel for action; those investigators will not vote on the determination. The Panel may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by staff or legal counsel. The Certification Commission Chair exercises general supervision over all investigations.

Both the individual submitting the complaint and the certificant who is the subject of the investigation (or his or her employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The Panel may at its discretion contact other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint. The Panel may also use experts to assist it in reviewing the complaint, response and determining further action.

The confidentiality of the matter will be maintained unless otherwise required by law or upon advice of legal counsel. The decision of the Panel may be made at an in-person meeting or by telephone or video conference and shall be based on majority vote of those Panel members participating. The deliberation of the Panel shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. The certificant is not permitted to address the Panel in person or by telephone or video conference, unless approved by majority vote of the Panel. The rules of evidence shall not apply and there shall be no witnesses, cross-examination, or other attributes of a trial. The Panel Chair shall make all procedural decisions with advice from staff and/or legal counsel. It is not expected that the certificant will be represented by counsel, although the Panel may permit counsel to participate in the process in accordance with guidelines established by the Panel Chair.

### 5. Determination of Violation

Upon completion of the investigation, the Review Panel determines whether there has been a violation of the ACF Certification Code of Ethics or whether the certificant

has engaged in other grossly negligent or illegal conduct relevant to the culinary profession, or violated other substantive requirements of the certification process (such as submission of false or misleading information to ACF). The Panel also decides on the imposition of an appropriate sanction, including but not limited to the following:

**Censure:** A written reprimand expressing disapproval of conduct. It carries no loss of certification status, but may result in removal from office at the national and local levels and from committee membership. Censure may be public or private.

**Counseling/Probation:** A directive to allow for correction of behavior specified in complaint. It may include mandatory participation in remedial programs. Failure to successfully complete these programs may result in other disciplinary action being taken. It carries no loss of certification status. Counseling/probation may be public or private.

**Suspension:** Temporary loss of certification and all benefits and privileges for a specified time. At the end of the specified suspension period, certification benefits and privileges are automatically restored. Suspension is a public action.

**Revocation of Certification:** Loss of certification; loss of all benefits and privileges. Upon revocation, the former certificant shall return the certification identification card and certificate to the Certification Commission for the American Culinary Federation. Specified time for reapplication to be decided on a case-by-case basis, but, at minimum, current recertification requirements would need to be met. A credential will not be re-issued until the Certification Commission determines that the reasons for revocation have been removed. Revocation is a public action.

The Panel staff liaison shall notify the Certification Commission Executive Committee and the certificant of the determination in writing within 14 days from the determination. The written summary of the Panel's determination will include the reason for the decision and also advise the certificant of the option for an appeal. The

Panel may advise any other licensing, law enforcement, or other body of final action if the Panel believes health or safety of the public is at issue (but only after the time for appeal has run or upon the final determination on appeal).

#### **6. Appeal to Certification Commission**

**The certificant shall have thirty (30) days from receipt of the Panel's determination to appeal to the Certification Commission.** The written appeal must include the stated appeal, the reason for the appeal (including relevant supporting materials), appellant's ACF identification number, and appellant's day phone number. **If there is an appeal to the Certification Commission**, the Review Panel determination report is prepared under the supervision of the Chair and is presented by a representative of the Review Panel to the Certification Commission along with a record of the Panel's investigation.

The Certification Commission Executive Committee reviews the decision of Review Panel. The Commission's review and determination are based entirely on the written record and the presentation by the representative of the Review Panel. The Commission shall only review whether the determination of the Review Panel was inappropriate because of 1) material errors of fact or 2) failure of the Panel to conform to the published criteria, policies, or procedures. Only facts leading up to and

including the time of the Panel's determination shall be considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. The Commission may accept, reject, or modify the Panel's determination, either with respect to the determination of a violation or the recommended sanction to be imposed. The Executive Committee will render a written determination, specifying the reasons for its decision, if applicable, and citing any provision(s) of the ACF Certification Code of Ethics that may have been violated or other conduct that has resulted in disciplinary action. The written determination will be communicated within 14 days of the Commission's decision to the certificant and to the certificant's employer, if applicable.

#### **7. Confidentiality Procedures**

The procedures have been developed to protect the confidentiality of both the complainant and the respondent in the investigation of a complaint of an alleged violation of the ACF Certification Code of Ethics. The need for confidentiality will be stressed in communications with all parties.

#### **8. Resignation**

If the certificant resigns membership in ACF or certification, the Commission may retain jurisdiction to take any appropriate disciplinary action at its discretion.

*Last Revised: 04/20/09*