

General

As representatives of the International Plastic Modelers Society, all elected/appointed officers of the IPMS/USA Executive Board, all staff appointed/employed/contracted by the Executive Board, and all volunteers who assist said officers or staff in their duties, to include the members of each National Convention Committee, are expected to observe high standards of business and personal ethics, to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities, and to comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

The IPMS/USA Whistleblower Protection Policy is intended to encourage and enable members and others to raise serious concerns internally so that IPMS/USA can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. All members of IPMS/USA are protected under this policy.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all members of IPMS/USA to report any violation or suspected violation of the IPMS/USA Constitution & Bylaws (C&BL) or any applicable state or federal laws governing the operations of IPMS/USA.

No Retaliation

No person who, in good faith, reports a violation or suspected violation of the C&BL or any applicable state or federal laws governing the operations of IPMS/USA shall be subjected to retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or other adverse action. This protection extends to any person who, in good faith, has cooperated in the investigation of any violation. Any person who believes that he or she is the subject of any form of retaliation for such participation should immediately report the same as a violation of and in accordance with this Policy. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of membership, employment, or contract.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis or may be submitted anonymously however IPMS/USA encourages anyone reporting a violation or suspected violation to identify themselves in order to facilitate the investigation. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation, to include use of state or federal law-enforcement.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of membership, employment, or contract.

Reporting Procedure

IPMS/USA suggests that members share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with the officer or staff member who can best act on them directly. However, if you are not comfortable doing so, or you are not satisfied with the response, then reports of violations or suspected violations should be submitted to the President IPMS/USA unless the report relates to the President IPMS/USA, in which case the report should be made to any other member of the Executive Board, who shall then be responsible to initiate an alternative procedure.

IPMS/USA has no special forms, drop boxes, or other special procedures for reporting violations or suspected violations, however written reports are preferred. Contact information for the Executive Board is available in the Journal, on the IPMS/USA website, or from the National Office. Telephonic reports are acceptable as an initial notification and may be necessary to rapidly alert the organization to a time-sensitive problem but should be followed up, in writing, as soon as possible to ensure correct presentation of all facts known to the complainant. Failure to do so may hinder timely and full investigation.

Compliance Officer

Due to the nature of IPMS/USA, there is no designated Compliance Officer but the term will be used below for brevity sake. The President of IPMS/USA normally functions as the Compliance Officer for the organization and is responsible for ensuring that all complaints are investigated and resolved. If the complaint is against the President, then next eligible officer in succession by C&BL becomes the Compliance Officer for this complaint. If C&BL succession is exhausted the Executive Board, in closed session, will select one of the remaining members or the appointed Counsel.

Handling of Reported Violations

The person receiving the complaint will provide a prompt but simple acknowledgement of the receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation to the complainant by the same media as submitted. If the complaint is sent to a person other than the President, then that person will immediately, and without further action, forward the complaint to the Compliance Officer and normal procedures will follow. If the report was anonymous, then obviously no acknowledgement is possible.

The Compliance Officer will promptly notify the Executive Board, Office Manager, and the appointed Counsel of the complaint and an investigation will be initiated. Given the nature of IPMS/USA, it may be desirable to appoint an Investigating Officer to assist the Compliance Officer, otherwise the Compliance Officer will be the Investigating Officer.

The Investigating Officer shall promptly investigate each such report promptly and prepare a written report to the Executive Board, Office Manager, and appointed Counsel. All actions of the Investigating Officer in receiving and investigating the report and additional information shall endeavor to protect the confidentiality of all persons entitled to protection. The investigation must proceed promptly, as a primary duty until complete. Periodic progress reports will be rendered, with an estimated date of completion. If necessary and consistent with privacy and confidentiality concerns, the complainant should be apprised of ongoing status to alleviate concerns the complaint is not being pursued.

Upon receipt of the Investigating Officer's final written report, the Compliance Officer, in consultation with the Executive Board, will determine and implement corrective actions if warranted. An appropriate communication will be sent to the complainant, if necessary. A written report will be provided to the Treasurer and Office Manager on any compliance activity relating to accounting, internal controls, or alleged financial improprieties.

Implementation of Policy

This policy becomes effective on the date approved by the Executive Board. It will be disseminated in writing to current officers and to currently appointed/employed/contracted staff, and placed in the Executive Board Procedures Manual. It will be disseminated to all members by posting in the Member Services Section of the IPMS/USA website. The President IPMS/USA will reference it in a Journal column.

Reports of violations or suspected violations, the investigation and disposition thereof, will be retained, with appropriate safeguards for privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with the IPMS/USA Documents and Retention Policy.

Policy approved by the Executive Board on Feb 3, 2013.