



THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS

CODE OF ETHICS

**Revision 1
22 May 2014**

Preamble

The AFTA Code of Ethics is a statement of ethics for travel agents and reflects principles generally accepted by the travel industry. Membership in AFTA and payment of the annual membership fee are a confirmation of a member's commitment to follow this Code of Ethics.

As travel becomes more accessible to more people, traditional and new to market destinations begin to capture the consumer's imagination. It is because of their special knowledge and expertise that travel agents have an important role to play in fulfilling consumers travel needs. This role comes with responsibilities, as travellers face a myriad of alternatives as to transportation, accommodation and other travel services. Travellers must depend on travel agencies and others in the industry to guide them honestly and competently. Similarly, carriers, hotels and other suppliers must provide to the traveller the product as it was advertised. All AFTA members pledge themselves to conduct their business activities in a manner that promotes the ideal of integrity in travel and agree to act in accordance with the Principles of the AFTA Code of Ethics.

PART I

RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC

1. Accuracy

AFTA members will be factual and accurate when providing information in any form about their services and the services of any company they represent. They will not use deceptive practices.

2. Affiliation

AFTA members will not falsely represent a person's affiliation with their firm.

3. Compliance

AFTA members will abide by the Australian Consumer Law.

4. Confidentiality

AFTA members will act in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and treat every client transaction confidentially and not disclose any information without permission of the client.

5. Conflict of Interest

AFTA members acknowledge they are working in their clients' interests and will not allow any dealings or negotiations on behalf of their client to be overly influenced by any preferred relationship with a supplier.

6. Consumer Protection

AFTA members will take every reasonable precaution to protect their clients against any fraudulent misrepresentation or unethical practices which may arise in the travel industry.

7. Cooperation

AFTA members will cooperate and assist with any investigation conducted by AFTA to resolve any dispute involving consumers or another member.

8. Delivery

AFTA members operating tours will take every reasonable action to ensure all components as stated in their brochure or written confirmation is provided, or provide alternate services of equal or greater value or provide appropriate compensation.

9. Disclosure

AFTA members will act fair and reasonably in their dealings with their clients, and provide complete details about terms and conditions of any travel service, including cancellation and service fee obligations, prior to accepting payment for a booking.

10. **Notice**

AFTA members operating tours will as soon as practically possible inform the relevant agent or client who reserved a space, details of any change in itinerary, services, features or price. If substantial changes are made that are within the control of the operator, the client will be allowed to cancel without penalty.

11. **Not bring the Travel Industry, ATAS or AFTA into Disrepute**

AFTA members will at all times conduct themselves in the highest ethical and moral manner and will not act in such a manner that the public's trust and confidence in the travel industry, ATAS or AFTA might reasonably be undermined.

12. **Qualifications and Professionalism**

AFTA members will employ staff with appropriate qualifications or experience and are committed to continuing professional development, such as (but not limited to) the Australian Travel Professionals Program (ATPP). AFTA members will ensure that all front line staff (sales staff) will provide professional service and advice by being fully informed on the various facets of Australian and international travel.

13. **Refunds**

AFTA members will facilitate refunds to their clients appropriately and refund any undisputed funds under their control within the specified time limit. Reasons for a delay in providing refunds will be given to the claimant promptly.

14. **Responsiveness**

AFTA members will promptly respond to their clients' complaints.

15. **Exploitation of Children**

AFTA members will not provide or assist in the provision of any travel service which, to their knowledge, is to be used for a purpose involving the sexual exploitation of children.

PART II

RELATIONS WITH CARRIERS AND OTHER PRINCIPALS

1. AFTA members will, at all times, represent their suppliers in a fair and impartial manner.
2. AFTA members will ensure their front line staff (sales staff) are thoroughly conversant with, understand, and adhere to any conference agreements, rules and regulations.
3. AFTA members will not inappropriately attempt to influence employees of carriers, hotels, tour operators or other organisations to gain preferential consideration or treatment in the assignment of space or for any other purpose.
4. AFTA members will assist to ease space availability problems with carriers by releasing any unsold space promptly and returning cancelled accommodation within an appropriate timeframe. Members shall refrain from suggesting and/or making duplicate bookings for clients. Members shall not make a CRS reservation without a specific customer request or prior written agreement between the principal and the member.
5. Orders placed by AFTA members for accommodation or services, whether written or oral, are binding and, if not required, are to be cancelled. When vouchers and exchange orders are presented for accommodation or services they are to be honoured without delay.
6. AFTA members shall adhere to standards of truth and fair representation and shall not make false, deceptive or misleading statements or implications when called on to give an opinion of a carrier, hotel, tour operator or other travel organisation.
7. In the event of a complaint or grievance by a client against any carrier, hotel or other principal, AFTA members will respect their client's right to complain and assist them in resolving the matter.
8. Non-travel agent members are encouraged to give appropriate recognition in all advertising, sales literature, and solicitation practices to their marketing partner, the travel agent.

PART III

RELATIONS WITH FELLOW MEMBERS AND OTHER TRAVEL AGENTS

1. An AFTA member should conduct their business professionally and respect fellow travel agents. In the unlikely event of a dispute between members, consideration should be given to seeking assistance from AFTA before resorting to costly litigation.
2. An AFTA member should not undermine the business dealings of a competitor nor volunteer an opinion thereon. If an opinion is sought it should be given with strict professional integrity and courtesy.
3. AFTA members shall not wilfully interfere with or induce cancellation of a transaction after a deposit has been paid or a memorandum in writing exists.
4. AFTA members shall not imitate, simulate or copy any name, design, style, mark or pattern used by another AFTA member, supplier, agent, hotel or common carrier without permission.
5. AFTA members are not justified in violating any provision of this Code of Ethics on the ground that another travel agent may be doing so.
6. AFTA members will not use improperly obtained client lists or other confidential information obtained from an employee's former employer.