

ABR/BVS Code of Ethics

In accordance with its statutes, the Belgian Association of Radiological Protection (IRPA affiliate) is a scientific association aiming to:

1. provide its members with objective and high level information regarding all aspects of radiological protection,
2. contribute to the knowledge of radiological protection among interested citizens and organisations,
3. promote the development of radiological protection by bringing together various scientific disciplines and through international networking,
4. put forward independent opinions on scientific, legal or organisational aspects of radiological protection when the association judges it necessary or on request.

According to this mission, the members of the ABR/BVS take on, as individuals, high-level responsibilities concerning public health and safety. This code will offer them appropriate and useful ethical guidance. Due to this specific context, the following guidance is not formulated in an institutional perspective, as ethical rules for the staff of an institution should be. The guidance is also different from the deontological codes that are elaborated in a professional perspective, like the deontological code for the physicians. It is conceived in a societal perspective and can be seen as an expert's deontology *ensuing from social expectations* regarding competence, neutrality and objectivity.

These principles are intended to aid members of ABR/BVS in maintaining a professional level of ethical conduct related to radiation protection. They are to be regarded as guidelines. Members may use them to determine the propriety of their conduct in all relationships in which they are exercising their professional expertise.

The following guidelines should be understood in this context.

1. Members shall give priority to the protection of public health, including for future generations, to the safety, to the protection of the environment and to the development of the best available operational radiation protection. They may express views on political, economical, financial and liability matters but the health and safety considerations must always be clearly identifiable in their opinions, proposals, guidance and statements.
2. Members shall exercise their professional skill and judgment to the best of their ability and carry out their responsibilities with integrity.
3. Members shall not allow conflict of interest, management pressures or possible self-interest to compromise their professional judgment and advice, in particular when public welfare and safety are at stake. Members are invited to declare potential conflicts of interest and could, as appropriate, notify possible management pressures or actions in favour of the interests of their company, institution or professional organization.
4. Members shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons carrying out work done under their supervision or direction are competent, and not under undue pressure from workload or other causes.
5. Members shall not undertake any employment, function or consultation that is contrary to the public welfare or to the law.

6. Members shall not undertake professional duties in activities beyond their competence and/or qualifications.
7. Members shall strive for the maximum possible transparency towards society. However, where necessary, they shall protect the confidentiality of information obtained during the course of their professional duties, provided that such protection is not contrary to the public welfare or to the law.
8. Members shall ensure that relations with interested parties, other professionals and the general public are based on, and reflect, the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and fairness. They will commit themselves to communicate in a form unequivocal and appropriate to the target audience with the aim of facilitating correct interpretation. In particular, they shall make clear if there are uncertainties, value judgments or ethical issues, what these are exactly and what is at stake.
9. Members should strive to improve, and regularly assess in an appropriate way, their competence (professional knowledge, skills and attitudes). With this aim in view, they shall use adequate means to take into account all the available scientific information and to avoid inappropriate selection of the sources.
10. Professional reports, statements, publications or advice produced by members should be based on sound radiation protection principles and science, be accurate to the best of their knowledge, specifying uncertainty, and be appropriately attributed.
11. Members should, whenever practicable and appropriate, correct misleading, sensational and unwarranted statements by others concerning radiation and radiation protection.
12. Members should take advantage of opportunities to increase public understanding of radiation protection and of the aims and objectives of the ABR/BVS.