

**SPD Employee Continuing Education
Training Guides**



Ethics

**Prepared by the SPD Advisory Group
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**SUPPLY, PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION (SPD)
CONTINUING EDUCATION**

ETHICS

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

- **Discuss ethics**
- **Discuss professionalism**
- **Discuss moral, legal and ethical behavior**
- **Understand good patient relations**

**SUPPLY, PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION
CONTINUING EDUCATION**

ETHICS

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ETHICS

DEFINITIONS

Ethics, in general, encompass moral and legal behaviors and relates to doing the right thing at the right time and where your actions can withstand the most severe scrutiny.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionals are people who know how to perform their jobs correctly, always striving to do better and make the profession better in the process. A professional will consistently go beyond the immediate task and puts forth the best possible effort to meet the needs of the customer, department, and facility. A professional also knows what is expected and constantly meets or exceeds the standards. They communicate effectively with all persons involved in the process, are courteous, and have a genuine interest in the successful achievement of the department's goals and missions.

Excellent employee relationships with supervisors and co-workers are critical. The relationships should be built on mutual respect and concern for each other in all directions, supervisor to technician, technician to supervisor, supervisor to supervisor and technician to technician.

How employees get along with their supervisor will affect the success of the organization. A respect for the position is often expected; however, a respect for the person is more natural. Sometimes there will be friction for a variety of reasons, some of which may be related to positions or personality. Professional employees will recognize this and will work to resolve differences to the good of the organization. Central Service/Supply, Processing & Distribution (SPD) employees should realize that the "boss" may not be their buddy and must treat all employees equally regardless of his/her own personal feelings. Respect is necessary in every relationship for one to be successful on the job. Employees who obtain promotions, awards, and move more quickly up their career ladders usually have the respect of their peers and supervisors. Respect is earned if an employee:

- Cooperates - by working hard and following instructions
- Is dependable – follows through and completes tasks
- Has good manners – is respectful of others
- Works well with others

- Shows an interest in the job
- Has ambition – is willing to work hard to be successful
- Is loyal – supports the medical center, supervisors, co-workers, and employees.

Employee expectations – Employees have certain, reasonable expectations of their employer and the employer’s supervisors must assume the responsibility in meeting these expectations. Some of these expectations include:

- Earn pay for the work done
- Safe working conditions
- Training to include training necessary to obtain the skills to do the job and continuing education to maintain proficiencies
- Supervisory intervention to foster cohesive working relationships and conditions
- An explanation of policies, regulations, and rules
- A fair evaluation of performance
- Consistent, fair leadership

If an employee feels that these needs are not being met, the employee should discuss these issues with their supervisor. Below is a short quiz which explores how well an employee gets along with his/her supervisor. “Yes” responses suggest a positive relationship with your boss. You should examine “No” responses to see if problems are revealed which you can correct.

Yes No

1. Do I believe in and support my facility?
2. Do I always follow the policies, rules, and regulations?
3. Do I always do what my supervisor wants me to do even if I disagree?
4. Do I defend my facility, my supervisor, and co-workers to others?
5. Do I recognize that I am accountable for what I do and don’t do on the job?
6. Am I a contributing member of my team?
7. Do I respect and show loyalty to my supervisor?

MORAL BEHAVIOR

Central Service/SPD professionals provide goods and services to others; therefore, they must follow a professional role of behavior that protects close working relationships with others and the facility. The role includes three aspects of behavioral responsibility: moral, legal and ethical.

Moral behavior stated simply is knowing and doing the right thing. Usually your conscience can be your guide but if in doubt, discuss it with someone you know who is morally responsible. Our patients fully entrust us with their lives and each employee must be held accountable for their moral obligations. Employees may be tempted to take shortcuts which may adversely affect patient outcomes. This is morally wrong, all policies and procedures must be adhered to. Other examples of morally acceptable behavior include:

- Completion of assignments
- Following work schedules
- Maintain good attendance
- Adherence to policies and procedures
- Respect hospital property and resources
- Respect for others, their beliefs, customs, and ethnicity.

LEGAL BEHAVIOR

Legal behavior is determined by the authority of laws and one must never overstep the limitations of these responsibilities. Legal limitations are established to protect staff as well as patients. Central Service/SPD technicians will always be held legally responsible for their actions. Within the Central Service/SPD arena one must be acutely aware of their legal obligations. Many of the records are considered legal documents and may be used in a court case. All records must be complete, accurate, and readily available.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Ethical issues relate to what is right or wrong relative to the standards of conduct for your profession and institution. Ethical behavior has been receiving much attention recently as the healthcare industry has evolved. This evolution has placed more emphasis on financial and political issues as well as growth. Publicly funded entities such as the VA healthcare system receive much scrutiny and, therefore, requires the utmost in ethical behavior from all of its employees.

How does one decide if a proposed action is ethical? This is a difficult question and is not easily answered; however, if the following are considered, you will most usually come to the right decision:

- Is the proposed action legal?
- Does the proposed action hurt anyone?
- Is the proposed action fair?
- Am I being honest as I proceed with the proposed action?
- Will my conscience bother me?
- Would I be willing to publicize my decision?

To further help you to make ethical decisions, you may want to review the list below of common elements of organizational “code of ethics:”

- Privacy of Communication
- Conflict of Interest
- Political Contributions in U.S.
- Company Records
- Patient Confidentiality
- Gifts, Favors, Trips, etc
- Use of Company Assets
- Relations with Competitors
- Relations with Suppliers
- Relations with Customers (patients)

As you can see, you must embrace responsibility for your actions both personally and as you represent the employer. Employees who develop, foster, and practice a consistent ethical approach to their decisions and actions can feel good about themselves and will enjoy the respect of his/her peers. Unethical actions are ultimately revealed and the consequences can be devastating.

QUIZ - ETHICS

1. Circle below all which help to attain respect
 - a. Show ambition
 - b. Is loyal
 - c. Is credible
 - d. Is dependable

2. Circle below all which an employee can reasonably expect from employer
 - a. Fair play
 - b. Long lunch breaks
 - c. Fair evaluations
 - d. Overtime

3. A professional code should include which aspect of behavioral responsibility (circle all which apply)
 - a. Moral
 - b. Legal
 - c. Honorable
 - d. Ethical

4. Moral behavior relates to the basic principles of right and wrong.
T or F

5. Legal behavior is determined by authority of law.
T or F

6. Ethical behavior relates to right and wrong as it relates to the standards of conduct for one's profession.
T or F

7. Some actions can be excused or overlooked because healthcare organizations have become political and are fiscally more responsible.
T or F

8. You cannot be held personally/legally responsible for an unethical action because your employer has liability insurance.
T or F

9. Some elements of a well written code of ethics should include (circle all which apply):

- a. Patient confidentiality
- b. Relations with suppliers
- c. Relations with spouse
- d. Conflict of interest

10. To help determine if a proposed action is ethical, one should consider (circle all which apply):

- a. Will my conscience bother me?
- b. Is it legal?
- c. Will it hurt anyone?
- d. Is it fair?

ANSWER KEY – ETHICS

1. a,b,c,d
2. a,c
3. a,b,d
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. F
8. F
9. a,b,d
10. a,b,c,d