

# Codes of Conduct

## for Professionals working in the built environment

*Codes of professional conduct apply to members of professional institutions. They must comply with their code or face the prospect of disciplinary action and possible expulsion. In addition, they may also face loss of insurance cover. The text below is an amalgam of the core of the codes of some of the main UK built environment institutions, including the ICE, CIHT, IHE and RTPI, plus the Engineering Council. While there is considerable overlap in the codes, some may omit certain requirements whilst imposing others. For further information, please consult the relevant code of conduct. All are available on-line.*

Professionals **must** uphold the reputation of their profession and their institution

Professionals **must not** work in areas in which they are not competent. Competence includes keeping up-to-date with all relevant developments in the field of work being undertaken.

Professionals **must** ensure that any advice given is accurate, independent, unbiased and professionally sound. They **must not** knowingly mislead others in technical or professional matters. They **must not** offer advice beyond their area of competence.

Professionals **must** have due regard to

- (a) the wider public interest, including the health, safety and wellbeing of the public and of future generations,
- (b) the protection of the environment,
- (c) the lawfulness of the work being undertaken.
- (d) all relevant law, facts and published guidance.

Professionals **must** treat all persons fairly and with respect.

Professionals **must** accept responsibility for work carried out under their supervision.

Professionals **must** encourage continuing professional development in others, especially those for whom they have line management responsibility.

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## Actions to consider when requested by a client, employer, or authority to perform substandard work, or work which potentially would involve a breach of a code of professional conduct

Examples may include work that

- fails to reflect current industry best practice
- uses out of date or questionable standards
- potentially breaches a duty of care
- might lead to a breach of a statutory duty
- is unlawful.

These situations can be very difficult and a matter of degree. Professionals may wish to consider a range of actions such as to:

- establish a clear audit trail.
- advise the client or employer of their professional opinion, referencing current guidance, science or evidence
- check with their insurer that their insurance cover will continue to be valid.
- obtain a written indemnification from the employer or client, should this be necessary.
- contact their own institution for clarification and advice.

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## Insurance

Public liability and professional indemnity insurance policies require the insured party to take reasonable steps to avoid a claim.

To ensure that any PI claims can be successfully defended, it is important that practitioners can at all times demonstrate that they are in compliance with their professional codes of conduct, including only undertaking work which they are competent to do. Competence includes keeping up to date with all developments in the field. It is important to note that any adverse claims experience can lead to increased premiums/terms and, in some circumstances, result in the inability obtain PI cover. In the latter case this could render a practitioner unable to continue to practice.