

Professional Standards Overview

REALTOR® Code of Ethics

REALTORS® set themselves apart from real estate licensees by agreeing to observe a REALTORS® Code of Ethics which holds them to a higher standard of ethical conduct. The New River Valley Association of REALTORS® hears complaints from members and the public about possible violations of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics. Penalties for such violations can result in monetary fines, increased educational requirements, and suspension or loss of membership. The NRVAR cannot require REALTORS® to pay money to parties filing ethics complaints, award “punitive damages” for violations of the Code of Ethics, or suspend or revoke a real estate professional’s license. Complainants wishing to pursue these types of remedies should do so through the legal system or the appropriate licensing authority or regulatory or administrative agency. The primary emphasis of discipline for ethical lapses is educational. It is intended to create a heightened awareness of and appreciation for the duties that the Code imposes.

To File An Ethics Complaint:

Ethics Complaint Form and FAQs (see website)

2014 Code of Ethics (see website)

Here are some general principles to keep in mind as you begin the process:

- Ethics complaints must be filed with the appropriate REALTOR® association 180 days from the time a complainant knew (or reasonably could have known) that potentially unethical conduct took place.
- The REALTOR® Code of Ethics consists of seventeen (17) Articles. The duties imposed by many of the Articles are explained and illustrated through accompanying Standards of Practice or case interpretations.
- Your complaint should include a narrative description of the circumstances that lead you to believe the Code of Ethics may have been violated. Please be as specific as possible about the actions that the REALTOR® took or did not take that you believe were unethical.
- Your complaint must cite one or more of the Articles of the Code of Ethics that may have been violated by the actions (or inactions) you have identified as potentially unethical. Hearing Panels decide whether the Articles expressly cited in complaints were violated – not whether Standards of Practice or case interpretations were violated.

- When your complaint is received, all related case materials are forwarded to the Grievance Committee for their review. The Grievance Committee's responsibility is to determine if the allegations are taken as true, is there a possible violation of the Article(s) cited in the complaint.

Once you have completed the complaint form, narrative and supporting documentation should be forwarded to:

New River Valley Association of REALTORS®

125 Ponderosa Drive

Christiansburg, VA 24073

Fax: 540.381-9358

Email: william@nrvar.com