

# WQA Code of Ethics

PROMULGATED BY THE WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INDUSTRY



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The Water Quality Association is dedicated to promoting the highest principles of honesty, integrity, fair dealing and professionalism in the water quality improvement industry. It is equally dedicated to preserving the consuming public's right to quality water. This Code of Ethics sets standards of conduct for industry members in their dealings with their customers, among themselves, with members of related industries, and the public at large.

## OBLIGATIONS

### Industry Members *Shall*:

- Conduct themselves as informed, law-abiding citizens dedicated to ethical business practices.
- Be informed of and adhere to all laws, statutes, ordinances, codes, and regulations applicable to the industry including those dealing with restraint of trade, consumer protection, truth in advertising, truth in lending, intellectual property protection, selling, registration, sanitation and effluent and product disposal.
- Accurately represent credentials, training, experience and abilities of all employees and agents.
- Ensure that their products or services are properly applied, installed or maintained when they are responsible for such application, installation or maintenance.
- Inform customers of the general maintenance, service requirements and related costs of the products or services they have applied or installed.

## GOOD BUSINESS CONDUCT

### Industry Members *Should*:

- Respond in a timely and forthright manner to customer complaints.
- Provide for the availability of timely and competent installation and service for their products.
- Pursue the advancement of knowledge and skills utilized in the water quality improvement industry.
- Adhere to and promote the Code of Ethics.
- Build their business on the merits of their products, services and abilities.

## MARKETING GUIDELINES

These Marketing Guidelines provide a general framework in which more accurate and informative advertising and promotional material can be developed to avoid misleading consumers about the quality of publicly or privately supplied water, bottled water, or water quality improvement products or systems.

1. The word "product" as used in these Guidelines and Procedures includes publicly and privately supplied water, bottled water, and water quality improvement products and services or systems.
2. Product performance, benefits or other claims, either written or verbal, shall be based on factual data obtained from tests conducted by technically competent personnel utilizing verifiable scientifically valid test procedures. These data must be available in writing at the time such claims are made.
3. Accurately represent the source water supply, the performance of the water improvement process and the benefit of the products or services.
4. Those who develop or disseminate, either in writing or verbally, product marketing claims or materials, including packaging, labeling, and installation, operating or maintenance materials, shall make available reputable, verifiable, factual substantiation for those product marketing claims or materials.
5. Statements, either verbal or written, which are false, misleading, deceptive, fraudulent, or which deceptively disparage publicly or privately supplied water, bottled water, water quality improvement products or systems, or other competitors or competitive products, shall not be used.
6. Pictures, exhibits, graphs, charts or other portrayals used in product marketing shall not be used in a false, deceptive or misleading manner.
7. Sweeping, absolute statements, either verbal or written, shall not be made if they are false or not applicable in all situations.
8. It shall not be stated or implied that the water to which the word "pure" is applied is "pure," unless the word is clearly defined by the user or by regulation. In addition, words such as purification, purifier, healthy, safe, clean, clear and free of contaminants must be defined.
9. Terms and definitions, either written or verbal, shall be used in accordance with established definitions of those terms as published by WQA in the Knowledge Base Glossary that is made available to the public.
10. Advertisements or marketing materials and practices, either verbal or written, shall be true and accurate in their entirety. Not only shall each sentence or statement, standing alone and separately considered, be literally true, but the combined overall effect of the materials shall also be accurate and not misleading.
11. Facts shall not be omitted from product advertising or marketing material or practices if the result would be to mislead or to misrepresent.
12. Devices or techniques used to demonstrate the presence of hardness, chlorine, color, or other water characteristics of the water supply, shall not be used in sales presentations without, at the same time, accurately informing the consumer of their meaning and scope.
13. The words "warranty," "guarantee," or equivalent terms shall not be used verbally or in writing in connection with industry products unless such use meets the requirements of the United States Federal Trade Commission's Rule on Pre-Sale Availability of Written Warranty Terms, 16 CFR 702.1 et seq., effective December 31, 1975 and amended March 12, 1987 and September 15, 2016, and Guides for the Advertising of Warranties and Guarantees, 16 CFR 239.1 et seq., effective May 1, 1985 and corrected May 21, 1985, as they may be amended from time to time.
14. The composition of advertisements or other forms of product promotion materials shall be such as to minimize the possibility of being deceptive or misleading. Product performance or benefit claims shall not be placed in advertisements or promotional material or used in sales presentations to give the impression that they apply to additional or different merchandise when such is not the fact.
15. An asterisk may be used to direct attention to additional information about a word or term which is not in itself inherently deceptive. The asterisk or other referenced symbols shall not be used as a means of contradicting or substantially changing the meaning of statements or graphic portrayals.
16. Prior to an advertiser's publishing or otherwise using an endorsement or testimonial, the person whose endorsement is being used shall have previously made and approved the contents and given permission for the advertiser's use of the endorsement and such endorsement or testimonial should comply with the United States Federal Trade Commission's Amended Guides Concerning Use of Endorsements and Testimonial in Advertising, 16 CFR 255 et seq., effective July 26, 2023, including particularly as applicable to social media endorsements and online reviews.
17. Care should be taken when making environmental or "green" claims. It is deceptive to misrepresent -- directly or indirectly -- that a product offers a general environmental benefit. Advertisements or marketing materials and practices should qualify broad environmental claims -- or avoid them altogether -- to prevent deception about the specific nature of the benefit. In addition, statements should not imply significant environmental benefits if the benefit is not significant. Advertisements or marketing materials and practices in this respect shall comply with the United States Federal Trade Commission's Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims ("Green Guides"), 16 CFR 260 et seq. most recent amendments effective Oct. 1, 2012. The Green Guides currently are undergoing a regulatory review of proposed updates to the Green Guides that were expected to address emerging issues like "net zero," "carbon neutral," and advanced recycling technologies.