



Code of Conduct

Unless otherwise noted, section citations in this Code of Conduct reference [Marin County Board of Supervisors Ordinance 3824](#): An Ordinance of The County of Marin, State of California, Establishing the Civilian Oversight Commission and Office of Inspector General for Oversight of the Marin County Sheriff's Office.

Purpose

In November 2024, the Board of Supervisors established an independent community oversight structure for the Marin County Sheriff's Office with the goal of cultivating trust, transparency, and accountability, based on a foundation of the best practices in civilian oversight and oversight models for other jurisdictions nationwide.

This Code of Conduct is adopted pursuant to [Marin County Ordinance No. 3824](#) and reflects Marin County governance standards for boards and commissions.

Article I. Confidentiality and Conflicts

1. Confidentiality.

The Commission may receive confidential or sensitive information in the course of their duties. The Commission shall safeguard all confidential and privileged information they receive, including personnel, medical, and protected health records, in compliance with applicable laws and confidentiality requirements, as described in §2.37.050(2).

2. Conflicts.

- a. The Commission shall act with integrity, independence, fairness, transparency and respect for the public trust, consistent with the [County of Marin's Board and Commission Member Guide](#).
- b. In cases of actual or perceived conflicts, the Commission may recommend that the County Executive's Office retain outside legal counsel for a specific matter as described in section §2.37.050(3).
- c. Commissioners shall comply with the County of Marin Board and Commission Member Guide, including the County Code of Ethics and

conflict of interest guidance contained within the Guide and excerpted below.

Conflict of interest

As a commissioner, you will make, participate in, or influence government decisions. If these decisions impact your finances or financial interests, then you may have a conflict of interest.

To avoid biased decision-making or the appearance of corruption, public officials with conflicts of interest may not participate in that decision.

There are many conflicts of interest rules under the State's Political Reform Act. If you think you have a conflict of interest, we encourage you to speak with a County attorney.

There are 5 general types of conflicts of interest that may prevent you from participating in a decision:

1. **Business Entity.** A business entity in which the official has an investment of \$2,000 or more in which he or she is a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or manager.
2. **Real Property.** Real property in which the official has an interest of \$2,000 or more including leaseholds. (However, month-to-month leases are not considered real property interests.)
3. **Income.** An individual or an entity from whom the official has received income or promised income aggregating to \$500 or more in the previous 12 months, including the official's community property interest in the income of his or her spouse or registered domestic partner.
4. **Gifts.** An individual or an entity from whom the official has received gifts aggregating to \$520 or more in the previous 12 months.
5. **Personal Finances.** The official's personal finances including his or her expenses, income, assets, or liabilities, as well as those of his or her immediate family.

Source: County of Marin Board and Commission Member Guide [Code of Ethics](#) and [Conflict of Interest](#)

Article II. Public Statements & Representation

1. **Coordination of Official Communications.**

All official communications on behalf of the Civilian Oversight Commission, including media responses and public statements, are coordinated through the Secretary in consultation with the Chair. Commissioners should refer media inquiries regarding Commission business to the Secretary before responding in an official capacity. The role of Secretary shall be fulfilled by the Staff Liaison, unless

unavailable, in which case the Commission may appoint a Secretary to fulfill their duties as described in the Commission's Bylaws.

2. **Representing Commission Positions.**

Commissioners may communicate positions formally adopted by the Commission at a public meeting and shall not represent that the Commission has taken a position where it has not. When speaking publicly, Commissioners must clearly distinguish between Commission actions and their individual views.

3. **Personal Views.**

When expressing personal views, Commissioners should indicate they are speaking in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the Commission.

4. **Legal Compliance.**

All official communications related to Commission business must comply with applicable laws, including the Brown Act and California Public Records Act. Official written communications related to Commission business may constitute public records and must be retained and disclosed in accordance with applicable law.

5. **First Amendment Considerations.**

When using any platform to discuss Commission business, Commissioners should be mindful of constitutional free speech protections and seek guidance from County Counsel before restricting access or removing content.

Article III. Public Decorum & Orderly Conduct

The Commission encourages a respectful dialogue that supports freedom of speech and values diversity of opinion. Commissioners, members of the public, and participants shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner.

To ensure orderly and productive meetings:

1. **Addressing the Commission.**

All remarks during Commission meetings shall be addressed to the Commission as a body, not to individual Commissioners, staff, or the audience.

2. **Relevance of Comments.**

A speaker shall limit comments to the subject matter of the agenda item being heard or, if commenting during the general public comment period, to matters that are subject to the Commission's jurisdiction.

3. **Prohibited Conduct.**

Abusive, discriminatory or disruptive conduct is prohibited.

4. **Enforcement by the Chair.**

The Chair may take the following actions to maintain order:

- **Request Compliance** – Remind the individual of the rules and seek voluntary compliance
- **Issue a Warning** – Direct the individual to cease the conduct or they will be cut off, prohibited from speaking further, or asked to leave the meeting
- **Removal** – Request removal if the conduct persists
- **Call a Recess** – Call a recess if necessary to restore order

Article IV. Accountability and Enforcement

1. **Reporting Concerns.**

Concerns regarding compliance with this Code may be raised with the Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary.

2. **Disciplinary Action.**

The Commission may address concerns consistent with its Bylaws and applicable law. As detailed in the Commission Bylaws, a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to remove a member requires a two-thirds vote of a quorum of Commission members.

3. **Final Authority.**

Nothing herein limits the authority of the Board of Supervisors, which is the only body authorized to take formal action to remove a Commissioner.

ARTICLE V. Code of Conduct Amendments

1. **Amendment Procedure.**

Amendments may be proposed by any member and shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of the total membership.

2. **Board Approval.**

All amendments shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisors before becoming effective.

ARTICLE X. CERTIFICATION

Adopted by the Civilian Oversight Commission at a duly noticed meeting on _____.

Reviewed by County Counsel and approved by the Marin County Board of Supervisors on _____.

Chair
Vice Chair