

The Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association



Code of conduct

A code of conduct for members of
The Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association
operating as suppliers or manufacturers of fire protection
equipment and services

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The Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association
The Barn, Radcliffe Road, Gawcott, Buckingham, MK18 4AA
www.ifeda.org Tel: 0844 225 1800

Foreword and Introduction

This code of conduct is provided as a basis for guidance to all members in pursuance of their professional duties and as a means to set out minimum standards of good conduct with which all members are expected to comply.

At all times members shall conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring IFEDA or the profession into disrepute. The code of conduct is neither a wish list nor a set of aspirations. It is a code by which our members conduct their business, in the supply of products and the provision of service in the field of fire protection and prevention.

It is a condition of membership of IFEDA that once adopted; you agree to be bound by the conditions of this code of conduct.

This code of conduct constitutes the essential core principles on which IFEDA is founded – Provision of Quality Products and Services by Quality Approved Members operating to nationally recognized quality standards. IFEDA Members are committed to these principles and will demonstrate them by their actions.

In an industry which ultimately exists to protect life and property, this code serves to strongly reinforce the simple message that in '**Using an IFEDA Member**' not only demonstrates your compliance with the law but also assures you of proper professional standards of both service delivery and value.



Who and What are we?

The Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association (IFEDA) was formed in 1989 from the need to establish a representative body which promoted and championed nationally recognised quality standards of both products and service delivery within the UK fire protection industry.

IFEDA is the representative trade body for those companies engaged in supply of products and services within the field of fire protection and prevention. Our members provide vital products, service and professional advice to UK industry, commerce, and the general public, which has a sole purpose of protecting life and property.

Our commitment to transparent and nationally recognised standards of quality in service delivery has seen IFEDA being the first trade association within the fire industry to achieve ISO 9001 for its own activities, and to incorporate mandatory third party accreditation (ISO 9001) with BAFE approval as a condition of membership.

The Association continues to work to promote and raise the standards of ethical trading by its members by the adoption of this 'code of conduct' covering, in particular, the standards expected of a Member in its dealing with its customers.

The Association places considerable emphasis on ensuring that quality standards are adhered to at all times and has rights to investigate a member's business to ensure that the code is being followed.

Persistent or serious failure to comply with this code and its emphasis on ethical trading and delivery of quality service and products to its customers, render a member liable to expulsion from the Association.

The Association operates complaints and conciliation procedure for members and their customers.

Compliance with this 'code of conduct' is a condition of membership of the
Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association

**A full list of current Members is available from our website at www.ifeda.org
or by contacting the National office on 0844 225 1800**



Principles Standard Terms

Code of conduct

This code establishes principles of good practice for Members. It is intended to ensure that customers who obtain products or services from IFEDA Members have an absolute right to expect and receive the highest levels of service, honesty and integrity. In the event of a complaint the Association requires its members to operate a Customer Complaint procedure, which is aimed at ensuring that the complaint is handled promptly and efficiently with a conciliation service available to resolve any dispute.

Right of Inspection

The Association reserves the right to inspect and investigate all companies who apply for Membership. It also reserves the right to perform random inspections on existing members to ensure that the code of conduct is being fully adhered to and, in the event of serious or repeated failures, to terminate that membership.

Signage and logos

Customers should be able to easily identify those companies committed to upholding this IFEDA Code of conduct.

Members should (where appropriate) display the Association's approved logo on their premises, vehicles, documentation and stationery that is relevant to their type of operation.

Customers will therefore be able to identify easily those companies committed to upholding the code of conduct.

No company is permitted to display the logo or signage unless it is a Member, and the Association will take action against any person or organisation wrongfully claiming membership.

IFEDA places customers' interests at the heart of this code of conduct. Customers should be entitled, when using products or services supplied by an IFEDA Member, to do so with confidence.

IFEDA Members' commitment to the customer:

Members agree to give their customer's the following pledge and commitment when using their services or products:

Fair and Responsible Trading

- Conduct their business lawfully and comply with all relevant laws and judicial decisions and trade fairly and responsibly in all dealings with their customers;
- Follow any guidance notes that IFEDA issue, as appropriate;
- Help customers when they need any information and guidance;
- Behave at all times with honesty and integrity and endeavour to ensure that all other persons with whom the member has a commercial relationship behave similarly;
- Not, knowingly, misrepresent facts to a customer concerning any aspects of a fire regulations or products



Specific Terms Standards of Service

Ethical Trading

Customers using an IFEDA Member should have an absolute right to expect and to receive the highest levels of service, honesty and integrity. Members must conduct their business lawfully and comply with all relevant legislation, and trade fairly and responsibly.

Quotation and Pricing

Members will provide clearly the pricing and payment profiles and must ensure that this is identified on all quotations and other relevant correspondence. Members must adhere to the terms set out in the Consumer Credit Act and also adhere to any existing, or future, legislation relating to Consumer Credit and/or finance.

Product Description

Members will ensure that all equipment sourced and being offered to customers is to the current British and European specification and standards. Any variations must be clearly identified on all quotations and relevant correspondence with the customer.

Representation or Misleading Statement

Members must not knowingly misrepresent or give misleading information regarding either legal requirements or products and services supplied.

Terms of Business with Customers

Prior to undertaking any service works for a customer, all members must obtain consent or mandate from the customer by way of a service agreement. Members will ensure that this agreement provides their customers with clear terms of business and any details relating to fee structure. This agreement, should, ideally, be in written format but in the case of a long established business relationship a verbal understanding will be at the discretion of the member concerned.

Suitability of Product

Members shall undertake to offer advice best suited to the customer's specific need and requirement, and where appropriate only proceed to supply product and/or service that meets that requirement.

Operation of Business

1. Any vehicle or premises the member operates from shall be clearly signed (where appropriate) giving the company name and contact details. It is recognised that this may not always be appropriate i.e. the member is subcontracting for another establishment and the use of the member's signage and logos may imply (a) that the contractor is third party accredited when they are not and or (b) the agreement between the original contractor and customer has been superseded with the member now being responsible for the contract.

2. All premises and facilities, in which the member deals directly with customers shall provide a professional, disciplined and well-regulated appearance.

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3. All paperwork used by the member shall clearly give the company name and contact details and show accreditations held.

Health & Safety

All premises, facilities and working practices are to a standard, and are suitable, for the safety and well-being of themselves and their customers, together with any third party, taking into account any obligations they may have under the Health & Safety At Work Act 1974. This includes ensuring that the member, their workforce and all necessary equipment are covered by the appropriate insurance policy. This policy should be displayed at their place of work where it is visible to a customer and anyone who wishes to inspect it.

Training

It is a fundamental requirement of Association Membership that all personnel either directly or indirectly employed by a member are trained and certificated to nationally recognized levels of competency. A member must make available to any customer who so requests evidence of training certificates relating to any person or persons undertaking works for them.

Advertising

Members must ensure that all their advertising and literature contains no misleading or in-accurate statements and use their best endeavours to avoid such misleading statements and comply with the codes and standards set by the Advertising Standards Authority (which covers non-broadcast media), the Independent Television Commission and the Radio Authority.

Staff Access

Members must ensure that a copy of this code of conduct is distributed to all operating locations of the member and that all operational staff have a copy and proper understanding of the code.

Customer Access

Members agree to provide copies of this code to customers as and when requested.



Complaint Handling & Conciliation Procedure

The member will ensure that their staff are instructed in the handling of complaints and in their dealings with the customer. Staff should always adopt a friendly, positive approach and avoid a defensive or evasive attitude when handling a complaint.

Clear levels of authority must be established to ensure speedy and remedial action. A response to a complaint should be issued within five working days with an endeavour to resolve the dispute within fifteen working days. Customers should be advised that a complaints procedure exists, how to use it and what additional options are available.

All members must maintain a complete record of complaints from which an analysis of complaints about activities covered by the code can be obtained. Members should take action based on this information to improve their level of service to customers.

The majority of transactions can be performed to customers' satisfaction. The few that result in a complaint can usually be resolved quickly and amicably. A small minority produces problems due to misunderstandings or a breakdown in communication. A conciliation procedure therefore exists to help resolve those disputes that cannot be quickly settled.

Procedures

- Unresolved disputes may be referred to the Association by the customer and/or the Member involved. Details should be submitted in writing to:
The General Manager, The Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association, The Barn, Radclive road, Gawcott, Buckingham MK18 4AA
- All relevant details will be promptly forwarded by the General Manager to the appropriate Conciliation Committee, a committee whose members are appointed by the National Management Committee of the Association.
- Disputes referred to a Conciliation Committee shall be actioned and its decision notified to the customer by the Association within 30 working days from the referral of the dispute to the Conciliation Committee.

Scope of Conciliation

- Conciliation procedures shall apply solely to matters arising out of the trading practice of a Member or Members in line with those areas specifically covered by this 'code of conduct'

Members agree to observe the principles of this code of conduct aimed at protecting the interest of all customers by ensuring that the level of services provided are of the highest possible standards.

No Restriction of Rights

Nothing in this Code restricts, nor is intended to restrict, the rights of a complainant, or a Member, to pursue remedies through the courts.

