



CODE OF ETHICS

The following rules and Code of Ethics are incorporated into the By-Laws of the Southeastern Association of Forensic Document Examiners:

Members shall conduct themselves in a manner to reflect credit upon this profession. To that end each member shall pledge himself/herself to conform to the Code of Ethics of the Southeastern Association of Forensic Document Examiners.

AIMS AND IDEAS

The Southeastern Association of Forensic Document Examiners has for its purpose the promotion of justice through the discovery and proof of the facts relating to questioned documents, and to maintain and advance the technical and ethical standards of the profession of questioned document examination.

APPLICATION

In furtherance of these aims and ideals each member of this organization pledges himself/herself to abide by the following rules of conduct:

1. To apply the principles of science and logic in the solution of all document problems and to follow the truth courageously wherever it may lead.
2. To keep informed on all new developments and processes in document examination by constant study and research, with a full realization that accuracy is possible only through competence.
3. To treat information received from a client as confidential; and when a matter has already been undertaken, to refuse to perform any services for any person whose interests are opposed to those of the original client, except by express consent of all concerned, or where required by established administrative procedure or by law.
4. To render an opinion or conclusion strictly in accordance with the physical evidence in the document, and only to the extent justified by the facts. To admit frankly that certain questions cannot be answered because of the nature of the problem, the lack of material, or insufficient opportunity for examination.
5. To act at all times both in and out of court in an absolutely impartial manner and to do nothing that would imply partisanship or any interest in the case except the proof of the facts and their correct interpretation.
6. To give the best possible service in all cases, irrespective of the importance of the matter, and to decline to act in any case in which surrounding circumstances seriously restrict adequate examination.
7. To charge for services, when serving as a consultant, on a basis which considers the extent and character of services rendered, the importance of the matter, and the relationship of the problem submitted to the controversy as a whole. Remuneration shall be fair and equitable considering all the elements in the case. No engagement shall be undertaken on a contingent fee basis. Members employed by public agencies under an annual salary or contract shall be controlled in respect to monetary matters by policies within their organizations.
8. To make technically correct and conservative statements in all written or oral reports, testimony, public address, or publications, and to avoid any misleading or inaccurate claims.
9. To maintain a constant spirit of fairness, combined with high ethical, educational and technical standards, thereby promoting justice and creating increased confidence in the profession of document examination; and by exemplary conduct and scientific thoroughness carry out the aims and ideals of this organization.