



VRMA Code of Conduct & Harassment Policy

Code of Conduct Policy against Discrimination and Harassment for Members and Event Attendees

The open exchange of ideas and the freedom of thought and expression are central to the VRMA's aims and goals. These require an environment that recognizes the inherent worth of every person and group, that fosters dignity, understanding, and mutual respect, and that embraces diversity. For these reasons, VRMA is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for all participants at our events and in our programs.

This Policy applies to all VRMA-related activities, including any conferences, symposiums, meetings or other events sponsored, co-sponsored, or cooperating with VRMA. This Policy also applies to communications sent through official communication channels for any such activity or event, including social media, emails, webinars, etc.

This Policy applies only to conduct in which the complaining party is a Member and/or Event Attendee or Attendee Guest and the subject of the complaint is a Member and/or Event Attendee or Attendee Guest. If a complaint is made by or against any VRMA employee, that complaint will be addressed under VRMA's employee policy against discrimination and harassment.

Discriminatory Harassment

VRMA prohibits discrimination and conduct that constitutes or could lead or contribute to harassment because of an individual's race or color, religion or creed, alienage or citizenship status, national origin, age, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, disability, marital or domestic partnership status, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law in the city or state in which the conduct at issue occurs. VRMA also prohibits other harassment - including bullying - rising to the level of persistent, malicious, and severe mistreatment by conduct or threats, intimidation, or abuse that has the effect of (i) substantially interfering with a Member or Event Attendee's participation in VRMA-related activities or (ii) that would reasonably cause a Member or Event Attendee to fear for his or her physical safety."

Examples of prohibited discriminatory harassment include, but are not limited to:

- use of ethnic slurs or derogatory terms relating to an individual's gender or sexual orientation;
- distribution of racially or sexually offensive e-mail or other electronic communications; and/or
- threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts directed at a particular sex or religious group or directed at an individual because of his or her sexual orientation, color or ethnicity.

Harassment does not require intent to offend. Thus, inappropriate conduct or language meant as a joke, a prank, or even a compliment can lead or contribute to harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific type of discriminatory harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature can constitute sexual harassment.

VRMA prohibits conduct that constitutes or could lead or contribute to sexual harassment. Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to:

- unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions;
- inappropriate touching of an individual's body;
- graphic verbal comments about an individual's body or appearance;
- sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; and/or
- the use of the Internet to display or distribute sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons.

Complaint Procedures and Remedial Actions

If you believe that you or any Member or Event Attendee has been subjected to any conduct of the type prohibited by this Policy by another Member or Event Attendee, you are urged to report the relevant facts promptly. If your personal safety is threatened or you have been the victim of criminal conduct, you should contact the police or, as applicable, facility security. Otherwise, if the conduct at issue occurs at a VRMA conference, you should direct such reports to a chair of the event or, alternatively, you may direct reports to members of VRMA staff or VRMA's Board of Directors, depending on which individual you feel more comfortable contacting under the circumstances.

Depending on the circumstance, and at the discretion of the VRMA President & Executive Director, the Board of Directors (or its designees) will review complaints and follow-up accordingly. The Board of Directors will make a final, binding decision regarding whether this Policy has been violated and the consequences of any such violation. VRMA will strive to keep the identity of individuals making reports as confidential as possible.

Individuals who violate this Policy may be subject to remedial action, up to and including without limitation suspension and termination of their membership in VRMA and exclusion from participating in future VRMA conferences or activities. Appropriate remedial action will also be taken with respect to an individual who knowingly makes a false allegation concerning an alleged violation of this Policy or makes a complaint under this Policy in bad faith.

No Retaliation

Threats or acts of retaliation against individuals who report inappropriate conduct pursuant to this Policy or provide information in connection with a report by another individual will not be tolerated. In the event you believe that you have been retaliated against for such action, you should use the above procedures to report the pertinent facts promptly. VRMA will investigate and take appropriate action in the manner described above.

Disclaimer

This Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy is a voluntary expression of the views and intentions of VRMA with respect to harassment and other objectionable behavior. VRMA assumes no liability or responsibility for the actions of any Member, Event Attendee, or Attendee Guest. VRMA is not responsible for protecting or assuring the well-being of any Member, Event Attendee, or Attendee Guest. This Policy does not create or acknowledge any legal obligations of VRMA.