



# Outdoor Service Guides

## Conflict Resolution Process

### 1. Purpose

This document establishes a structured process for resolving conflicts within the Outdoor Service Guides. It aims to handle all disputes involving board members, staff, volunteers, or members fairly, respectfully, and transparently, aligning with OSG's commitment to inclusivity and mutual respect.

### 2. Scope

This process applies to conflicts that arise within the scope of OSG activities and operations. It covers disagreements over policy interpretations, procedural disputes, interpersonal conflicts among members, and grievances related to organizational decisions.

### 3. Principles

- **Fairness:** The organization will treat all parties involved in a conflict justly, making decisions based on a balanced view of all information and perspectives.
- **Confidentiality:** The organization will keep details of the conflict and the parties' identities confidential outside of the Board and the Personnel Committee to protect privacy and prevent reputational harm.
- **Impartiality:** The organization will address all conflicts without bias. Any member of the conflict resolution team or board with a conflict of interest must recuse themselves.
- **Timeliness:** The organization will resolve conflicts expeditiously to prevent escalation and maintain harmony.

### 4. Personnel Committee

This committee will be responsible for receiving, reviewing, and resolving issues from organization members, as outlined in section 5, Conflict Resolution Process. The Organization, through this Committee, will make its best good faith efforts to resolve any conflict in accordance with the goals of: 1) promoting diversity and equity within the organization; and 2) compliance with all federal and state laws regarding discrimination.

**a. Committee Membership**

The Personnel Committee will consist of three (3) members, identified by the Board of Directors. Should an identified member be unable to carry out their responsibilities as a member of the committee, or resign their duties in that position, the Board of Directors will identify another member to take their place.

**b. Committee Membership Term**

The term for Personnel Committee members will be two (2) years, after which new nominations will be requested from the general membership and the Board will select the members for the next term from those nominations.

**c. Conflict of Interest**

If one of the members of the Personnel Committee is a party to a filed complaint, that member must recuse themselves from participation on the Committee. If this occurs, the remaining Personnel Committee members will reach out to select a replacement representative, keeping in mind Committee Composition (see 4c).

**d. Training**

Prior to reviewing any complaints, Personnel Committee members will undergo training on mediation techniques and conflict resolution as outlined in Section 7 to ensure an impartial review and decisions resulting from this process.

**5. Conflict Resolution Process****Step 1: Issue Identification**

- One or more parties involved in the conflict must submit a written complaint or request an in-person session with the OSG Personnel Committee, detailing the nature of the issue, the parties involved, and any relevant documentation or evidence.

**Step 2: Initial Assessment**

- The Personnel Committee will review the complaint within 30 days and determine the appropriate next steps. Depending on the complexity and severity of the issue, this may involve direct mediation or escalation to a conflict resolution committee.

**Step 3: Mediation**

- After reviewing the complaint, the Personnel Committee, using an external mediator or other selected neutral party, will schedule and facilitate a mediation session within 60 days of the initial complaint being filed. The goal is to reach a voluntary, negotiated agreement.
- Should the committee be unable to find a time that works for everyone within the 60 day window, the timeline may be extended with the agreement of both parties.
- Any communications made exclusively during or for the mediation process shall be confidential. Administrative aspects, such as the selection of the mediator and scheduling of the mediation session, and a final report of outcomes will be shared with the Board.
- The parties to the complaint may not disclose discussions or other communications with the mediator unless all parties agree, because it is required by law, or because otherwise confidential communications are relevant to a complaint against the mediator arising out of the mediation.
- The mediator will document the outcomes, which both parties and the mediator will sign.
- Upon completion, the mediator will provide a copy of the documented outcomes to the Board for review before its next meeting.

**Step 4: Conflict Resolution**

- In the event that mediation is unsuccessful or should one or more parties refuse mediation, the Personnel Committee will undertake a conflict resolution process within 90 days of the initial complaint being filed.
- The Personnel Committee will gather facts, interview involved parties, and review all submitted materials relevant to the conflict, then meet to discuss and make a determination.
- Conflict Resolution Committee Meetings shall be closed and any communication made during or for the conflict resolution process shall be confidential, with the exception of administrative aspects, including scheduling and holding of sessions and the final report of outcomes, which will be shared with the Board.

**Step 5: Decision Making and Outcomes**

- The Personnel Committee will make a determination based on the information gathered and create a report to present to the Board for review prior to their next meeting.

- The report will document all decisions and the rationale behind them, as well as including recommendations for next steps. Copies of the report will be provided to both parties as well as the Board.
- Recommendations may include disciplinary actions, policy changes, or other measures necessary to resolve the conflict and prevent future occurrences.
- The board will vote at its next meeting on any motions resulting from the report provided by the Personnel Committee.

**Step 6: Appeals Process**

- If any of the individuals involved, or any member of the Personnel Committee, feels the conflict was not resolved in a satisfactory manner, they may appeal the committee's decision to the board of directors within 30 days of receiving the final report. Appeals must be based on either a procedural error or new previously unavailable evidence.
- The Board of Directors, excluding any members who served on the Personnel Committee and engaged in Conflict Resolution, will hear the appeal and make a final determination.

**6. Documentation**

The organization must document and securely store information on all conflicts and resolutions. This documentation will include details of the complaint, steps taken during the resolution process, final decisions, and outcomes.

**7. Training**

The organization will provide training on the conflict resolution process to all Personnel Committee Members, Board Members, and other key personnel to ensure consistency and effectiveness. This may be completed as an internal training or auditing an external course<sup>1</sup>, but will consist of at least 3 hours of training time covering topics such as deescalation techniques, active listening, building collaborative solutions, and creating an action plan.

**8. Review and Amendments**

The board will review this document annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant. Any board member can propose amendments, which must receive a majority vote for approval.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coursera.org/learn/conflict-resolution-skills>