



**RECOMMENDED Code of Behavior for
Competitive Anglers in Ontario**

November 2008

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for
Competitive Anglers in Ontario
(Revised April 19, 2007)

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1. BACKGROUND

- a. *The Recommended Code of Behavior for Competitive Anglers in Ontario has been created by the Ontario Competitive Fishing Council as a tool for organizers of competitive fishing events. Organizers may use the template as a means to hold competitors to a high standard. It is necessary to define acceptable behaviors, to promote high standards of practice, to provide a benchmark for competitive anglers to use for self-evaluation and to establish a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities.*

2. CODE OF BEHAVIOR STATEMENT

A competitive angler should:

- a. understand that the opportunity to compete in a competitive fishing event is a privilege and a responsibility. As competitors they are representatives and ambassadors for competitive fishing. They should practice high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation and should conduct themselves in a manner that is a credit to themselves, fellow competitors, recreational anglers, the sport, the event, the sponsors of the event and the sportfishing industry.
 - b. respect the environment, the resource, other resource users, the fishery, recreational anglers, other competitive anglers, fishing event staff, event officials and event organizers.
 - c. comply with federal, provincial, state and local fish, wildlife, conservation, and boating regulations as well as competitive fishing event rules in a safe manner.
 - d. value and respect not only the fish they hope to catch but also the entire aquatic ecosystem that the fish live in. They should avoid spilling, and never dump, any pollutants, such as gasoline and oil, into the aquatic environment. They should dispose of all trash, including fishing lines, lures, leaders, and hooks, in appropriate containers, and help keep fishing areas litter-free. They should take precautionary measures necessary to prevent the spread of invasive species into non-native habitats.
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- e. acknowledge that they share in the use of these resources with many other user groups who also value the opportunities that lakes and rivers offer. Maximum courtesy and consideration should be expected while boating and angling in the vicinity of other resource users and their property, including docks, boathouses and marine vessels of all types. They should respect property rights, and should never trespass on private lands or waters. They should take responsibility for any damage or injury they may cause.
 - f. should follow, in a manner respectful of other outdoor enthusiasts, safe boating practices. They should exercise boating courtesy and launch ramp etiquette.
 - g. handle fish with care and release those they do not want or must let go promptly. They should maintain fish in live wells with the utmost care to facilitate successful live release at the end of the competitive fishing event.
 - h. maintain integrity in all their relationships, particularly with other competitors. They should report illegal or unethical behavior by other competitors to the appropriate authority promptly. No competitor should make false or misleading statements regarding other competitors or any aspect of tournament operations.
 - i. abide by final decisions made by event officials.
 - j. communicate in an honest manner. Personal accomplishments should be truthfully related. Anglers should not solicit support in the form of goods, services or financial rewards with statements that are not accurate.
 - k. interact with the media, the public, the outdoor industry and sponsors with integrity, propriety, honesty and accuracy.
 - l. become involved in and stay informed about local and provincial fisheries management decisions and conservation projects, should participate with youth fishing activities, practice ethics and sportsmanship, and be the best possible “fishing” teachers by sharing fishing knowledge and skills.
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