

Working Draft: RIPE Code of Conduct: Process and Consequences (v5)

Status of This Document

This is an initial working draft based on the Python and Mozilla documents. RIPE NCC staff have updated an initial draft provided by the TF chair.

This is a draft document prepared by the Code of Conduct Task Force for review by the RIPE community. It is based on similar documents developed by the Python and Mozilla communities.

Introduction

This document describes the process to be followed by the Code of Conduct (CoC) Team when handling reports. The same process applies equally to everyone who participates within the RIPE community.

Relation Between the Code of Conduct Team and others within RIPE

Everyone who organises activities or fills a role within the RIPE community has a responsibility to make sure that people understand what is appropriate behaviour. However, only the CoC Team is responsible for handling reports and making decisions about outcomes.

WG chairs are responsible for their respective mailing lists and WG sessions in a proactive way. In contrast, the role of the CoC Team is a reactive one – it will only act once a report has been submitted. As this is likely to be more complicated in practice, establishing who has the final authority in every case does not seem helpful. Instead, it is expected that the WG chairs and the CoC Team will liaise as needed and that the two groups will maintain a cooperative relationship.

Process Steps

This section describes the steps the CoC Team will take when handling reports.

1. Report is Submitted

People can submit reports electronically or in person. They will receive confirmation that the CoC Team has received their report and it is being reviewed. When a report is made in-person, the CoC Team member who receives the report will make sure it is properly entered into the system.

The member of the CoC that receives a report will be responsible for forming an assessment group to handle the report. The purpose of this triage step is to make sure the report is not seen by more people than necessary.

2. Assessment Group is Formed

This smaller group should consist of three people: two members of the CoC Team and one RIPE NCC staff member who is appropriately qualified. The member of the CoC Team who initially received the report would preferably be one of the two CoC Team members in this group.

Before assessing a report, CoC Team members will consider whether there are potential conflicts of interest. Reviewing the names of the people involved should be enough to determine whether this is the case. Any members of the assessment group who see a potential conflict of interest will recuse themselves so that someone else can take their place.

3. Report is Assessed

Depending on the nature of the report, elements of the assessment process may include (but are not limited to):

- Obtaining reports from witnesses
- Reviewing any relevant materials (photos, videos, screenshots, messages, emails, etc)
- Contacting the subject of the report to hear their side of the story
- Group discussion and evaluation of the evidence
- Consultation with others as appropriate

The role of the RIPE NCC staff member in the group is to provide administrative and legal support to the volunteers on the CoC Team as needed. Members of the CoC Team will do their best to be discreet when assessing reports.

4. Decision is Made

Once the assessment group feels that it properly understands the reported incident, it will decide whether it represents a breach of the Code of Conduct. If the group believes that a breach has taken place, it will agree on a course of action.

When deciding on the appropriate actions, the group will consider a range of factors, such as the severity of the breach, its impact on others, and any past incidents involving the same person.

In cases where the group believes that strong consequences should be applied, such as expelling someone from a RIPE Meeting, it may notify or seek input from other parties, such as the RIPE NCC's Events Team or Legal Department. However, while it might seek input from other parties, only the assessment group is responsible for making a final decision.

Once the group has made its decision, the relevant parties will be notified of the outcome as appropriate. In all cases, both the person who made the report and the subject of the report should be informed.

In all cases, the RIPE Chair Team and the RIPE NCC will be informed of a decision by the CoC Team before it is implemented.

5. Required Actions Are Taken

Once the assessment group has decided on next steps, it will arrange for them to be implemented as soon as is practical and appropriate. Depending on the outcome, the RIPE NCC may need to take certain actions and the staff member who supported the investigation group will be responsible for making sure this is done. They will report back to the CoC Team as appropriate.

People who dispute the outcome of a report can contact the CoC Team to make an appeal. In this instance, a different group of CoC Team members must review the case. The request for an appeal will probably not prevent certain consequences from being applied. For example, someone who is ordered to leave the RIPE Meeting will not be able to remain at the meeting while their appeal is being considered.

6. Evaluation is Recorded

The RIPE NCC will record both reports and evaluations in a system that allows it to maintain appropriate records and manage any consequences, such as mailing list bans.

The RIPE NCC will provide the CoC Team with information based on past reports. This will help it to identify patterns of behaviour relating to individuals when deciding on which actions to apply. It will also provide the CoC Team with statistics that help it to identify trends affecting the community as a whole.

The RIPE NCC will ensure that all information is stored and processed according to the relevant European data protection regulations. In cases of minor breaches, personal data will be held for 12 months. In cases of major breaches, personal data will be held for 24 months. In cases where actions taken exceed 24 months, then personal data will be held only for as long as such actions must be maintained.

It will also provide statistics that can be shared with the RIPE community for transparency and to identify trends. For example, the number of reports submitted over a certain period, report categories, percentage of reports upheld, and summary of consequences applied.

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Potential Consequences of Breaching the CoC

This section outlines some of the possible actions that may be taken as a result of breaching the RIPE Code of Conduct. It is important to be clear that these are all examples and these are not definitive lists. This is especially the case as not every form of participation is described, such as interactions via instant messaging or at virtual events. Both lists are ordered on a scale from least to most serious.

When deciding where on this scale a specific case belongs, the Code of Conduct Team will consider a number of different factors, such as whether that person has done anything similar in the past and how they have affected others. The CoC Team are empowered by the RIPE community to apply their best judgement when selecting a consequence for an action.

Meeting Sessions and Social Events

1. Asked to apologise
2. Removed from the room for a period of time to allow emotions to settle
3. Removed from the room for the remainder of a session
4. Removed from the meeting venue for the day
5. Removed from the social event for the remainder of the event
6. Removed from the meeting venue for the remainder of the meeting
7. Not allowed to attend future events for a period of time
8. Permanently banned from attending RIPE events

Note: in the case of virtual events, consequences would roughly correspond to their real-world equivalent. For example, someone might be asked to leave a conference call to calm down rather than leaving a physical room.

Mailing List

1. Asked to apologise
2. Publicly told not to repeat a kind of post
3. Temporary ban from posting to the list
4. Permanent ban from posting to the list
5. Temporary ban from posting to any RIPE mailing list
6. Permanent ban from posting to any RIPE mailing list

Loss of Community Role

The procedures to remove people from various roles within the community are covered in the relevant RIPE Documents. The CoC Team does not have any additional powers in this regard, and so this is not a consequence it can apply. However, it may be the case that a

person is no longer able to carry out their role after other consequences have been applied following a serious breach of the CoC, such as being banned from mailing lists or prevented from attending RIPE events.