



HERMOSA BEACH MUSEUM

Code of Ethics

*Updated: October 2022, September 2024, June 28, 2025
Approved by Board of Directors: September 12, 2024*

Hermosa Beach Museum
710 Pier Avenue
Hermosa Beach. CA 90254

ETHICS CODE ORIENTATION & BACKGROUND

The Hermosa Beach Museum (HBM) established a Code of Ethics for the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and all other personnel. It is intended to act as a guide of conduct for the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and all other personnel in ensuring that all conduct their official business with social responsibility that encourages public trust.

The HBM is firmly committed to excellence and integrity in governance, management, operations and dealing with the public.

The HBM is accountable to the public and responsible for the stewardship of its collection, programs and property.

The HBM is dedicated to making sure all members of the personnel are informed about the Code of Ethics, understand how it is applied, and are committed to compliance. All HBM policies, bylaws and related documentation will comply with The Code of Ethics.

The HBM Code of Ethics is approved by the Board of Directors and reviewed periodically and updated if needed; furthermore The Code is used as a standard to measure individual conduct and used to inform decision making regarding the HBM.

MISSION

The mission of the HBM is to engage, delight, and educate the community through the presentation and exploration of history.

VISION STATEMENT

Embracing the future to better preserve the history of Hermosa Beach, making it accessible to the world.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

All personnel comply with all applicable City, State and Federal laws; furthermore compliance with all applicable regulations and international conventions is required.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors:

- Commitment to the administration of the HBM as a public trust
- Encourage HBM volunteers and STAFF to understand the HBM Mission and public trust responsibilities

- Uphold and adhere to the HBM Code of Ethics, HBM Personnel Policy and HBM Bylaws
- Execute legal, fiduciary, ethical, and operational governance
- Initiate, revise and approve museum policies
- Verify that professional standards and practices as defined by the AAM (American alliance of Museums) are understood and upheld
- Verify that HBM work environment is professional and based on equality
- Resolve issues and disagreements in a fair and equitable way, in the best interest of the HBM
- Establish strategies to obtain goals and monitor their progress
- Raise funds to provide adequate financial support for the HBM
- Elect Board Members who can enhance and compliment Board leadership
- Complete and submit to the Executive Committee a self evaluation on an annual basis

Duties of the Board of Directors:

- Represent and promote the HBM
- Approve policies and governing documents
- Approve the budgeting for and creation of STAFF positions
- To be well informed and prepared to actively participate in Board deliberations
- Maintain active HBM Donor Membership while serving on the Board
- Attend all Board Meetings unless excuse is submitted in advance

The HBM Executive Committee oversees high level, confidential, or time-sensitive matters concerning the operation of the HBM and staff.

STAFF

The HBM currently has three paid staff positions that are responsible for museum operations and personnel.

Director & Curator (full-time): The Director & Curator is directly responsible for all museum collections management, permanent and temporary museum displays and a variety of high-level administrative needs. This person oversees and performs a variety of clerical and administrative duties to support the needs of the HBM staff, volunteers and members. The Director & Curator reports directly to the President of the Board of Directors. This position involves a significant amount of trust and responsibility. It is the moral obligation of this position to execute and uphold the Policy and Procedures of the HBM at all times and during all activities related to the HBM and training of HBM

personnel. Volunteers report to the Director & Curator for various activities and their direction.

Director & Curator or anyone working in such a capacity will agree to and abide by the AAM Curators Code of Ethics.

Refer to AAM Curators Code of Ethics.

Program & Education Manager (full-time): The Program & Education Manager is directly responsible for the development, planning, set up, and execution of all events at the HBM including but not limited to in-house educational events, facility reservations, and co-hosted events. This position maintains the HBM Master Calendar of Events & Meetings, and leads/monitors the Docent Program. The Program & Education Manager will also perform a variety of administrative tasks to support the staff and volunteer HBM personnel. This position reports directly to the Director & Curator. Event and docent volunteers work directly with the Program & Education Manager.

Registrar (part-time): The Registrar will be responsible for managing the collections & archives, performing inventories, assisting with collections documentation, managing Collections Storage Areas, and working collaboratively with HBM staff & volunteers for upcoming exhibits and programming needs. This position reports directly to the Director & Curator.

All staff employees are encouraged to participate in activities that do not interfere with the regular discharge of official duties and are related to professional development, community service, or other historically motivated missions.

Any employee of the HBM currently engaged in outside secondary employment must disclose this employment to the HBM President in writing. This document will be kept on file. Outside employment must not prevent the staff member from properly executing the HBHS job description. Outside employment shall not be undertaken while traveling or actively working at the expense of the HBHS.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of the HBM to provide equal opportunity for all persons and to prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, marital status, veteran status, military service, medical condition, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, age or other legally protected characteristics in every aspect of personnel policy and practice in employment, development, advancement, and treatment of volunteers. The HBM recognizes that it is not enough to proclaim that it does not discriminate and that it must in good faith actively strive to build a community in which opportunity is equalized.

PERSONNEL PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Personnel are defined as all HBM individuals involved in the operation of the HBM, including Staff, Board Members, Docents, and Volunteers.

All personnel are responsible for being aware of the policies and procedures that address conduct. The HBM will make policies and procedures and their updated versions available to all personnel.

The HBM has an ethical responsibility to have fair personnel policies, procedures and enforcement of such throughout the entire institution. Rights and responsibilities of all personnel will be clearly communicated, documented and available.

Use of the HBM property without express written permission by the Executive Committee or HBM Director & Curator is prohibited.

All HBM personnel will act with honesty, responsibility and be forthcoming with any information that is relevant and/or important to the HBM Staff or Board of Directors.

All persons acting as representatives of the HBM act in good faith in all agreements and strive to provide excellent customer and public service.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The HBM personnel shall at all times refrain from promoting or advertising any political entities, appointments or candidates while representing the HBM on-site or for an offsite function. They shall not use any political endorsement or promise in connection with any appointment or garner any political activity, contributions or favor while representing the HBM.

If HBM personnel are planning to run for political office or a public position, they must inform the Executive Committee as soon as possible in order to prevent a conflict of interest or the appearance of one.

HBM personnel shall not subject any other personnel to discrimination based on their expressed views.

This section does not deny any personnel any civil or political liberties as guaranteed by the United States and California Constitutions. The individual must make it clear that they are not representing the HBM when engaging in political activities.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

The online world of social media is ever changing, and therefore, this policy will be reviewed accordingly as necessary. The HBM shall be kind and friendly in our online interactions.

Complaints or concerns will be reviewed by the HBM Director & Curator and presented to the President. HBM personnel, when posting on behalf of the HBHS or on their personal channels, will operate under the mentality that online postings may exist forever in some form.

Social Media use on Behalf of the HBM:

Content shared from an HBM account or published online on behalf of the HBM must be in alignment with the HBM Mission and Code of Ethics policies. Content must be approved by the Director & Curator, who may at times seek guidance from the President. The Director & Curator will have access to any and all online accounts associated with the HBM, and must have high level/ admin access (so as to be able to remove any illicit comments or posts as needed on the spot). Any other personnel who post on behalf of the HBM may only have access to these accounts if approved by the Director & Curator or President.

Personal Social Media Channel Use:

HBM personnel shall not share any images of any collections items currently in storage or storage facilities online via social media channels without permission from the Director & Curator. HBM personnel frequently share activities, events, and upcoming programs at the HBM online via their personal social media channels. This is acceptable. However, the content shared must be from the original posting as shared by HBM STAFF and approved by the HBM Director & Curator to assure that information and messaging is correct. If HBM personnel share any content they have created themselves online that may be attributed to the HBM, a disclaimer must be provided similar to: *These opinions are mine and do not represent the views of the HBM.*

GIFTS, FAVORS, DISCOUNTS AND PERSONAL DISPENSATIONS

No one representing HBM, including the Board of Directors, Staff, volunteers or other personnel, can accept gifts, bribes, political contributions, favors, discounts and/or personal dispensations while serving in their professional or volunteer capacity.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Personnel must avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest can arise if a gift, favor, discount or personal dispensation is received and the HBM is expected to reciprocate the compensation. When the potential for a conflict of interest to occur has been identified, all personnel (Staff, Board members or volunteers) are expected to make a full disclosure to the HBM President in writing, and the President shall disclose the issue to the Executive Committee so as to make a decision in the best interest of the HBM.

The HBM personnel will refrain from promoting their own businesses, services, or products at the HBM, or using any online resources connected to the HBM.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Refer to the HBNH Collections Management Policy for further detail beyond excerpts included here.

The collections of the HBM are at the core of its mission in its service to the general public. It is the HBM's highest ethical obligation to protect the physical integrity and safety of the collection. The HBM Staff is accountable for the safekeeping of the collection and collection records. The stewardship of collections includes public trust, suitable management, accurate interpretation and the highest standard conservation and care possible.

The HBM will work to ensure that the collection in its care is properly documented, preserved, conserved, cared for, displayed, interpreted and managed; this includes maintenance of the facility the collection is housed in.

The HBM will strive to maintain public access to the collection and adhere to the guidelines that regulate such access by providing open hours of the HBM and responding in a timely manner to research requests, media outlets and HBM guests. The HBM will provide for the research needs of these individuals to the fullest extent possible while also ensuring the safety and security of the Collections. Information on, how to visit the HBM and access the collections is publicized online and with signage outside the HBM

The HBM complies with all city, state and federal laws, including laws that apply to collections and the act of collecting.

The HBM utilizes the 'best practices' and current information related to collection conservation, care, preservation and management.

The HBM agrees to recognize all rights of ownership and gain proper permissions in writing if needed concerning reproduction. No objects in the collection can be photographed, filmed and/or reproduced without the written permission of the HBM Executive Committee or the HBM Director & Curator. The decision to accession an object into the HBM Collections is made collectively by the Director & Curator and the Collections Committee by vote.

The HBM will strive to ensure that any loaned objects or objects at the HBM under a Temporary Custody form awaiting accession to the HBM are documented, cared for, displayed (loans), and returned (loans or denied potential accessions) in an ethical manner agreed upon with the owner of the object. The Director & Curator has the

ability to approve any incoming loans, and may consult the Collections Committee for guidance under special circumstances.

The HBM strives to ensure that accessions to the HBM Collections are processed correctly and responsibly as laid out in the Collections Management Policy, and that the objects have historical significance to the goals outlined in the HBM Mission Statement.

The HBM will strive to ensure that any deaccessions are processed correctly and ethically as laid out in the Collections Management Policy. The Director & Curator and Collections Committee must be in agreement on the reason for deaccession, and how the object is to be disposed of. In no way will the value of an object be part of the decision making process when evaluating the eligibility of an object for deaccession. After the object is deaccessioned, the object may be disposed of (destroyed), sold, or transferred to another public institution. Deaccessioned objects are never sold to persons associated with the HBM. HBM Staff and Board of Directors are not permitted to obtain deaccessioned objects. All proceeds gained from the sale of deaccessioned objects are placed in a restricted fund, to be used for acquisitions or for the care of existing collections. Funds shall not be used for the HBM operational budget or facilities maintenance/ repair. The use of these funds shall be recommended by the HBM Director & Curator and Collections Committee, and approved by the Executive Committee.

APPRAISALS

The HBM will encourage donors to seek a written appraisal from a qualified individual prior to transferring the object to the HBM. The HBM Staff will not give a verbal or written estimate for donors. The Director & Curator may provide guidance to the donor in regards to seeking an appraisal, but must provide more than one resource from which to seek appraisal. The HBM may arrange appraisals for internal purposes such as insurance or deaccessions.

PERSONAL COLLECTING

The HBM recognizes that HBM personnel may have personal private collections of historic items related to the scope of the HBM Collections & Archives. This type of collecting can enhance personal and professional knowledge and judgment. This type of collecting is encouraged, but subject to the following guidelines:

- Disclosure in writing of the general nature of personal collections or related purchases by HBM personnel is required. The HBM makes no claims on this material. This disclosure will be submitted to the Director & Curator to be kept on file.
 - The Director & Curator will report new personal collections of HBM personnel to the Executive Committee.
- HBM personnel must practice discretion when personally collecting or purchasing objects similar to those collected by the HBHS. No HBM

personnel may engage in competition with the HBM.

- New purchases made by HBHS personnel that fall within the scope of the HBM Collections and create the appearance of a conflict of interest must be reported to the Director & Curator. HBM personnel should make the opportunity of the first right of refusal to the HBM of any items to be purchased.
- HBM personnel may not use their affiliation status with the HBM or privileged information obtained via their connection to the HBM to enhance their personal collecting activities.
- The HBM prohibits personnel from interfering with its operations leading to acquisitions or donations of objects to the HBM for their own personal gain and financial benefit. This includes objects acquired through purchase, trade, gift, sale, and/or exchange.
- HBM personnel are prohibited from bringing objects from their personal collections to the HBM for storage or other non-related HBM purposes. Pieces from a personal collection are allowed for special exhibitions and office decorations if approved by the Director & Curator.
 - Care should be taken when the Director & Curator approves the exhibition of private collections to avoid a conflict of interest.

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS

The HBM seeks to promote fairness and consistency in making evaluations for awards and certifications presented by the HBM. Awards and certifications can only be presented if they have been approved by the Executive Committee.

PROGRAMS, AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY

Outside programs and/or activities will not compromise the integrity of the HBM, personnel or HBM Collections. All programs are conducted with public responsibility. The HBM will strive to represent the interests of its audience and the community it serves. Accuracy of all information presented by HBM in any form, including but not limited to exhibits, programs, and education is based on the best resources available. The HBM is dedicated to attracting the broadest audience possible and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ability, gender, education level, pregnancy, economic class and/or age.

AI USAGE BY MUSEUM PERSONNEL

The HBM recognized the prevailing significance and usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in today's world. New platforms that utilize this tool emerge frequently, creating a fast paced and ever changing circumstance to develop policy around. AI can be used to create new content, expedite administrative tasks or as a creative tool to develop new ideas.

The HBM simultaneously recognizes the inherent nature of museums as trustworthy institutions, and that content developed and published must be ethically and responsibly researched, created, and shared.

When using an AI tool, HBM personnel will remain compliant with the following points to ensure that proper checks and balances are upheld:

- Data protection and privacy will be upheld at all times. Sensitive personal information or confidential information will not be uploaded into an AI tool.
- Intellectual property and cultural ownership is acknowledged when sourcing information with an AI tool.
 - AI generated work does not negatively impact any cultural sensitivities or materials through bias amplified by the AI tool.
- Human oversight and editorial control by HBM personnel will be maintained while generating ideas, content, or analysis. Any materials shared externally will be reviewed by the Director & Curator in advance.
- The HBM will be transparent and accountable both internally and externally with any and all AI usage.
- HBM personnel will take into account the environmental footprint of AI by utilizing AI tools responsibly
- Any meeting minutes generated by AI tools will be reviewed by an individual present at the meeting within one week of the meeting to ensure accuracy.
- Any violations of the above must be reported to the HBM Director & Curator or HBM President in lieu.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The HBM will act responsibly in making financial decisions. The primary goal is to keep the HBM operating efficiently so that it can continue to exist in the future and provide the best care possible for the collections.

FUND-RAISING AND BUSINESS PRACTICES

Donations are not sought or accepted that compromise the mission or integrity of HBM. The principle of unbiased interpretation is upheld and not influenced by an existing or potential donor(s). The HBM conducts business with outside entities with integrity and respect.

DISCLOSURE

The HBM is dedicated to the principle that personnel share a responsibility to communicate with the public, membership and other personnel about the HBM's objectives, activities and outcomes.

The HBM responds to requests made for information in a reasonable and timely manner. When the potential for a conflict of interest to occur has been identified, all personnel are expected to make a full disclosure to the Board of Directors so that a decision can be made in the best interest of the HBM.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All personnel are required to maintain the highest level of confidentiality concerning proprietary and privileged information they may come into contact with as a result of their duties, especially information regarding the safety and security of the HBM and collections. “Confidential” means that the confidential information is not publicly available and is either valuable or sensitive to the organization or person to whom the information relates. This includes, but is not limited to, financial, personal, strategic or document based information in electronic, oral, printed or written form. This confidential information may be related to the HBM, HBM personnel, members, or donors. This information is maintained and accessible to the Director & Curator, President, and Treasurer, who may provide limited on site and electronic copy to members of the Board of Directors. Copies are not to be made by anyone other than the Director & Curator, President or Treasurer.

The HBM destroys any confidential documentation that is no longer needed to be kept on file.

If any confidential information as outlined above has been leaked, it is immediately reported to the President, Treasurer and Director & Curator. No one except these three individuals can attempt to resolve this issue on their own.

Donor Privacy & Confidentiality

Maintaining donor trust by protecting the personal information of HBM donors is of the utmost importance. The HBM defines “personal information” as information that can be used to distinguish, identify or contact a specific individual. It does not include publicly available information such as business contact information or names. Credit card information is handled by a secure third party host and used only to process payment initiated by a person contacting the HBM.

Donor information that the HBM may have includes names, addresses, telephone numbers, donation amounts, event attendance / registration, and payment information. Donor personal information given to the HBM will not be shared, sold, or exchanged with outside entities or organizations. Donor information within the database is only accessible by the Director & Curator, Education & Program Manager, President, and Treasurer. Donor information generated in reports is only accessible by HBM Staff and members of the Board of Directors.

All HBM personnel agree to maintain confidentiality while handling this information as outlined in the Personnel Agreement Form.

USE OF THIS CODE OF ETHICS

The HBM Code of Ethics applies to all personnel. The Code guides how the personnel and the HBM operates with regard to ethical behavior. The Code of Ethics is the standard by which all internal and external conduct is measured.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

AAM Curators Code of Ethics
By-laws of the Hermosa Beach Museum
HBM Board of Directors, Roles and Responsibilities
HBM Collections Volunteer & Intern Policy
HBM Interpretation Policy
HBM Safety and Security Policy
HBM Collections Management Policy
HBM Personnel Policy

DEFINITIONS

Personnel – including but not limited to all persons acting on behalf of the HBM; Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Staff and Volunteers.

