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# BOC Standards of Professional Practice

Implemented January 1, 2006

## Introduction

The mission of the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification Inc. (BOC) is to certify athletic trainers and to identify for the public, quality healthcare professionals through a system of certification, adjudication, standards of practice and continuing competency programs. The BOC has been responsible for the certification of athletic trainers since 1969. Upon its inception, the BOC was a division of the professional membership organization the National Athletic Trainers' Association. However, in 1989, the BOC became an independent non-profit corporation.

Accordingly the BOC provides a certification program for the entry-level athletic trainer that confers the ATC® credential and establishes requirements for maintaining status as a certified athletic trainer, ATC® (to be known as "athletic trainer" from this point forward). A nine member Board of Directors governs the BOC. There are six Athletic Trainer Directors, one Physician Director, one Public Director and one Corporate/Educational Director.

The BOC is the only accredited certification program for athletic trainers in the United States. Every five years the BOC must undergo review and re-accreditation by the National Commission for Certifying agencies (NCCA). The NCCA is the accreditation body of the National Organization for Competency Assurance.

The BOC Standards of Professional Practice consists of two sections:

- I. Practice Standards
- II. Code of Professional Responsibility

## I. Practice Standards

### Preamble

The Practice Standards (Standards) establish essential practice expectations for all athletic trainers. Compliance with the Standards is mandatory.

The Standards are intended to:

- assist the public in understanding what to expect from an athletic trainer
- assist the athletic trainer in evaluating the quality of patient care
- assist the athletic trainer in understanding the duties and obligations imposed by virtue of holding the ATC® credential

The Standards are NOT intended to:

- prescribe services
- provide step-by-step procedures
- ensure specific patient outcomes

The BOC does not express an opinion on the competence or warrant job performance of credential holders; however, every athletic trainer and applicant must agree to comply with the Standards at all times.

### **Standard 1: Direction**

The athletic trainer renders service or treatment under the direction of a physician.

### **Standard 2: Prevention**

The athletic trainer understands and uses preventive measures to ensure the highest quality of care for every patient.

### **Standard 3: Immediate Care**

The athletic trainer provides standard immediate care procedures used in emergency situations, independent of setting.

### **Standard 4: Clinical Evaluation and Diagnosis**

Prior to treatment, the athletic trainer assesses the patient's level of function. The patient's input is considered an integral part of the initial assessment. The athletic trainer follows standardized clinical practice in the area of diagnostic reasoning and medical decision making.

### **Standard 5: Treatment, Rehabilitation and Reconditioning**

In development of a treatment program, the athletic trainer determines appropriate treatment, rehabilitation and/or reconditioning strategies. Treatment program objectives include long and short-term goals and an appraisal of those which the patient can realistically be expected to achieve from the program. Assessment measures to determine effectiveness of the program are incorporated into the program.

### **Standard 6: Program Discontinuation**

The athletic trainer, with collaboration of the physician, recommends discontinuation of the athletic training service when the patient has received optimal benefit of the program. The athletic trainer, at the time of discontinuation, notes the final assessment of the patient's status.

### **Standard 7: Organization & Administration**

All services are documented in writing by the athletic trainer and are part of the patient's permanent records. The athletic trainer accepts responsibility for recording details of the patient's health status.

## **II. Code of Professional Responsibility**

### **Preamble**

The Code of Professional Responsibility (Code) mandates that BOC credential holders and applicants act in a professionally responsible manner in all athletic training services and activities. The BOC requires all athletic trainers and applicants to comply with the Code. The BOC may discipline, revoke or take other action with regard to the application or certification of an individual that does not adhere to the Code. The *Professional Practice and Discipline Guidelines & Procedures* may be accessed via the BOC website, [www.bocatc.org](http://www.bocatc.org).

### **Code 1: Patient Responsibility**

The BOC certified athletic trainer or applicant:

- 1.1 Renders quality patient care regardless of the patient's race, religion, age, sex, nationality, disability, social, economic status, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- 1.2 Protects the patient from harm, acts always in the patient's best interests, and is an advocate for the patient's welfare.
- 1.3 Takes appropriate action to protect patients from athletic trainers, other healthcare providers or athletic training students who are incompetent, impaired, or engaged in illegal or unethical practice.

- 1.4 Maintains the confidentiality of patient information in accordance with applicable law.
- 1.5 Communicates clearly and truthfully with patients and other persons involved in the patient's program, including, but not limited to, appropriate discussion of assessment results, program plans and progress.
- 1.6 Respects and safeguards his or her relationship of trust and confidence with the patient and does not exploit his or her relationship with the patient for personal or financial gain.
- 1.7 Exercises reasonable care, skill and judgment in all professional work.

### Code 2: Competency

The BOC certified athletic trainer or applicant:

- 2.1 Engages in lifelong, professional and continuing educational activities.
- 2.2 Participates in continuous quality improvement activities.
- 2.3 Complies with the most current BOC recertification policies and requirements.

### Code 3: Professional Responsibility

The BOC certified athletic trainer or applicant:

- 3.1 Practices in accordance with the most current BOC Practice Standards.
- 3.2 Knows and complies with applicable local, state and/or federal rules, requirements, regulations and/or laws related to the practice of athletic training.
- 3.3 Collaborates and cooperates with other healthcare providers involved in a patient's care.
- 3.4 Respects the expertise and responsibility of all healthcare providers involved in a patient's care.
- 3.5 Reports any suspected or known violation of a rule, requirement, regulation or law by him/herself and/or by another athletic trainer that is related to the practice of athletic training, public health, patient care or education.
- 3.6 Reports any criminal convictions (with the exception of misdemeanor traffic offenses or traffic ordinance violations that do not involve the use of alcohol or drugs) and/or professional suspension, discipline or sanction received by him/herself or by another athletic trainer that is related to athletic training, public health, patient care or education.
- 3.7 Complies with all BOC exam eligibility requirements and ensures that any information provided to the BOC in connection with any certification application is accurate and truthful.
- 3.8 Does not, without proper authority, possess, use, copy, access, distribute, or discuss certification examinations, score reports, answer sheets, certificates, certificant or applicant files, documents or other materials.
- 3.9 Is candid, responsible and truthful in making any statement to the BOC, and in making any statement in connection with athletic training to the public.
- 3.10 Complies with all confidentiality and disclosure requirements of the BOC.
- 3.11 Does not participate in activities that lead, or may lead, to the conviction, plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendere (no contest) to any felony, or to a misdemeanor related to public health, patient care, athletics or education. This includes, but is not limited to: rape; sexual abuse of a child or patient; actual or threatened use of a weapon of violence; the prohibited sale or distribution of controlled substance, or its possession with the intent to distribute; or the use of the position of an athletic trainer to improperly influence the outcome or score of an athletic contest or event or in connection with any gambling activity.
- 3.12 Cooperates with BOC investigations into alleged illegal or unethical activities. This includes but is not limited to, providing factual and non-misleading information and responding to requests for information in a timely fashion.
- 3.13 Does not endorse or advertise products or services with the use of, or by reference to, the BOC name without proper authorization.

#### Code 4: Research

The BOC certified athletic trainer or applicant who engages in research:

- 4.1 Conducts research according to accepted ethical research and reporting standards established by public law, institutional procedures and/or the health professions.
- 4.2 Protects the rights and well being of research subjects.
- 4.3 Conducts research activities with the goal of improving practice, education and public policy relative to the health needs of diverse populations, the health workforce, the organization and administration of health systems, and healthcare delivery.

#### Code 5: Social Responsibility

The BOC certified athletic trainer or applicant:

- 5.1 Uses professional skills and knowledge to positively impact the community.

#### Code 6: Business Practices

The BOC certified athletic trainer or applicant:

- 6.1 Refrains from deceptive or fraudulent business practices.
- 6.2 Maintains adequate and customary professional liability insurance.