

# **American Atheists' Conference Code of Conduct**

American Atheists is dedicated to providing a harassment-free conference experience for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion.

We expect participants to follow this code of conduct at all conference venues and conference-related social events.

Yes means yes; no means no; and maybe means no. Please take no for an answer for any request or activity. You are encouraged to ask for unequivocal consent for all activities during the conference. No touching other people without asking. This includes hands on knees, backs, shoulders—and hugs (ask first!). There are folks who do not like to be touched and will respect and like you more if you respect their personal space.

We have many different folks attending this conference: sexualities, genders, races, ethnicities, abilities, beliefs—these are just a few. Blatant instances of racism, sexism, homophobia, or other stereotyping and harmful behaviors should be reported to conference staff immediately.

Please do not wear heavy fragrances—including perfumes, colognes, scented shampoos, etc. Some of those attending have allergic reactions to scented products. No one will object to the smell of your clean body!

Please respect the sessions and the speakers. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices, take conversations and noisy children outside the session room, and move to the center of your row to make room for other attendees.

There are chairs and spaces at the front and back of the room that are marked “reserved.” The front row chairs are reserved for attendees with vision or hearing impairments. The back rows are reserved for attendees with mobility accommodation needs. Please leave these chairs and spaces free throughout the conference for those who may need them.

This conference welcomes families with children and expects all attendees to treat these families with courtesy and respect. Parents or guardians bringing children are responsible for the children’s behavior and are expected to remove disruptive children from the session. Parents or guardians should be aware not all language may be suitable for children.

American Atheists does not tolerate harassment of or by conference participants, speakers, exhibitors, volunteers, or staff in any form. Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Anyone violating this policy may be sanctioned or expelled from the conference (without a refund) at the discretion of the conference organizers.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact a member of conference staff immediately. **Conference staff can be identified by t-shirts/special badges/other ID.**

Conference staff will be happy to help participants contact hotel/venue security or local law enforcement, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the conference. We value your attendance.

[Email address for organizers]

[Phone number for conference security or organizers]

[Phone number for hotel/venue security]

[Local law enforcement]

[Local sexual assault hot line]

[Local emergency and non-emergency medical]

[Local taxi company]

### **Additional Information for Conference Staff/Volunteers Only**

#### **Warnings**

Any member of conference staff can issue a verbal warning (recommended language will be provided to staff) to a participant that his or her behavior violates the conference's anti-harassment policy. Warnings should be reported to **a specific person designated at the conference** as soon as practical. The report should include the following information (a form for these reports will be provided):

- Identifying information (name/badge number) of the participant
- The time the warning was issued
- The behavior that was in violation
- The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time of warning)
- The circumstances surrounding the incident
- The identity of the person making the report
- Other people involved in the incident

#### **Presentations**

Presentations or similar events should not be stopped for one-time gaffes or minor problems; although the designated conference staff member(s) should speak to the presenter afterward. However, staff should take immediate action to report to the designated conference staff member(s) any presentation or event that repeatedly or seriously violates the anti-harassment policy.

## **Taking Reports**

When taking a report from someone experiencing harassment you should record what they say and reassure them they are being taken seriously, but avoid making specific promises about what actions the American Atheists or the regional organizers will take. Ask for any other information if the reporter has not volunteered it (such as time, place) but do not pressure them to provide it if they are reluctant. Even if the report lacks important details such as the identity of the person taking the harassing actions, it should still be recorded and passed along to the designated staff member(s). If the reporter desires it, arrange for an escort by conference staff or a trusted person, contact a friend, and contact local law enforcement. Do not pressure the reporter to take any action if they do not want to do it. Respect the reporter's privacy by not sharing unnecessary details with others, especially individuals who were not involved with the situation or non-staff members.

Remember to get the following information:

- Identifying information (name/badge number) of the participant
- The behavior that was in violation
- The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time of warning)
- The circumstances surrounding the incident
- The identity of the person making the report
- The identity or description of the person(s) doing the harassing
- Other people involved in the incident

## **Expulsion**

A participant may be expelled by the decision of Conference Management for whatever reasons they deem sufficient. However, here are some general guidelines for when a participant should be expelled:

- A second (or more) offense resulting in a warning from staff
- Continuing to harass after any "No" or "Stop" instruction
- A pattern of harassing behavior, with or without warnings
- A single serious offense (e.g., punching or groping someone)
- A single obviously intentional offense (e.g., taking up-skirt photos)

**Hotel/venue security and local authorities should be contacted when appropriate.**

[Repeat conf/hotel/venue/law enforcement/hot line contact info here]

## **Public Statements**

As a general rule, conference staff should not make any public statements about the behavior of individual people during or after the conference.

In general, consult with other staff members when possible but act when necessary.