

I. DEFINITION OF ETHICS

Ethics is basically defined as rules or standards for governing the relations between people to benefit all concerned, with mutual respect for the needs and wants of all parties involved.

The essence of ethical behavior is:

- A. To conduct all relations between parties in friendliness, honesty and good faith;
- B. To honor fully, in word and in spirit, all agreements, once made; and
- C. To confine any critical comment to a reasoned and temperate discussion of actions and practices.

II. DANCERS RIGHTS

- A. Dancers should realistically evaluate their own dancing abilities and dance within those abilities.
- B. Dancers should be aware that some of their dancing habits may be uncomfortable or undesirable to other dancers in the square and should make every effort to avoid such actions.
- C. Dancers should treat other members of the club and its visitors and guests with courtesy, friendliness, and helpfulness. They should assist the less experienced dancers.
- D. Dancers should enthusiastically take part in the activities of any club that extends to them the benefits and privileges of membership and should accept all the responsibilities of a club member.

- E. Dancers should be concerned that the relations of their club with callers, other dancers, and other organizations are conducted in an ethical manner.
- F. Dancers should keep within the club any criticism of the conduct of club members, club officers, or club caller or teacher. Any such criticism should be offered in a constructive manner.
- G. Dancers who feel they can no longer accept the rules and practices of the club should resign from the club.
- H. Dancers should not wear the badge of a club if they are not members in good standing of the club.

III. ETHICS FOR CLUBS AND CLUB OFFICERS

- A. Club officers should have as their primary purpose and concern the welfare of the club and the square dance community as a whole.
- B. Club officers should conduct all club business and honor all club contracts in an ethical manner. An honest effort should be made by the club officers to resolve any problems prior to dismissal of a caller or employee of the club.
- C. Upon change of club officers, the new officers should be made fully aware of any outstanding club commitments. The new officers should consider themselves and the club to be legally and morally bound to fulfill any official commitments made by the previous officers on behalf of the club.

- D. In contractual matters, club officers should assure that all expectations and requirements, such as schedules, fees, expenses, etc., are clearly stated in writing and are understood by all contracting parties prior to signature.
- E. Clubs should plan and sponsor beginner classes to promote and perpetuate the square dance activity. Graduating dancers should be accommodated by the club, or the club should provide information regarding dancing opportunities in the area.
- F. Clubs should assure that visitors and invited guests are informed of club admission policies, such as attire and admission fees, as well as dance levels.
- G. Clubs should discourage "set squares" and cliques, in order to promote the fun and fellowship of square dancing.
- H. Clubs should use officially defined dance levels and should conform to the official definitions of the level.



DANCERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Square Dancers everywhere are encouraged to comply with an appropriate Code of Conduct that will enhance the public image and the pleasure of the movement to all dancers and non-dancers, as well.

Among the unique aspects of this wholesome activity is the attractive attire that is an intrinsic part of the image of the square dance. Accordingly, the wearing of appropriate apparel is as important to the enjoyment of the participants as it is to those watching. Not only should the clothing of the dancers be appealing to the eye, but also functional to the others within the square. It is generally recommended that this includes the wearing of long-sleeved shirts for the men and full or prairie skirts for the ladies as local customs and events may require.

Avoidance of alcoholic beverages both before and during dances is essential to insure the enjoyment for everyone. A single drink can severely diminish the response time required to execute the intricate moves of the dance. Square Dancing in itself has the capability of providing sufficient exhilaration to warrant abstinence from alcohol on dance nights.

Courtesy to others is important at all times. This includes personal cleanliness, as Square Dancing is an energetic recreation that can be offensive should adequate precautions not be taken.

The welcoming of others into the dance and into the squares is an integral part of the social aspect of Square Dancing. Walking

out of a square at any time is considered a severe insult. At the end of the dance, no one should leave the square before thanking everyone who contributed to the joy and the fun of dancing together.

Conforming to the accepted and generally taught hand positions and maneuvers for execution of the movements help to eliminate any uncertainty among the other dancers. Proper styling while dancing is as important to the enjoyment of the Square Dance as is the proper execution of the movements themselves.

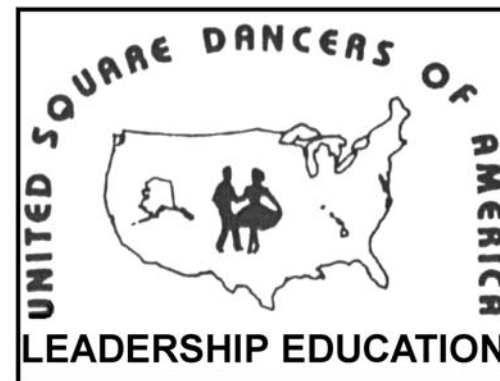
Adherence to these guidelines should be encouraged from the very early stages of beginner s class. The best means of achieving this is through example by experienced dancers and leaders and by the incorporation of ethics into the educational process during the class.

It is felt that through the reaffirmation of these long recognized rules of conduct, dancers everywhere will be reminded of the importance of courtesy, friendliness and personal hygiene. All of these things are an integral part of the Square Dance activity.

For additional information about USDA
or any of its programs, please contact:

Len & Connie Houle
Education/Publications Committee
32 First Ave
Westfield, MA 01085
(413) 519-0261
E-mail:
usda.education.publications@usda.org

DANCERS CODE OF ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT



This information sheet was developed by the Education Committee of the UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA, INC. and will provide information on dance ethics and code of conduct that all dancers should follow to ensure the best possible relations between organizations, clubs and club members.

Leadership Education material can also be printed directly from USDA web site at www.usda.org