



# NZMAT Code of Conduct

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When deployed as a member of a New Zealand Medical Assistance Team (NZMAT), you are an employee representing New Zealand. As a NZMAT member, you have a responsibility to act at all times in a manner which upholds the good reputation of New Zealand and contributes to the good reputation of any New Zealand government agency with which you may be associated. New Zealand officials overseas are seen at all times as representing New Zealand both in the performance of their official duties and in the manner in which they conduct themselves as private individuals.

The NZMAT Code of Conduct is designed to ensure professional conduct in what may be challenging circumstances. Violation of the Code of Conduct may result in removal from the incident site and either temporary or permanent suspension from the team. Each case of misconduct will be handled by the Team Leader or forwarded to the relevant authority, for appropriate action.

While deployed as a member of an NZMAT, you are bound by a relevant jurisdictional department or agency code of conduct.

Medical, Nursing and Allied Health staff should familiarise themselves with the endorsed code of conduct for their profession and endorsed by their professional registration body.

In general, while overseas, NZMAT members should behave in accordance with the following principles:

- Respect for the law of the country they are in, particularly in relation to laws and directions governing bank accounts, currency dealings, and traffic infringements
- Be culturally sensitive to the people of the host country and understand local customs and beliefs, including personal behaviour
- Report inappropriate behaviour on the part of another team member

## Expectations

- NZMAT members are expected to act honestly and impartially and avoid situations that might reflect badly on New Zealand or the NZMAT, compromise NZMAT or their personal integrity, or jeopardise NZMAT's relationships with other response agencies or foreign governments, whether on or off duty, in both work and social settings.
- NZMAT members must at all times observe and work within NZMAT rules and team structures, and respect the various responsibilities of the NZMAT Team Leader, his / her delegates and other team members. Any personal issues or grievances are dealt with through the team structure to the NZMAT Team Leader, whose arbitration will be final.
- NZMAT members must attend NZMAT or other response agency briefings whenever requested, and provide reports as required by the NZMAT Team Leader.
- Communications with the National Health Coordination Centre (NHCC), the New Zealand Ministry of Health, other New Zealand Government response agencies, or the Ministry of Health and government agencies of the country in which the NZMAT is operating, or non-government response agencies, will be made by and through the NZMAT Team Leader, or authorised delegates.
- While recognising that professional and technical exchanges will freely take place as appropriate and necessary, individual team members must not use personal relationships or private communications to attempt to influence the direction, nature or duration of the NZMAT response, or to shortcut or evade official communications channels.



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- All NZMAT members are considered bound by confidentiality agreements as in any Ministry of Health employment relationship.
- NZMAT members must comply with any instructions, prohibitions or restrictions that, in the opinion of the NZMAT Team Leader or delegates, are required to maintain individual and / or NZMAT security. These may include restrictions on movements or travel, a requirement to stay within a specific stated location, or restrictions on admitting visitors to a team residence or location.
- NZMAT members:
  - Should not make any public statement or speech, or give any interview to the media unless specifically authorised to do so by the New Zealand Head of Mission.
  - should not make any public comment on New Zealand or foreign Government policy or relief efforts.
  - NZMAT members should direct any media enquiries to the NZMAT Team Leader or designated representative.
- NZMAT members must observe and abide by New Zealand and local privacy laws, requirements and customs, and gain all relevant permissions before making images or recordings of any kind during a deployment, whether intended for publication or private use. This specifically includes images or recordings made in or around any medical facilities, or of any patients, injuries or treatments.
- NZMAT members must comply with the New Zealand Privacy Act 1993, the Health Information Privacy Code and all other applicable New Zealand or local privacy rules and standards, and use appropriate professional discretion at all times when discussing individual, team or professional subjects or activities in private or public places, or via electronic media of any kind.
- NZMAT members must comply with any dress codes or standards required by the NZMAT Team Leader. In the absence of any specified standard or code, NZMAT members are expected to maintain an appropriate professional appearance both on and off duty.

## Unacceptable Behaviour

Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders and team members are responsible for their actions and activities while on duty or during off-duty hours. The following behaviours are unacceptable and may be considered misconduct. These behaviours will lead to appropriate disciplinary action being taken, which may involve a range of responses up to and including removal from the team:

- demonstrating a bias towards any particular person or group over others
- the use of personal status as a NZMAT member to promote a political or personal agenda
- acceptance of any bribe of money, goods or services in exchange for attention, treatment or information
- the use of any illegal drug, or locally prohibited drug or abuse of any prescription medication at any time
- gambling or gaming for money while on duty



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- use of inappropriate or offensive language
- consumption of alcohol while on duty or where locally prohibited, including the driving or operation of equipment or machinery while under the influence of alcohol
- sexual, physical or psychological harassment of any person in any form
- inappropriate, foul or profane language
- unprofessional conduct, including disrespect towards the injured, dead, their personal effect, or families
- breach of New Zealand or local government laws, bylaws and ordinances
- wearing of NZMAT uniforms or identification into bars, taverns or other places which could reflect badly on the NZMAT or relevant government agency
- NZMAT members are required to take local sensitivities into account and should not wear clothing with offensive logos
- maintenance of a grievance that in the NZMAT Team Leader's opinion is unreasonable and / or that impacts on NZMAT effectiveness and efficiency

## Prior Authorisation

The following require prior authorisation by the Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader:

- entry into contracts for goods and services in the name of the team, relevant department of health (or equivalent) or the New Zealand Government
- the use of personal mobile telephones, radios, music players in a controlled area
- discussion with any media source during the activation
- any article written by a team member for publication, or any personal news release regarding an official deployment or the activities of a team, including the posting of NZMAT-associated information on any social media site
- travelling outside the duty area as defined by the NZMAT Team Leader

Prior to taking photographs, audio or videotapes at a disaster site, NZMAT members should refer to the NZMAT *Ethical Photography Guidelines* and seek permission from the Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader and the person or the organisation being photographed or recorded.

## Reporting for duty

NZMAT members are responsible for their actions and activities during off-duty hours and are responsible for reporting to their work assignment at the time and place scheduled. Tardiness due to social activities is unacceptable. Failure to report for duty when and where agreed without legitimate excuse is unacceptable.

## Buddy system

While on duty, NZMAT members should utilise the "buddy system" and should not leave the area unless accompanied by another team member and should inform their supervisor of the destination and



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approximate time of return. In culturally sensitive countries this may require a female team member to be 'buddied' with a male team member.

## Finance

NZMAT members are responsible for the payment of any in-room expenses incurred during the deployment should they be accommodated at a hotel as agreed prior to deployment.

## Grievances

NZMAT members who have criticisms, complaints, concerns and grievances should initially contact the Team Leader or the Deputy Team Leader. Team Leader communications with the relevant jurisdictional Department of Health should be limited to daily situation reports and problems and issues not resolved by the team. NZMAT members communication with the relevant Department of Health (or equivalent) is discouraged except when requested by relevant Department of Health (or equivalent), or in the event of grievances not resolved by the team leadership.

## Glossary

Chain of command	The line of authority and responsibility along which orders are passed from the Team Leader to team member. The chain of command in this document relates to the NZMAT only.
Command	Command refers to the direction of members and resources of the NZMAT in the performance of the NZMAT's roles and tasks.
Deputy Team Leader	The second in line in the chain of command. A Deputy Team Leader has authority only within the NZMAT. Responsibilities include the direction and coordination of the activities of the NZMAT. A Deputy Team Leader operates vertically within the NZMAT and cannot command members of another NZMAT.
Team Leader	Leader of the NZMAT
Buddy system	An arrangement in which persons are paired for mutual safety or assistance.

## NZMAT MEMBER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I confirm that I read and understood the NZMAT Code of Conduct and confirm that I agree to adhere to the expectations and behaviour outlined while representing the New Zealand Government offshore during a NZMAT deployment.

**Member's  
Name:**

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**Member's  
Signature:**

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**Date:**

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**Please return a scanned copy of this to: [Judy.Fairgray@middlemore.co.nz](mailto:Judy.Fairgray@middlemore.co.nz)**