

Recusal

Board members are charged with making decisions that objectively represent the voice of the public, members of the profession, and those seeking entry into the profession. This means that as a board member you are not an advocate for a private interest group or professional association. As a public official, you are held to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct, and should strive to avoid any relationship, activity or position that may influence the performance of your official duties as a board member.

It follows that you must recuse yourself from any conflict of interest that would compromise your neutrality in making decisions on the board. Ask yourself, “can I decide the issue, fairly and without bias, prejudice, or the impression or appearance of impropriety?” If not, you should recuse from the matter.

A conflict of interest is a type of interest that would result in some benefit, perceived benefit to you, or a bias or perceived bias in favor of or against a particular matter. Under any of the above circumstances, you may have an ethical duty to recuse. Factors to consider in deciding whether to recuse are whether the issue at hand involves a colleague, friend, family member or someone with a close business or social relationship. If yes, then it may be proper to recuse yourself from the matter. The more remote the relationship, professional association, or knowledge becomes, the further you may be removed from bias. You must consider whether you can render an impartial and unbiased decision.

Finally, when acting as a case advisor, you have a legal duty to recuse when the case involves a **contested matter** which is being deliberated and voted upon.

Examples include:

- Reviews of Administrative Warnings
- Petitions for Summary Suspension
- Complaints for Probable Cause (Med Board)
- Administrative Law Judge Proposed Decision and Orders (ALJ PDOs).

The Case Advisor **must** recuse him or herself and leave the room for any contested matter. Board Counsel should be present for contested cases to answer any legal questions and to provide information to the prosecutor should the case be remanded.

The Department of Safety and Professional Services greatly appreciates your willingness to serve the public and those in your profession. If there are any questions about whether a Board member should recuse, please contact Board Legal Counsel.