

SECTIONS 320 & 340 WITH NEW HEADINGS

SECTION 320

Preparation and Reporting of Information and Undue Pressure

- 320.1 Professional accountants in business are often involved in the preparation and reporting of information that may either be made public or used by others inside or outside the employing organization. Such information may include financial or management information, for example, forecasts and budgets, financial statements, management's discussion and analysis, and the management letter of representation provided to the auditors during the audit of the entity's financial statements. A professional accountant in business shall prepare or present such information fairly, honestly and in accordance with relevant professional standards so that the information will be understood in its context.
- 320.2 A professional accountant in business who has responsibility for the preparation or approval of the general purpose financial statements of an employing organization shall be satisfied that those financial statements are presented in accordance with the applicable financial reporting standards.
- 320.3 A professional accountant in business shall take reasonable steps to maintain information for which the professional accountant in business is responsible in a manner that:
- (a) Describes clearly the true nature of business transactions, assets, or liabilities;
 - (b) Classifies and records information in a timely and proper manner; and
 - (c) Represents the facts accurately and completely in all material respects.
- 320.4 Threats to compliance with the fundamental principles, for example, self-interest or intimidation threats to objectivity or professional competence and due care, are created where a professional accountant in business is pressured (either externally or by the possibility of personal gain) to become associated with misleading information or to become associated with misleading information through the actions of others.
- 320.5 The significance of such threats will depend on factors such as the source of the pressure and the degree to which the information is, or may be, misleading. The significance of the threats shall be evaluated and safeguards applied when necessary to eliminate them or reduce them to an acceptable level. Such safeguards include consultation with superiors within the employing organization, the audit committee or those charged with governance of the organization, or with a relevant professional body.
- 320.6 Where it is not possible to reduce the threat to an acceptable level, a professional accountant in business shall refuse to be or remain associated with information the professional accountant determines is misleading. A professional accountant in business may have been unknowingly associated with misleading information. Upon becoming aware of this, the professional accountant in business shall take steps to be disassociated from that information. In determining whether there is a requirement to report, the professional accountant in business may consider obtaining legal advice. In addition, the professional accountant may consider whether to resign.

SECTION 340

Compensation and Incentives Linked to Financial Reporting and Decision Making

340.1 Professional accountants in business may have financial interests, or may know of financial interests of immediate or close family members, that, in certain circumstances, may create threats to compliance with the fundamental principles. For example, self-interest threats to objectivity or confidentiality may be created through the existence of the motive and opportunity to manipulate price sensitive information in order to gain financially. Examples of circumstances that may create self-interest threats include situations where the professional accountant in business or an immediate or close family member:

- Holds a direct or indirect financial interest in the employing organization and the value of that financial interest could be directly affected by decisions made by the professional accountant in business;
- Is eligible for a profit related bonus and the value of that bonus could be directly affected by decisions made by the professional accountant in business;
- Holds, directly or indirectly, share options in the employing organization, the value of which could be directly affected by decisions made by the professional accountant in business;
- Holds, directly or indirectly, share options in the employing organization which are, or will soon be, eligible for conversion; or
- May qualify for share options in the employing organization or performance related bonuses if certain targets are achieved.

340.2 The significance of any threat shall be evaluated and safeguards applied when necessary to eliminate the threat or reduce it to an acceptable level. In evaluating the significance of any threat, and, when necessary, determining the appropriate safeguards to be applied to eliminate the threat or reduce it to an acceptable level, a professional accountant in business shall evaluate the nature of the financial interest. This includes evaluating the significance of the financial interest and determining whether it is direct or indirect. What constitutes a significant or valuable stake in an organization will vary from individual to individual, depending on personal circumstances. Examples of such safeguards include:

- Policies and procedures for a committee independent of management to determine the level or form of remuneration of senior management.
- Disclosure of all relevant interests, and of any plans to trade in relevant shares to those charged with the governance of the employing organization, in accordance with any internal policies.
- Consultation, where appropriate, with superiors within the employing organization.

- Consultation, where appropriate, with those charged with the governance of the employing organization or relevant professional bodies.
- Internal and external audit procedures.
- Up-to-date education on ethical issues and on the legal restrictions and other regulations around potential insider trading.

340.3 A professional accountant in business shall neither manipulate information nor use confidential information for personal gain.