

Bay Area Country Dance Society

Code of Conduct

Our chief principle is *respect*: for your partner, for the line, for the musicians and caller, for the space, for all members of the community, and for yourself. We believe this is the primary requirement for the reason we're here: to have fun!

A few guidelines to help translate that into practice:

Ask a partner kindly. Accept their answer cheerfully. If you are repeatedly declined by a prospective partner, it is best to give them space.

Feel free to decline a dance with someone with whom you feel uncomfortable. If you would prefer not to dance with them; a simple "no thanks" is appropriate. We encourage you to dance with a variety of people both new and familiar, but your safety and comfort come first.

Ask your partner what role they would like to dance.

Dancing involves physical contact and eye contact, which can sometimes include flirtatious movement and interaction. These types of interaction are part of the dance; they do not apply after the music has stopped. Flirtatious or close dancing is not permission to interact flirtatiously or closely with a fellow dancer in any other context.

In both dancing and socializing with fellow dancers, all interaction—especially physical—needs to be respectful and mutually agreed upon. With an unfamiliar person, assume a generous margin of personal space.

Every dance move is an interaction between two or more people; invite another dancer in, do not force them. Use open-handed grips that are held together by the tension and input of both dancers; avoid grips that squeeze or encircle another person's thumb, hand, wrist, or body in a way that they can't escape.

Many of us have injuries or physical limitations that may affect how we dance. We also have a variety of preferences for style, speed, ornamentation, and closeness. Check with your partner before each dance to be sure you are aware of each other's needs and preferences. Have a practice swing or try out a few figures if you'd like to double-check that you're in agreement!

If you encounter a painful or uncomfortable situation in the middle of a dance, saying a firm "Ouch," "No," or "stop that" can be the quickest way to indicate a problem. If you feel that you are in immediate danger, **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEAVE THE LINE**. You are more important than the dance.

Each dancer has both the right and the responsibility to maintain control of their body. Do not lift another dancer off the floor. Do not lift up children. Do not lift up small people. Do not dip people without their explicit permission. Do not swing so fast that someone is flung into another dancer or the wall. Avoid abrupt movements that may startle other dancers, upset their balance, or cause pain and injury. If your balance or ability to control your movements are temporarily impaired—whether by alcohol, illness, hunger, or any other reason—consider sitting out a dance or an evening.

No guns.

No intoxication (e.g. high, drunk, tripping).

No drugs.

No language or publications that disparage a gender, ethnic group, social group, etc.

No hate speech.

No illegal activities.

Violating any of these rules may result in a verbal warning. For more serious offenses the consequences may include suspension or banning from dances.

If you feel that someone at a BACDS event has violated these guidelines or has otherwise made you feel uncomfortable or unwelcome, please speak directly to that person if it seems safe to do so. If not, please talk to other dancers. They may have noticed the same thing; they may be willing to talk to the person; or they may be able to explain what is going on. If that does not resolve the issue, please report to any of

- the designated contact for the dance series (see list on other side) in person or by email.
- the dance manager (the person sitting at the door can help you locate the manager)
- a member of the BACDS board (see list on other side)
- the Dancer Safety committee (**dancer-safety-report@bacds.org**)

If you are concerned about privacy, anonymity, or confidentiality, please say so in your report, and let us know what specific information you consider confidential. We will do our best to respect your wishes.

Remember: if you would warn your friends to avoid someone, it is worth reporting. We don't know that there is a pattern of inappropriate behavior unless people report single incidents.

BACDS Code of Conduct

How to Report an Issue

If you feel that someone at a BACDS event has violated these guidelines or has otherwise made you feel uncomfortable or unwelcome, please report it. If you feel comfortable talking directly to the person involved, please do offer direct feedback. They may be unaware that they made you uncomfortable, and may be willing to listen and learn. Please also mention your concerns to other dancers. They may have noticed the same thing; they may be willing to talk to the person; or they may be able to explain what is going on. If that does not resolve the issue, please report it to us. If you would warn your friends to avoid someone, it is worth reporting. We don't know that there is a pattern of inappropriate behavior unless people report single incidents.

WHERE AND HOW TO REPORT

1. You can report to the dance manager or a member of the organizing committee at the event. If you are not sure who is managing the dance, ask around. The door sitters should know, or the caller.
2. You can report via email or in person to the designated contact person for the dance series. Use one of the following addresses:

Berkeley Thursday Contra
Berkeley Thursday English
Berkeley Saturday English
Hayward Contra
Palo Alto Contra
Palo Alto English
Peninsula English
San Francisco English
San José English
Dancer Safety Committee

Erik Hoffman
Janet Stephens
Sharon Green
Marcia Davis-Cannon
Marcia Davis-Cannon
Lise Dyckman
Loretta Reid
Kevin Goess
Mary Tabor
Marcia Davis-Cannon
Erik Hoffman
Kevin Goess

berkeley-contra-report@bacds.org
berkeley-english-report@bacds.org
berkeley-experienced-english-report@bacds.org
hayward-contra-report@bacds.org
palo-alto-contra-report@bacds.org
palo-alto-english-report@bacds.org
peninsula-english-report@bacds.org
san-francisco-english-report@bacds.org
san-jose-english-report@bacds.org
dancer-safety@bacds.org

3. These email addresses are guaranteed to go only to the person listed above, so that if you are concerned about confidentiality you know that it has not been broadcast to a group.
4. You can report to a member of the BACDS Board of Directors, if you see them at a dance or know their contact information. You can report to the Board of Directors as a whole by sending an E-mail to **bacds-board-only@bacds.org** or to the Dancer Safety Committee as a whole by sending to **dancer-safety@bacds.org**.

The updated list of the BACDS Board of Directors is available at <https://www.bacds.org/organization/#bod>

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

If you feel that any of the information in your report should be kept private or confidential, we will respect that to the best of our ability. If you are reporting by email, place the word "CONFIDENTIAL" in all capitals in the subject line. If you are reporting verbally or on paper, make sure you emphasize your confidentiality concerns. Please be specific about exactly what information is to be kept confidential, and if possible, indicate how widely it may be shared.

Unless you say otherwise, only the person who takes your initial report will see the confidential part and will not share it with anyone who does not need to know for purposes directly relating to your case. You may permit sharing with a group such as the Dancer Safety Committee, the BACDS Board, or the organizing committee for the dance series or event.

IF YOU ARE THE RECIPIENT OF A REPORT

This can happen even if you are not an organizer or designated contact. If someone reports an issue to you, listen carefully. Try to do so in a private setting if possible. Take notes in writing, and double-check with the person who reported to you that you have the details correct, and that you understand which parts are to be kept confidential.

Make a copy of the report with the confidential information omitted, but described or paraphrased. Send the copy to **dancer-safety@bacds.org**. Keep your original in a safe place. If the confidential information is needed, the Dancer Safety Committee will ask for it.

Unless there is immediate peril to life or limb, do not take any other action without permission from the person who reported to you or instructions from the Dancer Safety Committee. Do not disclose the confidential information without explicit instructions from the person who reported to you or from the Dancer Safety Committee.