

Professional Conduct

Certified Fitters are required to abide by the Code of Professional Responsibility (ABC's professional ethics outline) to maintain good standing. The Code was adopted **to promote acceptable standards of moral and professional conduct.**

Certified Fitters must conduct themselves in a fashion that brings **credit to the profession**, including if necessary, the exposure of illegal, improper, and/or unethical conduct of others that can assist the board in maintaining the standards of the profession.

Professional Ethics

The practice of orthotics and pedorthics (the “Profession”) is a recognized allied health profession.

The Certified Fitter of Therapeutic Shoes **assumes specific responsibilities to the physician or other licensed healthcare prescriber, the patient, the public, associates and to the Profession itself.**

These responsibilities must be discharged with honor and integrity to assure the maintenance of public confidence in the Profession.

Professional Ethics

The Profession exists for the **primary purpose of assisting patients in maintaining functional lives.**

The ABC Certified Fitter shall be responsible for making the **greatest possible effort to satisfy the patient's therapeutic footwear requirements.**

Professional Ethics

Ethics, Custom and the Law

Unethical conduct may involve violations of customs and usages of the Profession as well as actions that violate the law. Failure to conform to this Code, including conduct that violates moral principles, customs and practices of the Profession or the law.

Such disciplinary action depends upon the particular circumstances involved and how the conduct in question reflects upon the dignity and integrity of the Profession.

Professional Ethics

Diagnosis and Prescription:

The Certified Fitter **must receive a prescription from a physician or appropriately licensed healthcare provider or other valid order** that meets the profession's standards **before providing any footwear or inserts.**

“Valid orders” include but are not limited to: referrals, authorizations and/or hospital or skilled nursing facility orders, or other requests that are consistent with the profession's standards.

Professional Ethics



Evaluation and Recommendation

All decisions by the ABC Certified Fitter must be made with the **understanding and intent that the patient's best interests are the primary concern.**

It is the **responsibility of the physician, orthotist or prosthetist to recommend specific orthotics design, NOT the certified fitter.**

Changes in Patient's Condition:

When appropriate, or when requested by the patient, physician or licensed healthcare provider, the ABC Certified Fitter shall **monitor and observe the patient's physical condition** in connection with the prescribed therapeutic footwear to make certain the patient is responding appropriately.

As soon as possible, the ABC Credential Holder must **notify the physician** or referring appropriately licensed healthcare provider and the patient of changes in the patient's condition **that affect the patient's footwear treatment plan.**

Professional Ethics

Provision of Services:

The ABC Certified Fitter shall **recognize the patient's freedom of choice in selection** of the therapeutic footwear.

Professional affiliations, including employment and referral relationships, **may not adversely limit access to services and shall not adversely affect the decision-making process** of the ABC Certified Fitter.

The ABC Certified Fitter must adhere to the ethical principles of ABC which shall take preference over business relationships.

Professional Ethics

Modifications:

The ABC Certified Fitter may repair or adjust an orthosis (A5512) without notifying the prescribing physician or appropriately licensed healthcare provider, however, such **repairs or adjustments must conform to the original prescription.**

Any repairs, adjustments, modifications and/or replacements that substantially alter the design or function of the originally prescribed devices, must be authorized by the physician or the appropriately licensed healthcare provider.

Professional Ethics

Confidential Information:

All information relating to a patient's identity, background, condition, treatment or management plan or any other information relating to the ABC Certified Fitter/ patient relationship is and shall always **remain confidential** and may not be communicated to any third party not involved in the patient's care **without the prior written consent** of the patient or patient's legal guardian.

Care:

The ABC Certified Fitter shall use all **reasonable efforts to meet the patient's therapeutic footwear requirements.**

Research:

In the event that the ABC Certified Fitter desires to engage in a research project or study, he/she shall first ensure that: (i) all patients affiliated with such projects or studies **consent in writing** to the use of the results of the study; (ii) the data and information regarding the patient **remains confidential**; (iii) the **dignity and well-being of the patient** shall be primary concerns; (iv) the research is conducted in accordance with all research.

Code of Professional Responsibility federal and state law; (v) there is an absence of fraud; (vi) all data is fully disclosed; (vii) there is an appropriate acknowledgment of individuals making contribution to the research; and (viii) in the event that any acts in the conduct or presentation of research appears to be unethical or illegal, the ABC Certified Fitter shall immediately report the unethical or illegal conduct to ABC and, if appropriate, the applicable law enforcement authority.

Professional Ethics

Trust and Honesty:

All ABC Certified Fitters shall always be **truthful and honest** to the patient, the physician and the public in general.

Professional Ethics

Fees and Compensation:

The ABC Certified Fitter shall **provide services and orthoses based on the needs of the individual receiving the services and not solely for personal financial gain**. The ABC Certified Fitter shall **not engage in false, misleading or deceptive actions in relation to the ultimate cost of the services undertaken or furnished**. The ABC Certified Fitter shall not over utilize or unnecessarily continue therapeutic footwear services beyond the point of benefit or by providing services more frequently than necessary. The ABC Certified Fitter **shall not submit false or misleading information** in requesting payment or reimbursement.

Professional Ethics



Practice Arrangements:

The ABC Certified Fitter shall not: (i) directly or indirectly request, **receive or participate in dividing, transferring, assigning or rebating any funds derived from a referral of a patient** to any other individual or entity, whether affiliated with the ABC Certified Fitter or otherwise; or (ii) **profit by means of a credit** or other valuable consideration, such as an unearned commission, **discount or gratuity for providing therapeutic footwear services, except for the fees earned for services performed for the patient.**

The ABC Certified Fitter shall refer all patients to the most appropriate service provider, taking into consideration the nature and extent of the problem, treatment resources and availability of healthcare benefit coverage, and the likelihood of receiving appropriate and beneficial care.

Professional Ethics



Delay in Services:

The ABC Certified Fitter **shall not accept any prescription when the ABC Certified Fitter knows**, or has good cause to believe, **that the therapeutic footwear cannot be furnished within a reasonable period of time**. In such instances, the ABC Certified Fitter must **discuss the situation with the patient and physician and appropriately licensed healthcare provider**. The ABC Certified Fitter shall not unreasonably delay or allow the unreasonable delay of the provision of therapeutic footwear services.

Professional Ethics



Compliance with Laws and Regulations:

The ABC Certified Fitter **shall provide therapeutic footwear in accordance with Federal law** and the laws and regulations of the jurisdiction(s) in which they practice.

Professional Ethics

Dr.
Comifort[®]



Reporting:

The ABC Certified Fitter **shall report to ABC any conduct** that reasonably appears to violate this Code.

Professional Ethics

Delegation of Responsibility:

The ABC Certified Fitter **shall not delegate any task** requiring unique skills, knowledge or judgment **to an unqualified person**. The primary responsibility for footwear care performed by supporting personnel rests with the delegating ABC Certified Fitter. Adequate supervision is required to make certain the patient receives the necessary and appropriate care.

Public Communication:

The ABC Certified Fitter shall not provide any consideration to any member of the press, radio or television, or other communication medium in exchange for professional publicity in a news item. When advertising, the ABC Certified Fitter may publicize him/herself through any commercial publicity or other form of public communication (including any newspaper, magazine, telephone directory, radio, television, direct mail, or other advertising) provided that the **communication shall not: (i) contain a false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, unfair or sensational statement or claim; (ii) be misleading due to the omission of necessary material information; (iii) contain any false or misleading statement; or (iv) otherwise operate to deceive.** Each advertisement shall be identified as an advertisement unless it is absolutely clear from the context that it is a paid advertisement.

Professional Ethics

Illegal Discrimination:

The ABC Certified Fitter **shall not decline** to accept a patient **on the basis of race, gender, color, religion or national origin** or on any basis that would constitute illegal discrimination under Federal law.

Sexual Relations with Patients:

The ABC Credential Holder **shall not have consensual or nonconsensual sexual relations with a current or former patient** of the ABC Credential Holder ***unless* a consensual sexual relationship existed** between the ABC Credential Holder and the patient **prior to the provision of any services** or the ABC Credential Holder has not provided any services to the patient for the one year period preceding the beginning of the sexual relationship. The ABC Credential Holder **shall not engage in, require, or demand sexual relations with a patient** incident to or as a condition of any orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic services.

Professional Ethics

Dignity:

The ABC Credential Holder has the personal responsibility to **conduct themselves in a manner that will assure the dignity and status of the Profession. Examples of unacceptable behavior** include, but are not limited to, **falsifying documents, misusing the certification credential, slandering or libeling another**, disparaging former employers, disparaging former employees, and **misrepresenting one's capacity as a provider of services.**

Professional Ethics

Solicitation:

The ABC Fitter **shall not**, either directly or indirectly, **solicit the patronage** of individual patients **by way of intimidation, threats, harassing conduct, undue influence, coercion, duress, or unwarranted promises of benefits.**

The ABC Credential Holder shall not solicit a patient who is apparently in a mental condition that impairs his/her personal judgment to make decisions concerning the devices or services being offered.

Use of Credentials:

The ABC Fitter shall use the fact that he/she is **credentialed only as evidence of meeting the requisite standard of knowledge and competency** in the discipline of the Certified Fitter of Therapeutic Shoes, as defined by ABC.

ABC Certified Fitter of Therapeutic Shoes

An ABC certified fitter of therapeutic shoes is an individual trained and qualified in the provision of non-custom therapeutic shoes and non-custom diabetic multi-density inserts. A certified fitter of therapeutic shoes is competent to practice within the scope of non-custom therapeutic footwear only.

The ABC certified fitter of therapeutic shoes is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility, which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The ABC certified fitter of therapeutic shoes is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time-limited certification is based on participation in the Mandatory Continuing Education program.

A5500 and A5512



How to Become a Certified Fitter of Therapeutic Shoes (CFts):

Educational Qualifications—high school diploma or GED

Fitter Education Certificate—completion of NCOPE approved therapeutic shoe fitter education program

Supervisor's Attestation Form—documented 250 hours of patient contact with fitting shoes

Letters of Recommendation—a letter of reference from a professional referral source such as a healthcare professional providing referrals or an ABC Certified Pedorthist/Orthotist.

Application Fee—\$75.00 non-refundable

Examination Fee—\$175.00 fee to sit for the Written Exam

Successful Completion of Exam

ABC CFts Requirements



Continuing Education:

25 credits must be earned within the 5-year cycle of each time limited certificate

Either Category I or Category II credits may be obtained

A maximum of 8 Category II credits can be earned per 5-year cycle

Approved courses can be found at www.abcop.org

CFts Annual Requirements