**Rocky Mountain Swing Dance Club (RMSDC)**

**Goal:**

RMSDC is committed to providing an environment that is free from all harassment. Harassment based upon an individual's gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. All RMSDC members and everyone attending our activities is expected and required to abide by this policy. RMSDC will not tolerate anyone retaliating against someone bringing complaints of harassment to the RMSDC Board.

We have a responsibility to maintain a dance place that is free of harassment. As a nonprofit, it might be our legal obligation. As a club it is our moral responsibility. It is necessary for the longevity of the club to have an atmosphere where all can flourish and dance.

**Code of Conduct**

Harassment based upon an individual's gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation or whether the dancer leads or follows will not be tolerated. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcome, inappropriate and offensive comments, conduct, or physical advances. Examples of harassing behavior may include unwanted physical contact, language of an offensive nature, and obscene gestures. Harassment includes demeaning, degrading and/or offensive comments and activity that may or may not carry the implication that the individual being subjected to these advances may fear how he or she will be treated or perceived if he or she resists the behavior. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. This exists when someone is made to feel uncomfortable and suffers emotional and/or mental strain due to frequent exposure to such behavior.

Examples of harassing behavior may include but are not limited to:

* Unwanted physical contact, foul language of an offensive sexual nature, sexual propositions, sexual jokes or remarks, obscene gestures, and displays of pornographic or sexually explicit pictures, drawings, or caricatures.
* Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment
* Sexual, demeaning, degrading and/or offensive comments and activity that may or may not carry the implication that the individual being subjected to these advances may fear how he or she will be treated or perceived if he or she resists the behavior.
* Creating or encouraging an atmosphere of intimidation, hostility or offensiveness as perceived by any individual who observes the sexually offensive behavior or language.
* Use of inappropriate conduct, including offensive verbal and written communication of a sexual nature.
* Unwanted, unwelcome, uninvited, unsolicited and offensive physical advances such as rubbing and groping.

If you feel uncomfortable with how close your partner is dancing with you, you can

* Ask them to give you more space
* You can also slightly stiffen up your dance frame to push them away from you gently
* Gently pushing them away
* Feel free to say you need to end the dance
* Decline more dances

**Underage Policy**

If someone under the age of 18 experiences discomfort with a dancer's attention to her/him, the minor is encouraged to bring a complaint to a member of the RMSDC Board. A member of or appointed by the Board will ask the dancer to leave the underage person alone. All incidents that involve someone under the age of 18 will be recorded in writing by an officer of the RMSDC board.

**Responsibility, Complaint & Investigative Procedure**

Each and every person attending RMSDC sponsored activities is expected and required to abide by the RMSDC Code of Conduct. Immediately report to a member of the RMSDC Board and fill out a RMSDC Request for Executive Board Decision for Member Disciplinary Action.

A member of the RMSDC Board or someone appointed by the Board can assist the accuser in filling out the RMSDC Request for Executive Board Decision For Member Disciplinary Action. The President will ensure that an investigation is conducted. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend upon the complaint. The intent is to obtain further information about the events/conduct complained of, to enable the person(s) named in the complaint to tell their side of the story, to determine whether harassment has in fact occurred, and to develop an appropriate resolution. Parties involved may be asked to put the complaint in writing, or the person with whom the complaint is discussed might take notes and ask to have them signed. All members of the RMSDC are expected to cooperate with any investigation of a complaint of harassment, upon the request of the President.

The results of the investigation will be presented to the RMSDC Executive Board in order for them to decide how to best handle the complaint. Any member or dancer who is determined to have committed harassment or retaliation or who fails to cooperate with a RMSDC sponsored investigation of discriminatory harassment or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including revocation of their membership or being barred from future club activities.

**Retaliation**

RMSDC will not tolerate anyone retaliating against someone bringing complaints of harassment to the RMSDC Board. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including revocation of membership and being barred from future club activities.

**Sexual Harassment and Assault Hotlines**

**RAINN https://rainn.org/ 800-656-HOPE**

**The Blue Bench http://thebluebench.org/ 303-322-7273**

**SAVA http://savacenter.org/ 970-472-4204, 1-877-352-7273**

How to avoid sexual abuse, and sexual harassment:

• Do not go to isolated areas alone or with others.

• Be direct and firm if others are asking you to do something you don’t want to do.

• Be aware to whom you tell private information

It is common for survivors of sexual abuse to have feelings of embarrassment, anger, guilt, panic, depression, and fear even several months or years after the incident. Trust your instinct. If you sense that a situation may be dangerous or inappropriate, it probably is. MAKE A REPORT TO A TRUSTED PERSON.

**What will be done with this Code of Conduct?**

* It will be posted in its entirety on the RMSDC website, including a downloadable RMSDC Request for Executive Board Decision for Member Disciplinary Action.
* A copy of the Code of Conduct will be placed at the check-in desk easily visible to all.
* Each new RMSDC member will be required to sign a document promising to abide by the Code of Conduct, stating that they understand that their membership may be revoked and they may be barred from activities if they violate the Code of Conduct.

*If you feel harassed, or a situation escalates, what should you do?*

* *Ask your partner to give you more space. Take a step back from your partner. Slightly stiffen up your dance frame to gently push your partner away from you. If your partner ignores all 3 of these, say you need to end the dance. Politely but firmly decline any more dances.*
* *Ask the harasser to stop. Warn them that if their behavior continues, they will be reported. It is a step toward proving that their conduct was unwelcome and not consented to by silent agreement.*
* *Write a note or memo to your harasser if they fail to stop. Clearly state that the harasser's behavior is not wanted and must stop immediately. This note or memo should be dated and signed and should have the harasser's first and last name in the greeting. You may choose to send this letter by certified mail, return receipt requested. You may also wish to copy the RMSDC Board. In any event, you should keep an exact copy for your records.*
* *Keep records of each encounter including the date, time, place, details and witnesses. If the harasser sends an email, leaves a voicemail, or in some other way gives a tangible piece of evidence of their inappropriate behavior, keep this in your records. Identify other victims and supporters / witnesses. Ask them to write down what they have experienced or observed and ask them to sign and date their statement.*
* *If the harassment continues, write a letter to the RMSDC Board describing the incidents and saying that the law requires non-profits to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment. Set up a meeting to explain the situation and ask them to take steps to stop the harassment.*
* *If the RMSDC Board does not show interest in correcting the situation, consider bringing the situation to your private attorney.*

*From Colorado Revised Statutes 7-126-302 - Termination, Expulsion or Suspension... only if fair, reasonable, carried out in good faith,... fair & reasonable if.... Not less than 15 days prior written notice of expulsion, suspension, or termination & the reasons therefor & an opportunity for the member to be heard by the board orally or in writing not less than 5 days before the effective date of the expulsion, suspension or termination...*

*Any written notice given by mail must be given first-class or certified mail sent to last address on record. Challenging this expulsion must happen within 1-yr of effective date of expulsion.*

*Why a Code of Conduct?*

*"A nonprofit can be held liable for a hostile… environment if it knew, or reasonably should have known, of the conditions or activities and failed to take corrective action." --* [*http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/employment05001995.shtml*](http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/employment05001995.shtml)

*Ignoring harassment leads to the club getting a bad reputation and losing attendance at dance.*