

Publication Ethical Standards: Guidelines and Procedures

I. Publications Committee Policies for Ethical Standards Violations

A. Importance of Compliance

AIAA publications are one of the most important and recognizable services provided by the Institute to the aerospace profession. AIAA's archival journals and books are of lasting value to the scientific and technical community, and thus their quality and reputation must be carefully and continually safeguarded. Unfortunately, an increasing number and variety of ethical violations, including plagiarism, have been encountered. The increase in ethical violations may be at least partly due to the rapidly expanding worldwide accessibility of electronic information storage and distribution. Thus, the AIAA Publications Committee has developed and is promulgating straightforward policies and procedures that specify ethical violations involving AIAA publications and clarify their fair and uniform handling.

B. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the most serious violation of ethical standards. Cases of authors taking the ideas or writings from another author and using them as their own are referred to the Publication Ethical Standards Subcommittee (an authorized Subcommittee of the full AIAA Publications Committee). Upon the Subcommittee's recommendation to the Vice President–Publications, the following sanctions may be applied:

- a. All current submissions to AIAA journals and/or books by any of the authors may be withdrawn.
- b. The Vice President–Publications may request and publish letters of apology from the offending authors.
- c. A permanent ban from publication in AIAA journals and books may apply to each individual author, as well as in combination with new authors.
- d. If an author is an AIAA member and the Publication Ethical Standards Subcommittee believes that additional sanctions are warranted, then the Subcommittee may ask the AIAA Ethical Conduct Panel to impose further penalties, up to and including possible revocation of AIAA membership.

C. Other Ethical Violations

Ethical violations not involving plagiarism will be handled by the respective journal or book Editor-in-Chief (and possibly the Associate Editor or other volunteer involved in processing the manuscript). These ethical violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Listing authors who did not significantly contribute to the technical work, leaving out those who did contribute, or providing false contact information.
- b. Failing to correctly state company or government clearance information.
- c. Failing to correctly state the copyright status of parts or all of the submission.
- d. Submitting the current or a closely related work to another publication or organization while it is under consideration or review by AIAA (multiple submissions).
- e. Failing to provide, at time of submittal, the complete publication/presentation history of the current work or any closely related work by the authors. This also includes information on prior or current related presentations or submissions to any non-AIAA organizations.

f. Other violations, including but not limited to improper referencing and authorship issues that may not surface until the work has been published.

For any of the ethical violations listed in Section I.C above, the Editors-in-Chief have the authority to reject the submission, to institute up to a two-year ban from publishing in AIAA journals or books, and to inform any other publishing organization involved with the submission about the sanctions. Repeat violators can expect the Editor-in-Chief to place a permanent ban on future publication in AIAA journals or books. The Editor-in-Chief has the right to request additional actions by the Publication Ethical Standards Subcommittee and/or the Vice President–Publications. Authors guilty of any publication ethical violations will be noted in the journal manuscript tracking system and the book database such that details of previous violations will be available to all AIAA editors at the time of any new submission.

II. Procedures for Ethics Investigations

A. Publication Ethical Standards Subcommittee-Led Investigations

1. Receipt of Complaint

Complaints of plagiarism or other publication ethical violations may be brought to the Subcommittee by an author, an editor, a reviewer, or any other party who believes that misrepresentation or wrongdoing has occurred.

All complaints must be accompanied by evidence of the alleged wrongdoing. For allegations of plagiarism, for example, the following documentation would be required:

- a. Copies of both the original document and the alleged plagiarized version, with relevant passages highlighted.
- b. Full publication details of both documents.
- c. A written description of the alleged violation.
- d. Copies of any communications the complainant may already have had with the accused author(s).

2. Investigation

The Subcommittee then follows these procedures:

- a. They evaluate the evidence submitted to make an initial determination of the validity of the complaint. If they believe that more evidence is required, they will notify the complainant of that need.
- b. If the complaint appears to be valid and the evidence is complete, the Subcommittee drafts a letter to the accused author informing him/her of the complaint and requesting a response, including an explanation of any special circumstances. The letter is signed by the Vice President–Publications, and a deadline is given for a response by the author (generally four–six weeks).
- c. If the author responds, the Subcommittee considers the content of that response before making a final determination in the case. This evaluation may also include additional communication with the complainant. If the author does not respond, the Subcommittee proceeds without his/her input.
- d. If the Subcommittee concludes that the original complaint was valid, they draft a letter (to be signed by the Vice President–Publications) informing the author of their findings and notifying him/her of the consequences (as outlined in Section I.B). If the Subcommittee finds the original complaint to be invalid, they draft a letter so informing the author. At the same time, they notify the complainant of the final resolution of the case.

3. Appeals by the Author

If, after the resolution of the case by the Subcommittee, the author appeals the decision, the Subcommittee may revisit the procedures followed and decisions made. They may choose to take no further action if their original findings are validated by the review. If there is any question, however, of either validity or bias, then the Subcommittee may refer the appeal (along with all related documents and correspondence) to the Vice President–Publications for final review and disposition.

B. Editor-Led Investigations

1. Pre- or Post-Publication

Because violations falling in this category are generally a result of authors making false statements during the submittal process, and those statements are fully documented, formal investigations are seldom required. All authors are required to verify items such as valid authorship, copyright, manuscript history, etc., at the time of submission. If the Editor knows any of these verifications to be false, then he/she may immediately invoke any of the sanctions described in Section I.C. If suspected violations are not discovered by the Editor until a manuscript has already been published, the Editor can still apply the same sanctions as in Section I.C. The Editor always has the right to request additional actions by the Publication Ethical Standards Subcommittee and/or the Vice President–Publications.

2. Appeals by the Author

If, after a decision by the Editor, the author wishes to appeal the decision, the Editor shall review his decision with the author. If the author then wishes a further review of the decision, he may appeal to the Vice President–Publications for a final review and disposition.