



Irish Charity Shops Association

Code of Charity Retailing

This Code sets out the good practice members of the Association are required to observe (must) as well as outlining additional good practice that is advised but optional (should).

This Code may be amended from time to time to take account, for example, of legislative changes during the year.

The aims of the Code are:

- To promote good practice and high standards in charity retailing
- To promote public confidence in and support for charity shops
- To increase donations to charity shops, both straight into shops and through house-to-house collections.
- To get positive publicity for charity shops
- To promote awareness of legitimate charity shops and to help stamp out dishonest and bogus activities

Topics covered under the code:

- General Requirements
- Shop Operations
- Stock Collection
- Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility
- Notes

1. General Requirements

1.1 Members of the Irish Charity Shops Association should always have regard to the purpose of the Code - to promote charity shops as the way of making the most of donations of unwanted goods - and seek to maximise income for parent charities.

1.2 Members must comply with their statutory obligations as charities, as employers, as retailers and occupiers of property.

1.3 Members must not bring the charity shops sector into disrepute, or undermine it, by any inappropriate or illegal activity.

2. Shop Operations

2.1 Members must operate charity shops that comply with existing legislation including:

- Data protection
- Disability Discrimination and other Equality issues
- Employment
- General charity law
- Health and Safety (including fire prevention)
- Sale of goods
- Trading Standards and Consumer Protection
- Waste

2.2 Members should treat the public (donors and customers) with care and consideration.

2.3 Members should provide clear information to donors and customers about their charity's objectives and activities on request.

2.4 Members should provide appropriate training, information and support to staff and volunteers.

2.5 Members should take all reasonable measures to ensure the secure handling of cash, cheques and credit card payments as well as donations in kind.

2.6 Members should have clear, published policies and procedures for the handling of complaints received in their shops.

3. Stock collection

3.1 Where collections of goods are undertaken, members must comply with appropriate requirements of relevant legislation, in addition to the more general statutory requirements of Health and Safety, Employment etc.

House-to-house collections carried out directly by members

3.2 Members undertaking house-to-house collections for goods in the Republic of Ireland should, where required, hold an appropriate local license for the movement of waste.

3.3 Members must ensure collections are not undertaken by minors (those under 16) and must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that collectors are fit and proper persons.

3.4 Members must ensure that all collectors are issued with identification badges and certificates of authority. These should always be clearly visible and produced to members of the public on request.

3.5 Members must ensure collection sacks comply with relevant safety standards and carry the ICSA logo.

3.6 Members should include clear contact details for their charity on all requests for donations (including collection sacks and envelopes). Personnel representing the charity - whether employees, volunteers or subcontractors - and where possible their vehicles, should be clearly identifiable. The registered charity number and ICSA logo must appear on all printed material relating to collections carried out directly by members.

Partnership collections

3.7 Members sourcing goods using commercial organisations that make use of their charity's name must ensure these collections are within the requirements of the relevant legislation and that the collection is appropriately licensed. When selecting a partner company, members should establish that there are no conflicts of interest.

3.8 Members ought to be aware that these partnerships might be seen to conflict with core charity retail objectives (i.e. the donation of goods for sale in-store to maximise income for the charity). Members should also consider the reputational risks to their charity - and to the Charity Shops sector - of being involved in activities which might be seen to undermine this objective, or which might damage the public's trust and confidence in the sector.

3.9 Members should also ensure that they are receiving the maximum possible financial benefit for their charity from such arrangements. Members should ensure clear and transparent statements are made on collection material detailing the benefits to both parties of such commercial partnerships.

3.10 Members must ensure that appropriate remuneration statements are included with collection materials, in line with current industry best practice. Charity legislation also includes measures designed to safeguard a charity's name and reputation from abuse by others. Members must ensure that commercial partners implement these measures in full.

Collection materials used in these partnerships may not carry the ICSA logo.

3.11 Partnership collections undertaken by members should always be transparent, and all collection materials (e.g. leaflets, bags) should state prominently that the collection is not being conducted directly by a charity.

3.12 In addition:-

- The name of the commercial partner should appear prominently on the front of the collection sack, alongside the name and logo of the charity for whom money is being raised,
- There should be a clear statement that the collection is being undertaken by a commercial partner. Such a statement should be in line with Government guidance, as outlined above,
- There should be a clear statement on collection and promotional materials about what happens to the goods donated i.e. the use and destination for these goods.

3.13 Charities should also ensure clear and transparent statements are made on collection materials detailing the benefits to both parties of such commercial partnerships.

General requirements relating to all house-to-house collections

3.14 Members should take appropriate measures to avoid house-to-house collections overlapping with other collections.

3.15 Members should take care that collections do not saturate an area, that collection areas are manageable and targeted to allow for proper checks to avoid such saturation.

3.16 Members should collect at the times stated, push collection sacks carefully and fully through letterboxes, make every effort to collect unused sacks; close gates to houses approached, ensure collectors do not walk on householders' gardens and are polite and helpful at all times.

3.17 Members should also ensure that partner organisations conform to all requirements of the Code particularly those that apply to collections.

Collections via textile and book banks

3.18 Where textile and/or book banks are operated using a commercial partner, members must comply with the requirements of paragraphs 3.7-3.13 above, in addition to the requirements of this section. In addition, where stock is collected in banks that is not intended for sale in charity shops, this should be clearly stated on the banks.

All banks described in this paragraph are not eligible to carry the ICSA logo.

3.19 Members operating textile and book banks must ensure they comply with relevant safety standards.

3.20 Members operating textile and book banks should ensure they have the permission of the appropriate site owner before placing their textile or book banks and should ensure they comply with the terms of the site owner in relation to emptying of the banks, and the cleanliness and maintenance of surrounding areas.

Collections of cash

3.21 Cash should not be collected as part of the house-to-house collection of goods for charity shops. If members collect cash alongside goods, they should have clearly defined cash handling rules including temporary and confirmed receipting procedures and note that the legal requirements for cash collections may be different from those for the collections of goods.

3.22 Minors (those under 16) must not under any circumstance collect cash.

4. Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility

4.1 Charity retail already contributes significantly to waste reduction through promoting reuse, recycling and overall sustainability. The sector also diverts large volumes of material from the waste stream. Notwithstanding this, members ought to be aware of their wider corporate responsibilities and endeavour to ensure that their activities are sustainable. It is for individual members, within the limits of the law and the spirit of this Code, to determine what actions it might take to promote sustainable behaviour.

Notes

This Code is based on best practice and law current at January 2011 and will be revised as necessary to take account of legislative and policy developments. It may be amended from time to time, to take account, for example, of legislative changes.

Breaches of the Code that are brought to the attention of the Association will be considered by the Steering Group and where appropriate will be addressed at a regular or emergency meeting by Association members. Misuse by a person or body who is not a member of the ICSA may result in appropriate legal action being taken by the Association.