

Definition:

An ethics claim is an objection lodged against a DONA certified doula or DONA member in which the doula is accused of behavior that violates DONA International's Standards of Practice and/or Code of Ethics. It may be submitted by anyone, including but not limited to the client, her partner or family, a nurse, the client's care provider, a hospital administrator, another doula, a DONA certified doula, a DONA approved doula trainer; or it may be originated by the Ethics Committee.

If the objection is determined not to involve possible violations of the DONA International Standards of Practice and/or Code of Ethics by a DONA certified doula or DONA member, then it is not an ethics claim. It remains, by definition, a complaint.

An incident is any potentially negative occurrence arising in a birth or postpartum support situation and involves the DONA certified doula or DONA member as the provider. The incident may be submitted to the Ethics Committee Chair by the doula or another party.

Goal and Purpose:

The goal in having an Ethics Claim Procedure is to provide a mechanism through which the public and the community of doulas may be protected if there is alleged misconduct on the part of a DONA certified doula or DONA member.

The purpose of the Ethics Claim Procedure is to provide a vehicle in which a complaint may be brought, a fair and complete investigation undertaken and appropriate action taken.

Submitting an Objection:

When submitting an objection, the following procedure must be followed:

- Complete the Submission Form for Lodging an Objection below explaining the details of the objection. Include all relevant facts and any supporting documents. Reference the specific DONA International Standards of Practice or Code of Ethics alleged to have been violated if known and understood. Objections filed anonymously are unacceptable and cannot be processed.
- Email the completed Submission Form for Lodging an Objection and supporting documents to EthicsChair@DONA.org with a copy to DONA@DONA.org.
- The objection must be received no later than eighteen (18) months after the date of the alleged occurrence.

DONA International Procedure:

- The complainant will receive confirmation of receipt of the objection.
- The Ethics Committee Chair will provide written copies of the objection to the Ethics Committee and the doula under review.
- The doula under review will be given an opportunity to respond.
- The Ethics Committee will evaluate the objection, determine whether it is a complaint, or a valid ethics claim and make recommendations of possible sanctions.
- All involved parties will be notified in writing by the Ethics Committee Chair of the findings of the investigation and informed of any resulting action recommended by the Ethics Committee.
- Ethics Committee deliberations will remain confidential and only the matters discussed in the letter to the involved parties will be disclosed. The documents gathered for the investigation will remain on file with DONAInternational.

Acceptance of Determination:

- By virtue of engaging the DONA Ethics Claim Procedure, the complainant must agree to accept, without question, any determination, conclusions and decisions made by the DONA Ethics Committee as final and binding. The complainant must agree not to take any further action against the doula under review with respect to the objection filed herewith.

Confidentiality:

- All parties involved in the Ethics Claim Procedure, including the complainant, the DONA certified doula or DONA member under review, members of the Ethics Committee and Board of Directors and any third parties must agree to keep confidential for all time any and all verbal or written communications regarding the submission, mediation, negotiations, conclusions and/or sanctions of the objection filed with DONA International.

DONA INTERNATIONAL SUBMISSION FORM FOR LODGING AN OBJECTION		
Date submitted:	Date(s) of occurrence:	
Complainant Name(s):		
Address:		
City:	State/Province:	Zip/Postal Code:
Phone No.:	E-mail:	
Doula’s Name:		
Doula’s Phone No.:	Doula’s E-mail:	
This objection is believed to be an ___ethics claim; ___complaint; ___incident report		
Provide a detailed description of the objection below. Attach additional sheets and supporting documents, as necessary. Reference the specific DONA International Standards of Practice or Code of Ethics alleged to have been violated, if known and understood.		