



## South African Birth Photographers Association OATH OF CONDUCT ©2015

### APPLICATION

The SABPA Oath of Conduct is an oath taken by professional birth photographers who have passed their SABPA exam and are registered on the SABPA Registry.

Access to a birth or legal action, civil penalties or refusal of access to a birth due to malpractice by a birth photographer lies with the primary healthcare provider and the medical institution he or she works at, as well as the parent/s. SABPA is not a regulatory body nor do we take responsibility for any photographer. Instead we empower parents, photographers, hospitals and healthcare providers by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to uphold the integrity, safety and privacy of the birth space and its role players whilst allowing parents to have their birth stories captured.

There is no direct punishment for breaking the SABPA Oath of Conduct. SABPA does however hold the right for its Independent Advisory Board to remove a photographer from the SABPA Registry for breaking the oath.

The oath applies to all forms of documenting a baby's birth: photography, videography and publishing.

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### Duty to Our Clients

- Our primary responsibility is to our clients. We will act, at all times, in accordance with the highest standards of professional and personal integrity.
- We provide photography services that are considerate of the needs of a birthing woman and which respect the dignity of our clients at all times.
- We respect a woman's right of informed choice and consent in birthing.
- We apply our best efforts towards providing exceptional birth photography services to our clients including providing images equal to or superior to the samples that we display.
- We use a birth photography contract that clearly outlines the rights and obligations of both the photographer and the client.
- We always insure that we have a back-up photographer who is registered with SABPA should we not be able to cover a birth we have committed ourselves to.
- We do not send a non-SABPA photographer / photographer that does not meet the hospital's merit requirements to the best of our knowledge.

### Duty to Other Birth Professionals & the Photography Industry In General

- We treat all other birth professionals with courtesy, respect, honesty and fairness.
- We do not plagiarize or make ourselves guilty of intellectual property theft or imitation. We only use our own copy, ideas, words, photos and marks. Please see <http://www.maternalfocus.com/utah-birth-photographer/for-birth-photographers/words-words-words>
- We do not do market research by posing as potential clients to other photographers.
- We support and encourage the growth of birth photography across South Africa. We demonstrate friendliness and cooperation to other birth photographers.
- Discriminatory, disrespectful, defamatory or dishonest behavior within the industry and towards fellow-birth photographers and birth professionals.



- **We understand that each hospital / medical professional may have their own merit requirements & permission procedures for allowing a birth photographer at a birth. We respect and familiarize ourselves with such requirements & procedures and make sure that we meet them before we ask for permission to be present at a birth or create expectations with a client.**

#### **Duty to Women and Society**

- We promote the health of women and their babies, as well as maternal choice.

#### **Duty when in Theatre / Labour Ward / NICU / Home Birth Environment**

1. When attending a birth, we wear our business branded scrubs with clear identification and we at all times carry our SABPA license card ready to be produced if asked for by hospital staff. We make sure that our client has the relevant permission forms available on file.
2. We only enter the ward / theatre when well and not sick. If we are sick, we utilize the services of our SABPA back-up photographer.
3. We wash our hands, put up our hair and follow any other sanitation procedures a hospital may have e.g. wearing protective clothing or face masks or wiping down our cameras. We ensure we abide by all sanitation and infection control procedures.
4. We do not touch items designated to us as sterile. We ask and confirm what is sterile when unsure.
5. We never take additional equipment into theater besides a camera and perhaps a back up lens or memory cards in our pockets. Tripods, monopods, additional lights or gear are not appropriate.
6. We do not photograph staff or any of their identifying information without permission. Staff faces that are captured 'collaterally' will be faded out or blurred in the final product.
7. Should there be an emergency, we obey as directed and/or leave immediately if asked. We do not photograph life-threatening emergencies. We lower our cameras and wait until the emergency has subsided to resume photographing that patient. If unsure its an appropriate time to resume, we quietly and discreetly ask a medical professional in the room who isn't otherwise occupied with patient care.
8. We do not take photographs of the following actual medical procedures:
  - 8.1 An epidural / spinal anesthesia
  - 8.2 Making an incision
  - 8.3 IV insertion
  - 8.4 Water breaking / any vaginal checks
  - 8.5 The use of forceps
  - 8.6 Vacuum extraction
  - 8.7 Suction to clear airways
  - 8.8 CPR / resuscitation
9. It is our responsibility to communicate to our clients that permission for our presence must be obtained from the relevant health care professionals. It is also our responsibility to familiarize us with the permission requirements of the relevant hospital / institution / healthcare provider as these may differ from birth place to birth place (see permission forms under 'Resources for Hospitals and Photographers').
10. We always provide our client with a copy the SABPA Birth Photographer's Oath.
11. We only photograph our clients and their babies / identifying information. We do not photograph other patients or their babies or their identifying information.



12. We recognize that the experience of giving birth is private and sacred. Our goal is to not interrupt that, but document the story for the family's memories. We are not there to give opinions or medical advice or project our own feelings/experiences about birth before, during or after procedures. We respect the choices our clients are making with their care providers.
13. We do not ask ANYONE to reenact moment, pose a baby in any way without permission or ask any of the medical staff to move or act in a certain way. We are documenting not directing.
14. Our clients' medical history and any interpretable medical recordings / data / information during births remains private and confidential.
15. Use of flash is prohibited in theater. Outside of theater, it is subject to 1) the parents and/or the care provider's preferences as to if/when/how much to use it. 2) it is only done with a professional speed light flash that is bounced away from the family or care provider. It is never used with a "pop up flash" on a camera.

#### **Model Release & Publishing Rights:**

**For purposes of this oath 'to release' means to give images to the client and 'to publish' means to make images public.**

1. We honor our clients' right to privacy. Every image is published with permission. A model release and client approval must be obtained before submitting images to SABPA or publishing them anywhere else.
2. We avoid explicit nudity unless the client has asked otherwise and those images remain for their private use.
3. We use discretion in releasing or publishing images that could compromise the client or the relevant health care providers or call them into question.
4. Only licensed music is used for slide shows.
5. We use extreme caution when identifying our presence at a birth in real time on social media. Hospital name or client identifying information should never go online until after the birth and then only if permission is granted by the family.
6. It is the family's privilege and right to announce the birth of their child. SABPA members do not announce on their social media pages before families or without permission of families.
7. Images of medical personnel may only be published or released to the client with their permission, this means the client only gets images where the staff are unidentifiable or blurred out. Only unidentifiable images (such a back of the head or masked face) or blurred faces may be published without consent. We never release or publish the identifying image of a medical professional without their expressed consent.

#### **SABPA**

1. Only founding members, SABPA Head of Communication and the SABPA board may make statements or decisions on behalf of the SABPA.
2. Only photographers who are registered on the SABPA Birth Photographer's Roll may use the SABPA mark on business / personal materials and only for as long as they remain registered.
3. Being registered on the SABPA roll does not automatically grant you access to all births and hospitals as each have their own approval or accreditation requirements, as well as the tools to implement those processes (some of these tools are available under SABPA's resources).
4. All formal SABPA emails / discussions on the closed SABPA forum are privileged and confidential and should be treated as such.

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South African Birth Photographers Association



5. Formal SABPA documentation may not be changed, copied or adapted in anyway. It is the intellectual property of SABPA.

**Please Note:**

SABPA is a supporting & resource association and although members may be removed from the roll by our Independent Advisory board if complaints are received regarding breaking the SABPA oath, *we are not an accreditation and regulatory body.*

SABPA does not take responsibility for the actions of any photographers. Instead we provide parents, photographers, hospitals and healthcare providers with the necessary tools and resources (like the oath) to uphold the integrity, safety and privacy of birth and its various role players themselves and to grant access on merit.

If you do feel that a birth photographer on the roll broke the oath in any way, please email us the relevant details to [info@sabirthphotographers.com](mailto:info@sabirthphotographers.com)

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