

# BYLAWS OF THE SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP FOR FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY (SWGTOX)

Approved by SWGTOX on Friday, April 18, 2014

## 1. Name and Objectives

### 1.1. Name

- 1.1.1. The name of the organization shall be Scientific Working Group for Forensic Toxicology.
- 1.1.2. The organization will be referred to as SWGTOX.

### 1.2. Mission

- 1.2.1. The mission of SWGTOX is to develop and disseminate consensus standards for the practice of forensic toxicology.

### 1.3. Objectives

- 1.3.1. SWGTOX will establish standards for the practice of forensic toxicology, including the following areas:
  - 1.3.1.1. Standards, practice, protocols including quality assurance and quality control
  - 1.3.1.2. Education and training requirements
  - 1.3.1.3. Accreditation
  - 1.3.1.4. Certification
- 1.3.2. SWGTOX will provide guidance for the development of a Code of Professional Conduct for forensic toxicologists and laboratories.
- 1.3.3. SWGTOX will identify general areas of research and development needs in the field of forensic toxicology.
- 1.3.4. SWGTOX will promote public awareness of the field of forensic toxicology.

### 1.4. Scope

- 1.4.1. Human performance toxicology (*e.g.*, drug facilitated crimes, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs)
- 1.4.2. Postmortem forensic toxicology
- 1.4.3. Non-regulated employment drug testing
- 1.4.4. Court ordered toxicology (*e.g.*, probation and parole, drug courts, child services)

- 1.4.5. General forensic toxicology – other toxicology performed for legal purposes in a variety of biological specimens (e.g., non-lethal poisonings or intoxications).
- 1.4.6. While the work product developed by SWGTOX is the standard of practice in forensic toxicology, the scope of SWGTOX activities will not necessarily include those specialized areas where mandated, codified rules and regulations currently exist.

## **2. Committee Structure**

- 2.1. The SWGTOX Chair or Co-Chairs are appointed by the Forensic Toxicology Council (FTC) to facilitate the mission and objectives of SWGTOX.
- 2.2. SWGTOX is comprised of three Committees, the Chair of each will be appointed by the SWGTOX Chair or Co-Chairs -
  - 2.2.1. Standards, Practice, Protocols and Accreditation
  - 2.2.2. Education, Ethics, Outreach and Certification
  - 2.2.3. Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation
- 2.3. An Executive Committee is formed consisting of the SWGTOX Chair or Co-Chairs, Committee Chairs, an Executive Secretary and two Members-at-Large elected by the SWGTOX Members.
- 2.4. The Executive Committee will determine the need for Subcommittees. If deemed necessary, the Chair(s) will appoint a Subcommittee Chair. The Subcommittee Chairs are responsible for facilitating the mission and objectives of the Subcommittee.
- 2.5. As appropriate, Committees and/or Subcommittees may be divided into smaller task groups facilitated by a Task Group Chair, appointed by the Subcommittee Chairs.

## **3. Membership**

- 3.1. Categories of Membership
  - 3.1.1. A Member is selected from a diverse group of individuals with various backgrounds experienced in the scope of the Committee or Subcommittee. Members have voting privileges.
  - 3.1.2. Consultants and invited guests are selected from a diverse group of individuals with various backgrounds who supplement the expertise of the Committee or Subcommittee. Consultants and invited guests do not have voting privileges.
- 3.2. Details of Memberships
  - 3.2.1. Number of Members, Consultants and Invited Guests

- 3.2.1.1. The number of Members shall not exceed 50.
- 3.2.1.2. There is no limit to the number of consultants and invited guests.

3.2.2. Selection of Members, Consultants and Invited Guests

- 3.2.2.1. The Executive Committee will select Members that represent the community at large, including forensic toxicologists practicing in the United States and internationally, as well as select ancillary disciplines.
- 3.2.2.2. Committee Chair(s), Sub-Committee Chair(s) and Task Group Chair(s) will select consultants and invited guests.

3.2.3. Terms of Appointment

- 3.2.3.1. The term of appointment for the SWGTOX Chair or Co-Chairs shall be at the discretion of the Forensic Toxicology Council.
- 3.2.3.2. The term of appointment for Members shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- 3.2.3.3. The term of appointment for consultants and invited guests shall be at the discretion of the Committee Chair(s), Sub-Committee Chair(s) and Task Group Chair(s).
- 3.2.3.4. The term of appointment for Members-at-Large is two years. The appointments are staggered and are not term-limited.
- 3.2.3.5. Continued appointment in SWGTOX requires on-going participation in SWGTOX activities.
  - 3.2.3.5.1. Lack of on-going participation in SWGTOX activities will result in termination from SWGTOX.
- 3.2.3.6. Members, consultants, and invited guests are free to resign from service at their discretion.
- 3.2.3.7. A violation of the SWGTOX's Code of Professional Conduct and/or other activity detrimental to the field of forensic toxicology will result in termination from SWGTOX.

3.3. There will be no compensation or honoraria for any SWGTOX activity.

#### **4. SWGTOX Chair Duties**

4.1. The SWGTOX Chair will -

- 4.1.1. Be a member of the Executive Committee
- 4.1.2. Preside at SWGTOX meetings
- 4.1.3. Appoint Committee Chairs
- 4.1.4. Act as the official Spokesperson for SWGTOX
- 4.1.5. Communicate with the Forensic Toxicology Council

#### **5. Executive Committee Duties**

5.1. The Executive Committee will –

- 5.1.1. Ensure timeliness of SWGTOX work product
- 5.1.2. Organize SWGTOX meetings
- 5.1.3. Select Members
- 5.1.4. Assign tasks to Members
- 5.1.5. Liaise with the SWGTOX funding authority
- 5.1.6. Appoint an Executive Secretary
- 5.1.7. Perform annual assessment of SWGTOX

#### **6. Committee Chair Duties**

6.1. Committee Chair will -

- 6.1.1. Organize Committee meetings
- 6.1.2. Monitor activities of appropriate Sub-Committees and Task Groups
- 6.1.3. Inform the Executive Committee of Committee progress
- 6.1.4. Ensure timeliness of SWGTOX work product

#### **7. Sub-Committee Chair and Task Group Chair Duties**

7.1. Sub-Committee Chair and Task Group Chair will -

- 7.1.1. Organize Sub-Committee and Task Group meetings
- 7.1.2. Inform the appropriate Committee Chair of Sub-Committee or Task Group progress
- 7.1.3. Ensure timeliness of SWGTOX work product

#### **8. Executive Secretary Duties**

8.1. The Executive Secretary will -

- 8.1.1. Prepare and maintain minutes of SWGTOX Executive Committee, SWGTOX Committee, Sub-Committee and Task Group meetings
- 8.1.2. Ensure document control
- 8.1.3. Facilitate SWGTOX communication
- 8.1.4. Disseminate information

## **9. Meetings**

- 9.1. SWGTOX shall meet twice a year, or as the Executive Committee directs.
- 9.2. All Members shall be notified of meetings in advance.
- 9.3. In addition to face-to-face meetings, other modes of communication shall be employed as needed. This includes conference calls, e-mail, and web-based conferences.
- 9.4. SWGTOX meetings will be conducted in parliamentary fashion in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

## **10. Voting of SWGTOX Documents**

- 10.1. Members have voting privileges for the purpose of ratifying SWGTOX Bylaws, and SWGTOX draft and approved standards of practice for forensic toxicology.
- 10.2. A vote will only be conducted when a quorum of at least 3/4 of the membership is achieved.
- 10.3. An acceptance vote requires a consensus vote of 2/3 of the attending Members.
- 10.4. Alternatively, an e-mail vote can be conducted at the discretion of the Chair.
  - 10.4.1. E-mail votes must be received within 14 days of dissemination.
  - 10.4.2. A response must be received from 3/4 of the Members, and an acceptance vote requires a consensus vote of 2/3 of the responding Members.

## **11. Process for Approval of the Standards of Practice for Forensic Toxicology**

- 11.1. Until published, all SWGTOX work product is considered confidential.
- 11.2. The draft document is distributed to SWGTOX Members, consultants and invited guests for review and consideration. Comments shall be returned to the Executive Secretary within 30 days of document dissemination.
- 11.3. Comments are returned to the appropriate SWGTOX Committee, Sub-Committee and/or Task Group for evaluation and revision, if necessary.
- 11.4. Additional rounds of review are utilized at the discretion of the appropriate SWGTOX Committee, Sub-Committee and/or Task Group.
- 11.5. The final draft document shall be distributed to SWGTOX Members for review, consideration and vote. The vote shall be conducted according to SWGTOX Bylaws Section 10.

- 11.5.1. If approved, the draft document shall be published on the SWGTOX web-site for public comment. Comments shall be returned to the Executive Secretary within 60 days of document posting.
- 11.5.2. If not approved, the draft document shall be returned to the appropriate SWGTOX Committee, Sub-Committee and/or Task Group for evaluation and revision, if necessary.
- 11.6. Public comments are compiled by the Executive Secretary for review and evaluation by SWGTOX. Those comments deemed persuasive will be addressed in final revision of the document prior to final vote by the SWGTOX Members.
- 11.7. After the period of public comment and any necessary revision(s), the draft document will be presented to the SWGTOX Members for vote. The vote shall be conducted according to SWGTOX Bylaws Section 10.
- 11.8. Following an affirmative vote, the document is considered approved and will be published on the SWGTOX web-site.
- 11.9. SWGTOX will prepare a response to relevant public comment topics in written form and post its response contemporaneously on the SWGTOX web-site. The response will be prepared by the appropriate SWGTOX Committee, Sub-Committee and/or Task Group and approved for distribution by the Executive Committee.

## **12. SWGTOX Document Control**

- 12.1. SWGTOX published documents are reviewed at least every two years in accordance with the SWGTOX Document Review Operating Procedure to assess continued appropriateness and need for revision. If no revision is necessary, the document is approved as published for another two-year period.
- 12.2. Minor changes such as typographical changes can be corrected without public review and comment. However, substantial changes that affect the content and/or interpretation require public review and comment of any revised section, and vote by SWGTOX Members as described in SWGTOX Bylaws Section 11.

## **13. Amendments to the SWGTOX Bylaws**

- 13.1. Amendments to the SWGTOX Bylaws require a vote.
- 13.2. A vote will only be conducted when a quorum of at least 3/4 of the membership is achieved.
- 13.3. An acceptance vote requires a consensus vote of 2/3 of the attending members.
- 13.4. Alternatively, an e-mail vote can be conducted at the discretion of the Chair.

**14. Document Formatting**

- 14.1. A uniform document style utilizing standard hierarchical outline formatting will be adopted by SWGTOX.
- 14.2. Arial 12 font will be utilized in all SWGTOX documents.