

Trading Card Industry Integrity Framework

Adopted by the Certified Trading Card Association – 2026

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Purpose

The Trading Card Industry Integrity Framework establishes the core ethical principles, professional standards, and consumer-protection expectations that define a trustworthy, transparent, and responsible trading card ecosystem. As a signature initiative of the Certified Trading Card Association (CTCA), this framework positions the organization as the leading voice advocating for integrity across the hobby.

Vision

A trading card industry where collectors, dealers, breakers, marketplaces, manufacturers, and grading services operate with honesty, transparency, and accountability-ensuring long-term trust and sustainability for the hobby.

Scope

This framework applies to all CTCA-certified entities and serves as a model for best practices across the broader trading card industry. It covers:

- Breaker transparency
- Accurate product representation
- Fraud prevention
- Marketplace integrity
- Consumer protection
- Ethical grading and authentication practices
- Responsible marketing practices

Core Principles

1. Transparency

All industry participants must provide clear, accurate, and accessible information about products, services, and business practices.

2. Fairness

Collectors must be treated equitably, with no deceptive, manipulative, or exploitative practices.

3. Accountability

Businesses must take responsibility for their actions, correct errors promptly, and maintain systems that prevent misconduct.

4. Consumer Protection

The safety, rights, and interests of collectors must be prioritized in all transactions and interactions.

5. Integrity

Honesty and ethical conduct are foundational expectations for all certified participants.

6. Professionalism

Industry participants must uphold high standards of conduct, communication, and operational excellence.

Standards of Practice

Breaker Transparency

- Publish clear rules for all breaks.
- Disclose odds, formats, and randomization methods.
- Use verifiable, tamper-proof randomization tools.
- Stream breaks with uninterrupted visibility of all cards.
- Provide full post-break documentation.

Accurate Product Representation

- Never misrepresent the contents, condition, or value of products.
- Clearly disclose resealed, repackaged, or aftermarket products.
- Provide accurate descriptions and high-quality images.

Fraud Prevention

- Implement identity verification for high-value transactions.
- Maintain secure payment and shipping processes.
- Report fraudulent activity to CTCA and relevant authorities.
- Maintain audit trails for inventory and transactions.

Marketplace Integrity

- Enforce policies against shill bidding, price manipulation, and counterfeit listings.
- Require transparent seller histories and feedback systems.
- Provide dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Consumer Protection

- Offer clear refund, return, and dispute policies.
- Provide timely customer support.
- Maintain accurate order tracking and fulfillment.
- Protect consumer data and privacy.

Ethical Grading & Authentication Practices

- Ensure graders are trained, qualified, and conflict-free.

- Maintain consistent grading standards.
- Disclose population data and grading methodologies.
- Prohibit preferential treatment or pay-to-play grading.

Responsible Marketing Practices

- Avoid misleading claims, hype-driven manipulation, or predatory sales tactics.
 - Clearly disclose sponsored content or paid partnerships.
 - Market responsibly to minors.
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Compliance Expectations

- CTCA-certified entities must adhere to this framework as a condition of certification.
 - Violations may result in corrective action, suspension, or revocation of certification.
 - CTCA will maintain a public record of disciplinary actions to promote transparency.
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Industry Impact

The Trading Card Industry Integrity Framework establishes CTCA as the leading organization dedicated to protecting collectors and strengthening the hobby. By defining ethical norms and professional expectations, CTCA fills a long-standing gap in the industry-providing the unified standards and central voice the hobby has lacked.

Conclusion

This framework is a foundational pillar of CTCA's mission. It signals to collectors, businesses, and the broader public that integrity is not optional-it is the standard. Through this initiative, CTCA positions itself as the protector of the hobby and the steward of its future.