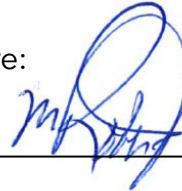


## Respectful Workplace

Effective Date: February 18, 2025

Last Revised: June 23, 2025

CAO Signature:



---

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect the right of employees to a safe workplace, free of harassment and bullying.
- To promote a respectful workplace by addressing the factors that contribute to its creation, development, and maintenance at the City of Pitt Meadows. This includes raising awareness of appropriate behavior and addressing and/or preventing workplace bullying, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility.
- To establish clear procedures for reporting complaints, conducting investigations, and resolving related concerns to workplace conduct.
- To specify that this policy is in addition to, and not in substitution for, rights all individuals have under the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*, or that workers have under the *Workers' Compensation Act* or provisions of the *Collective Agreement*.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all City of Pitt Meadows employees as well as to those at the worksite with whom City employees conduct business with and where a work relationship exists. This includes, but not limited to, exempt and union employees, elected officials or alternates, students, committee members, volunteers, contractors or other service providers engaged by the City of Pitt Meadows, and to members of the general public.

This policy applies to all sites where business activities are undertaken by employees for the City. It applies to all situations where activities are connected to

work with City employees and could impact employment during and outside of regular business hours, at and away from the workplace.

This includes:

- activities on City premises;
- work assignments outside City premises;
- work-related conferences, training sessions and seminars;
- work performed via online or digital means, including remote communication, virtual collaboration, cloud-based systems, and social media platforms used for business-related activities;
- work-related travel; and
- work-related social functions that are sponsored or organized by the City.

### 3. Exclusions

- In instances where an external investigation is approved by the CAO for a complaint made by an employee against a Council member, the Council Code of Conduct Policy and its investigative protocols will prevail.
- This policy is not intended to include conduct that a reasonable person would find to be welcome or neutral, including, but not limited to, social invitations, mutually consensual relationships, or other appropriate workplace interactions.

### 4. Definitions

In this policy,

- (1) ***British Columbia Human Rights Code***: prohibits discrimination including harassment on the basis of prohibited ground as outlined in Section 13. The prohibited grounds include race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, and conviction of a criminal or summary offence that is unrelated to the employment or the intended employment of that person.
- (2) ***Workers Compensation Act***: This policy is developed in accordance with Sections 115, 116, and 117 of the Workers Compensation Act which sets out the general duties of employers, workers, and supervisors respectively, and Guideline G-D3-115(1)-3 Bullying and Harassment, of the Workers Compensation Act.



(3) ***Bullying and Harassment:*** is any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.

- a. Bullying and harassing behavior can include:
- Verbal aggression, insults or threats;
  - Humiliating initiation practices or hazing;
  - Spreading malicious rumors;
  - Calling someone derogatory names;
  - Vandalizing personal belongings;
  - Isolation and/or exclusion from work-related activities.

The above list is not exclusive and harassment can also take place on the grounds of a persons' age, religion, or any other characteristic protected under Human Rights.

- b. Bullying and harassing behavior does not include:
- Expressing differences in opinion;
  - Offering constructive feedback, guidance or advice about work-related behavior;
  - Reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment (eg. Managing a workers' performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, assigning work).

(4) ***Bullying:*** consists of treating abusively and affecting by means of force or coercion that could hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Bullying can involve the use of negative physical contact or the use of superior strength or influence to intimidate someone, typically to force them to do something. It usually presents a pattern of behaviour that is intended to offend, degrade or humiliate a person or group of people, which has been described as the assertion of power through aggression.

(5) ***Harassment:*** one or a series of incidents of objectionable conduct, comment or act of tormenting by continued persistent attacks and criticism towards a group or individual. Harassment on prohibited grounds includes sexual harassment and personal harassment. In line with this policy, harassment also



- means any form of retaliation undertaken as a result of an individual having invoked, or in any way been involved with a complaint lodged pursuant to this policy where:
- a. such conduct might reasonably be expected to cause insecurity, discomfort, offence or humiliation to another person or group;
  - b. submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of employment;
  - c. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for any employment decision including, but not limited to matters of promotion, increases in salary, job security or benefits affecting the employee; or
  - d. such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- (6) ***Sexual Harassment***: is illegal and is a form of discriminatory harassment that may include, but is not limited to, the following actions and/or behaviours:
- a. unwanted and/or unwelcome sexual advances or attention such as remarks about appearance, conduct or personal life.
  - b. display of offensive or pornographic pictures, objects or written material.
  - c. requests for sexual favours, persistent unwelcome invitations.
  - d. comments made by e-mail, voice mail, or other conduct, comment, gesture or unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offense or humiliation to an employee.
- (7) ***Personal Harassment***: means a disruptive, work-related objectionable conduct towards a specific person, which serves no legitimate work purpose and has the effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive work environment that threatens dignity, respect and job performance. Personal harassment may include but is not limited to bullying, threats, coercion, malicious or intimidating gestures or actions, verbal assault or ostracizing, taunting, threatened or actual physical assault, humiliation, insults, rudeness, gossip, or slander.
- (8) ***Discrimination***: is illegal and includes any comments or conduct that would constitute a contravention of the BC Human Rights Code. This code currently protects against discrimination based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or that group or class of persons

- (9) ***Workplace Incivility:*** behaviours that may lack clear, harmful intent but are considered to be discourteous, impolite, abrasive, rude, or otherwise consisting of a lack of regard for others.
- (10) ***Disrespectful Conduct:*** conduct or comment that is objectionable or unprofessional and serves no legitimate work purpose and has the effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or disrespectful work environment. Such conduct, which may be physical or psychological in nature, is prohibited by this policy and by the Code if it is based on one of the prohibited grounds.
- (11) ***Complainant:*** an individual who believes that he or she has a complaint of conduct contrary to the policy and is bringing forward the complaint.
- (12) ***Respondent:*** an individual against whom an allegation(s) of conduct contrary to the policy has been made and who is responding to the allegation(s) made in the complaint.
- (13) ***Investigator:*** the person assigned to investigate the complaint. The Investigator may be the Director of Corporate Services, the Manager of Human Resources or their delegate, or, an external third party.

## 5. Policy Statements

The City of Pitt Meadows recognizes the obligation to have a respectful workplace that is free of bullying, discrimination, harassment, and incivility. All individuals are responsible for their own personal conduct and are expected to behave in a professional, respectful manner in the workplace and at activities where a work relationship exists.

The City of Pitt Meadows does not tolerate bullying, discrimination, harassment, or workplace incivility, nor will it tolerate any false complaints or complaints made in bad faith, or any reprisals towards those who report a concern or file a complaint in good faith.

Disrespectful conduct contrary to this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Complaints under the policy will be addressed in an impartial, timely and confidential matter.



## 5.1. Roles and Responsibilities

**(a) All Employees are expected to:**

- comply with the Respectful Workplace Policy and conduct themselves appropriately, within the spirit and intent of this policy, contributing towards a safe, welcoming and inclusive work environment;
- interact with others in a civil manner that must be free of bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination;
- if experiencing or witnessing behaviour that would reasonably constitute a policy violation, address such behaviour as appropriate, such as by speaking directly to the individual(s) involved, and/or reporting the behaviour to the Human Resources (HR) department, or if preferred, to a Union Representative, Manager, or member of the Corporate Leadership Team;
- be knowledgeable of, and abide by, Policy Guidelines D3-116-1, (Workers Duties) of the Workers Compensation Act;
- ensure they understand the Policy; lack of awareness of the Policy is not a defense for discriminatory or harassing behaviour; and
- attend scheduled training sessions designed to familiarize them with the policy.

**(b) Managers and Supervisors are expected to:**

- ensure the principles of the Policy are reflected in the execution of duties, operational policies and practices within their area of responsibility;
- model inclusive and professional behaviour and not participate in discriminatory or harassing behaviour;
- communicate and support this Policy by ensuring all workers under their supervision are provided with a copy of the Policy including knowledge of their rights and responsibilities;
- participate actively and take necessary action in the resolution and investigation of complaints and implement required remedial action;
- report incidents of bullying and harassment; and
- be knowledgeable of section 115 and 117 of the Worker's Compensation Act that summarizes the employers' and supervisors' responsibility in providing a safe work environment, and educating employees on safe work procedures.

**(c) Members of the union executives and shop stewards are expected to:**

- ensure enhanced employee awareness of respectful conduct in the workplace through appropriate support of City initiatives; and

- assist and support members with the complaint resolution process.

(d) **Human Resources is expected to:**

- Facilitate the complaint resolution process, including acting as investigator if required;
- review investigation reports to determine the outcome of complaints;
- inform complainants and respondents, in writing, of the outcomes of investigations;
- impose discipline or take other action, such as providing education, to improve employees' understanding of respectful workplaces; and
- ensure this Policy and related procedures are reviewed annually.

## 5.2. Prohibitions

(a) **Confidentiality:**

All persons involved in a complaint under this policy will ensure the matter is kept confidential in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation. Any unwarranted breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action against those responsible. The release of information will only be on a need to know basis during the investigation after due consultation with Human Resources.

(b) **Malicious Reports:**

An investigation may determine that a complaint is not supported and that there is no breach of this policy. Such a finding does not necessarily mean that the complaint was malicious.

Malicious complaints are those where the complainant or others know there is no foundation to the complaint and where the complaint is filed for the purpose of bringing an adverse consequence to the respondent or another employee of the City. Such complaints are a breach of this policy and any employee engaged in presentation or filing of such a complaint may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Decisions made under this process are considered final. A decision made under this process does not affect the rights of an individual to seek recourse through the collective agreement, if applicable, or through the BC Human Rights Tribunal.



### 5.3. Procedures and Guidelines

The following procedures provide guidance and direction in responding to, and resolving, complaints that are submitted in accordance with this Policy.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the procedures are to:

- Provide direction to all staff in the implementation of the Respectful Workplace Policy;
- Provide a consistent time sensitive process that is efficient and fair in resolving complaints/allegations in relation to respectful workplace issues; and
- Ensure that complaints of violations of this Policy are taken seriously, are dealt with objectively, and that every reasonable effort is made to maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

#### Complaint Handling

This Policy supports both a formal and informal approach to complaint resolution. Where appropriate, employees involved in a complaint are encouraged to utilize the informal approach to the resolution process.

In all complaint resolutions, the identity of the complainant and the nature of the complaint will be made known to the individual alleged to have engaged in disrespectful behaviour (the Respondent). The respondent will be provided an opportunity to explain their behaviour and to have such explanations properly considered.

##### **(a) Informal Complaint Resolution**

Before a formal process becomes necessary, an employee who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment or bullying may be encouraged, if comfortable, to bring the matter to the attention of the individual responsible and advise them that the conduct is unwelcome, describing the behaviours or actions that were considered inappropriate and unwelcome, and communicate that the behaviour should cease immediately and not be repeated. The employee may also consider seeking assistance from their supervisor/manager, union representative or a Health and Safety Committee member.



If the conduct persists, or if the individual does not feel comfortable dealing with the person responsible for the conduct, the individual may submit their concern in writing to either their Manager or Human Resources who will review with the individual the options for resolution.

The Manager or Human Resources, as applicable, will meet with the parties (either separately or together) and attempt to mediate a resolution that is acceptable to both parties. If a solution is reached, the complaint will be deemed resolved.

### **(b) Formal Complaint Resolution**

Should the employee feel the informal complaint resolution process was unsuccessful or not possible; the employee may proceed with filing a formal complaint. This should be done within ten (10) calendar days from the date of incident or date resolution was attempted, using the Respectful Workplace Complaint Form as established by the Manager of Human Resources.

**The Respectful Workplace Complaint Form will be forwarded to individual(s) designated for the management of formal complaints as follows:**

- Human Resources, for all complaints involving individuals of the level of Managers and below except for those employees in the Human Resources Department;
- The CAO, for complaints involving Directors and all staff in the Human Resources Department;
- The Director of Corporate Services, for all complaints involving the CAO;
- The CAO, for all complaints involving a member of Council.

Upon receipt of the Respectful Workplace Complaint Form, Human Resources and the individual(s) designated for the management of the complaint will do a preliminary review of the Complaint Form and this Policy to assess whether the complaint falls within the scope of this Policy. They will also review the substance of the allegation(s) in the complaint to determine whether the subject matter in the complaint is something that, if true, constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined under this Policy.



The complaint will then either be investigated within fifteen (15) calendar days or be dismissed if it would not constitute a violation of this Policy or the Human Rights Code.

If the complaint is dismissed, Human Resources or designated individual will inform the complainant of the reasons in writing.

If the complaint progresses to a formal investigation, the individual(s) designated for the management of the complaint will have the discretion to conduct the investigation internally through Human Resources or externally by appointing a neutral third party. If it is determined that an investigation is warranted, the Investigator will follow the procedures as outlined below. Time limits provided in the Code prevail where an individual wishes to file a formal complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

#### When the Respondent is a Council Member

Where the CAO approves a formal investigation to be conducted on a complaint where the respondent is a Council member, the CAO will appoint an external investigator and the Council Code of Conduct Policy and its established protocols will prevail.

#### Steps of Formal Investigative Process:

- a. The investigators (Human Resources or External Investigator) are to act as fact finders and will not be responsible for determining if there is a breach of this Policy or any outcomes of the investigation. These investigators will be appropriately trained.
- b. The investigation will be conducted as quickly as possible. The complainant will be contacted by an investigator within two working days of the complaint being accepted for investigation.
- c. The respondent will be provided with the complainant's name and information on the particulars of the complaint and offered an opportunity to respond.
- d. The complainant, the respondent, and any individuals who may be able to provide relevant information will be interviewed individually and their responses summarized. Each party has the right to be accompanied by, or represented by, a person of their choice.



- e. When the investigation is complete, the investigators will file a report, which will summarize the allegations, responses and findings. The report will not contain a recommendation on findings.
- f. The decision-maker of the complaint may find one, the other, or both parties in contravention of this Policy. Making the final decision and determining culpability and discipline will be the sole responsibility of these designated individual(s).
  - Director of Corporate Services, for all complaints involving individuals of the level of employees and managers (except for those employees and managers in the Human Resources Department);
  - The CAO, for all complaints involving Directors and all staff in the Human Resources Department;
  - The Director of Corporate Services, for all complaints involving the CAO; and
  - City Council, for all complaints where the respondent is a member of Council, as per the Council Code of Conduct Policy which will prevail in these instances.
- g. Both the complainant and respondent will be informed in writing of the decision. Human Resources will meet with the respondent, his or her Manager and any other parties deemed relevant to the proceedings to discuss the findings of the investigator's report, to review this Policy, and to outline the actions to be taken to remedy the situation. The respondent will be invited to involve a support person.
- h. The decision-maker will consider remedy or discipline options including but not limited to individual or group education, job site or position transfer, training, mediation counselling, no contact for a period of time, temporary or permanent changes to reporting structures or work assignments, and discipline up to and including termination of appointment.
- i. Where appropriate, such determination will be reviewed with the CAO. The approved decision by the CAO is considered final.

#### 5.4. Grievance/Appeal Process

If a complaint or respondent is not satisfied with the final decision in respect to the complaint, the following avenues may be considered:



- a. Bargaining Unit employees – decisions relating to a respectful workplace complaint may be grieved by a member of the bargaining unit;
- b. Management and Exempt employees – see the Manager of Human Resources for more information;
- c. A WorkSafe BC complaint; or
- d. Complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

### 5.5. Documentation

- a. Human Resources will maintain all documentation pertaining to the complaint in a confidential manner.
- b. When the allegations are not proven and there is no disciplinary action, there will be no records of the complaint placed in the personnel files of the complainant, the witnesses or the respondent.
- c. Where a complaint is substantiated, the incident will be recorded in the respondent's file.

### 5.6 Training

Training will occur as required and policy review will be included in orientation. Training for all staff will include the following:

- a. How to recognize bullying, harassment and discrimination;
- b. How staff who experience or witness bullying and harassment should respond;
- c. Procedures for reporting and how the employer follows up with incidents and complaints;
- d. Documentation/forms review.

### 5.7 Annual Review

This program and these procedures will be reviewed annually. All workers will be advised and educated on this Policy when they are hired through the employee orientation process.

## 6. Related Policies

Other related policies include:

- a. Employee Code of Conduct Policy A020
- b. Customer Service Policy A038
- c. Council Code of Conduct Policy C100