



# Staff Report

## Administration – Chief Administrative Officer

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**Report To:** COW-Finance, Admin, Fire, Community Services  
**Meeting Date:** November 27, 2023  
**Report Number:** FAF.23.176  
**Title:** Employee Code of Conduct and Respectful Workplace Policies  
**Prepared by:** Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.23.176, entitled “Employee Code of Conduct and Respectful Workplace Policies”;

AND THAT Council approve the new Corporate Policy entitled “Employee Code of Conduct, POL.COR.23.XX”;

AND THAT Council repeal corporate policy “Workplace Violence and Harassment, POL.COR.18.08” and replace with two (2) new Corporate Policies, “Respectful Workplace, POL.COR.23.XX and Workplace Violence, POL.COR.23.XX.”

### B. Overview

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This report recommends that Council approve a new Corporate Policy entitled “Employee Code of Conduct” and that Council repeal the current Corporate Policy, Workplace Violence, and Harassment, and replace it with two (2) new Corporate Policies entitled “Respectful Workplace” and “Workplace Violence”.

### C. Background

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#### Employee Code of Conduct Policy

A code of conduct is important as it provides employees with clear guidelines for their behaviour and performance. Understanding the rules, policies, and expectations not only helps prospective employees gauge their fit within the organization, it also helps current employees excel in their roles.

Although the Town has a number of policies outlining the standards and behaviours expected from employees within the workplace, the Town has not instituted an Employee Code of Conduct. Following a comprehensive policy review conducted by the Human Resources Division, a recommendation was presented to the Senior Management Team proposing the development of a Code of Conduct for Employees. An updated Code of Conduct for Members

of Council, Local Boards and Advisory Committees Policy [POL.COR.21.06](#) was approved by Council on November 22, 2021. It is important to note that the draft Employee Code of Conduct outlines rules, policies, and procedures that Town employees are already expected to follow.

### **Workplace Violence and Harassment Policies**

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) mandates that employers have a policy and program to address workplace violence and harassment. The policy and program prioritizes the safety and well-being of employees. It provides guidelines and procedures to prevent, address, and respond to incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace, thereby creating a safer and more secure environment for employees.

The workplace violence program must include measures and procedures for:

- Controlling risks identified in the assessment of risks;
- Summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur; and
- Workers to report incidents of workplace violence.

Workplace violence programs must also set out how the employer will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints of workplace violence and domestic violence.

The workplace harassment program must include:

- Measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace harassment to the employer or supervisor, or to report to a person other than the employer or supervisor if the employer or supervisor is the alleged harasser;
- How incidents or complaints of workplace harassment will be investigated and dealt with, and how confidentiality will be maintained; and
- How the results of the investigation will be provided to the worker who allegedly experienced workplace harassment and the alleged harasser.

Through a review of the current Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy, [POL.COR.18.08](#), Staff recommend implementing two distinct policies, “Respectful Workplace” and “Workplace Violence”, while adhering to OHSA requirements, to provide greater clarity regarding the expectations and procedures associated with respectful workplace behaviour and violence prevention.

## **D. Analysis**

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### **Employee Code of Conduct Policy**

Staff recommend the adoption of an Employee Code of Conduct which outlines the expected behaviour and standards for all Town employees. While a Code of Conduct cannot address every ethical situation, it serves as a guide to help employees navigate

ethical dilemmas, avoid conflicts of interest, and maintain public trust. Adherence to these standards is critical for the reputation of the Town and its employees.

This policy aligns with the Town's core values of Excellence, Integrity, Accountability, Inclusivity, and Stewardship. These values reflect the Town's commitment to fostering a positive culture and promoting respect, acceptance, and inclusiveness.

The proposed Code of Conduct outlines the following key principles:

- Professionalism, ethics, and courtesy in all interactions
- Fostering a safe and healthy workplace
- Compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and policies
- Responsible and appropriate use of municipal resources
- Conducting business with integrity
- Procedures for addressing conflicts of interest and reporting policy violations

The Employee Code of Conduct will operate in conjunction with collective agreements, contracts, legislative requirements, and professional standards relevant to the employee's job.

The draft Code of Conduct was made available to all staff for review and some additional feedback received has been incorporated.

Once Council approves the final Employee Code of Conduct, a copy will be posted on the Town's website, and appropriate review and sign-off for all staff will commence. As outlined in the draft policy, compliance with the Code of Conduct is a condition of employment for all Town employees. At the time of hiring, new employees will sign an acknowledgment certifying that they have read, understood, and will comply with the Code.

Annually, employees will complete an online acknowledgment certifying that they have read, understood, and will continue to comply with the Code.

### **Respectful Workplace and Workplace Violence Policies**

Staff are recommending breaking out the "Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy, [POL.COR.18.08](#) into two separate policies, "Respectful Workplace" and "Workplace Violence" to provide clear and distinct guidelines for the different types of workplace issues. This clarity is intended to help employees better understand and address specific concerns related to respectful behaviour and violence.

Different types of workplace issues require different approaches. The Respectful Workplace policy aims to create a respectful workplace by promoting positive communication, diversity, equity, inclusion, fairness, and teamwork. Additions to the draft Respectful Workplace policy include:

- A statement regarding the Town’s commitment to maintaining a positive and inclusive workplace where all individuals are responsible for promoting respectful communication, embracing diversity and equity, encouraging fair and considerate treatment, and fostering teamwork and open dialogue
- Examples of disrespectful behaviour
- Definitions for “Psychological Safety”, “Respectful Workplace”, “Systemic Discrimination” and “Workplace”

The Workplace Violence Policy has also been updated to ensure the safety and security of all employees. The revised policy covers:

- Definitions of workplace violence and an added definition of “Workplace”
- Reporting procedure for potential threats or violent incidents
- Procedures for addressing such incidents, including prevention and response
- The importance of a supportive workplace culture

The separate policies will allow for more focused training and awareness programs. Employees will receive specialized training on creating a respectful workplace culture and training on recognizing and addressing potential violence in a separate session.

Having two policies will also make it clearer for employees to understand where and how to report incidents or concerns, simplifying the reporting process and ensuring that the appropriate reporting channels are used. These two new draft policies were reviewed and endorsed by the Town’s Joint Health & Safety Committee.

### **Additional Respectful Workplace Program Initiatives**

Town employees report experiencing a noticeable uptick in encounters with disrespectful behaviour from the public. Examples involve instances where individuals engage in discourteous, rude, or impolite interactions with employees during the course of their work. This increase in disrespectful public interactions can have various implications, including potential impacts on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall workplace atmosphere.

In response to these challenges and with Council's approval of the “Respectful Workplace” and “Workplace Violence” policies, and accompanying the rollout of the policies, staff will undertake the following initiatives to enhance the Respectful Workplace & Workplace Violence program:

1. **Review of the Respectful Public Interactions Policy [POL.COR.22.07](#) with Employees:**  
This policy is intended to guide staff in identifying situations that meet the criteria of inappropriate behaviour by members of the public, and the associated actions that may be taken in such circumstances.

The policy aims to promote a positive, safe, and supportive environment for interactions between members of the public and Town staff that encourage respect, commitment, and considerate relationships.

2. **Respectful Workplace Posters:** Staff will be adding new Respectful Workplace posters in all Town-owned facilities open to the public. This poster was designed by Human Resources and Communications staff, in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee. A sample poster is included in this report as Attachment 4.
3. **Activating the Town's Phone System Recording:** All inbound and outbound phone calls from Town Hall will be recorded for quality assurance and training purposes. Call records will be retained for 6-months at which point they will be permanently deleted. The phone system recording will be activated as of January 1, 2024. Communication with staff and the public will be provided in advance.
4. **Additional Training:** Utilizing an external consultant, training will be provided for all staff on respectful workplace practices, dealing with difficult customers, and communicating effectively with the public. This training is scheduled for 2024.

## Conclusion

In summary, it is recommended that the Council approve the adoption of the new "Employee Code of Conduct" policy and repeal the existing corporate policy, Workplace Violence and Harassment, and replace it with the two new "Respectful Workplace" and "Workplace Violence" policies. This transition to two separate policies is an important step towards creating a more inclusive, respectful, and safe workplace. These policies are designed to align with best practices and legal requirements, providing clear guidelines for employee behaviour and a comprehensive framework for addressing conduct and safety issues. Approving these changes demonstrates the Town's commitment to a positive workplace culture and employee well-being, ultimately positioning the Town for continued success and growth.

To ensure all staff have a clear understanding of and adhere to the new policies, training sessions and resources will be provided to help employees become familiar with the Employee Code of Conduct, as well as the revised Respectful Workplace and Workplace Violence policies.

## E. Strategic Priorities

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### 1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders.

### 2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

## F. Environmental Impacts

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None.

## G. Financial Impacts

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**Additional Training:** For consideration in the 2024 budget, there is an increase of \$40,000 to the Human Resources operating budget under corporate training for an external training provider to facilitate training for all staff on respectful workplace practices, dealing with difficult customers, and communicating effectively with the public.

**Activating the Town's Phone System Recording:** The cost for activating the Town's phone systems is \$4/per user/per month. For all users, this will result in an annual cost of \$8700.

## H. In Consultation With

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Jen Patton, HR/ Health and Safety Advisor

Sarah Traynor, Manager of Human Resources

Tim Hendry, Manager of Communication and Economic Development

Will Wray, Manager of IT

## I. Public Engagement

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The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer [cao@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:cao@thebluemountains.ca).

## J. Attached

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1. Draft Employee Code of Conduct
2. Draft Respectful Workplace Policy
3. Draft Workplace Violence Policy
4. TBM Respectful Workplace Poster

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Everitt  
Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:  
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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	FAF.23.176 Employee Code of Conduct and Respectful Workplace Policies.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment-1-Draft-Employee-Code-of-Conduct.pdf - Attachment-2-Draft-Respectful-Workplace-Policy.pdf - Attachment-3-Draft-Workplace-Violence-Policy.pdf - Attachment-4-TBM-Respectful-Workplace-Poster.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 17, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Shawn Everitt - Nov 17, 2023 - 8:07 AM**