



# Respectful Workplace

Human Resources  
Policy L19

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<b>Policy:</b>	L19 – Respectful Workplace
<b>Policy Department(s):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Adoption Reference:</b>	CM20220307.022
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Last Amended:</b>	N/A

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## Policy Purpose

The County of Grande Prairie is committed to making safety our way of life and working to ensure that all employees and Councillors are treated with dignity and respect. The purpose of this policy is to outline the County's commitment to creating workplaces free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and violence.

## Policy Statement

This policy outlines our commitment to protecting both the physical and psychological safety of our employees and Councillors and to create a work environment that contributes to employee health and well-being.

## Definitions

"Allegation" means a statement or complaint, made without giving proof, that someone has done something wrong or illegal;

"Bullying" means a repeated pattern of unwelcome behaviour perpetrated by one or more individuals that is intended to intimidate, embarrass, offend, degrade, or humiliate a particular group or person;

"Complaint" means when an employee or customer makes an allegation of a contravention or offense against the Respectful Workplace Policy, Alberta Human Rights Act, or Occupational Health & Safety Act (Part 2);

"Complainant(s)": means the individual or group of individuals who submit a complaint;

"Councillor" means a duly elected member of Council under the Municipal Government Act to represent a Division of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 who continues to hold office;

"County" means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation;



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“County Work Locations” includes any area in which employees are engaged in work for the County of Grande Prairie. This includes offices, shops, County-owned vehicles, remote workspaces, or any location in which an employee is performing work for the County;

“Discrimination” means a distinction, whether intentional or not, directed at a person or class of persons based on prohibited grounds such as race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. Discrimination relates to the personal characteristics of an individual or group with the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on, or withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, and advantages that are available to others;

“Employee” includes a person directly or indirectly employed by the County or any person affiliated with the County including volunteers, and independent contractors;

“Harassment” includes unwelcomed physical, threatening, or intimidating verbal conduct because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation;

“Investigator” means a director or designate, manager, County representative, or Human Resources team member, who assists, leads, or conducts an investigation related to bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence;

“Respectful Workplace” means an environment that values integrity, professionalism, fairness, understanding, diversity, and accountability for one’s action;

“Respondent(s)” means an individual or individuals about whom a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence is made;

“Prohibited Grounds” means race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation;

“Psychological Safety” means the absence of harm, threat of harm, or risk to mental well-being;

“Sexual Harassment” means any unwelcome sexual behaviour that adversely affects, or threatens to affect, directly or indirectly, a person's job security, working conditions, or prospects for promotion or earnings; or prevents a person from getting a job, living accommodations, or any kind of public service;

“Violence” means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury whether at work or work-related.

## Policy Guidelines

1. This policy applies to all County of Grande Prairie Employees and Councillors.



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2. The County of Grande Prairie recognizes the importance of providing a healthy and safe workplace that promotes psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to mental health from negligent, reckless, or intentional conduct.
3. The County will not tolerate or accept bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence from any person at or around the worksite including any area in which Employees and Councillors are engaged in work for the County. These types of behaviours can lead to compromised productivity, illness, increased stress levels, absenteeism, poor morale, and employee turnover.
4. The County is committed to ensuring appropriate prevention programs and procedures are established to prevent, eliminate, control, or minimize these inappropriate behaviours, and will make reasonable effort to prevent and respond to workplace conduct that does not comply with this policy. All Employees, Councillors and affiliates of the County are obligated to uphold this policy and must work together to promote a workplace free from violence, discrimination, bullying and harassment.
5. All Employees and Councillors are to maintain a high standard of ethical and professional conduct by being:
  - 5.1. Trustworthy in our decision-making and interpersonal relationships
  - 5.2. Transparent in our communications
  - 5.3. Respectful of others
  - 5.4. Collaborative in achieving our goals
6. Employees and Councillors must be educated on the recognition and management of incidents involving bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence.
7. The County is committed to appropriately investigating all allegations of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence in an objective and timely manner and take appropriate corrective action to address conduct in violation of this policy.
8. The County is committed to providing appropriate support for those affected by incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence.
9. Summarily, the County is committed to these guiding principles:
  - 9.1. To maintain a common understanding of the expectations and behaviours considered appropriate and inappropriate in County work locations and in the delivery of or access to County services.
  - 9.2. To prevent and manage inappropriate workplace behaviour in County work locations.



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- 9.3. Recognizing that conflict, disagreement, or inappropriate workplace behaviour may occur, the County expects these issues to be resolved in a manner that contributes to the workplace in a positive way.
- 9.4. To assess and respond in a timely manner to allegations of inappropriate workplace behaviour as necessary.
10. Nothing in this policy is intended to discourage an employee from exercising their rights pursuant to any other law including the Alberta Human Rights Act.

### Attachments

Schedule 'A' – Respectful Workplace Procedure

Schedule 'B' – Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer

Schedule 'C' – Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints

Schedule 'D' – Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques

Schedule 'E' – Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours

### References

<b>Legal Authorities</b>	Alberta Human Rights Act Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Occupational Health and Safety Act (Part 2) & Code (Part 27)
<b>Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.</b>	Policy B1 – Policy Development Policy L17 – Anti-Racism Policy
<b>Other</b>	N/A

### Revision History

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
Month Day, Year	Reviewed and Amended #CM(motion number)
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## Schedule 'A' – Respectful Workplace Procedure

<b>Procedure:</b>	Respectful Workplace Procedure
<b>Associated Policy:</b>	Policy L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Procedure Department(s):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
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## Purpose

A procedure to support implementing the County's Respectful Workplace Policy. This procedure outlines expectations for and actions that must be taken to support a respectful workplace.

## Definitions

"Allegation" means a statement or complaint, made without giving proof, that someone has done something wrong or illegal;

"Bad Faith" means the intent to deceive or to be intentionally dishonest. A complaint made in bad faith may be frivolous or vexatious. A frivolous complaint is petty, insignificant, completely without factual basis, has no prospect of success. A vexatious complaint is a complaint that brings up an issue that has already been decided, or one that is without reasonable cause, brought maliciously to harass another person;

"Bullying" means a repeated pattern of unwelcome behaviour perpetrated by one or more individuals that is intended to intimidate, embarrass, offend, degrade, or humiliate a particular group or person;

"Business Purpose" is something which is in the best interest of the County. A justifiable reason for doing something or taking a particular course of action such as obtaining, gathering, and using information for carrying out the administration of the County to create a safe workplace or viable operations;

"Complaint" means when an Employee or customer makes an allegation of a contravention or offense against the Respectful Workplace Policy, Alberta Human Rights Act, or Occupational Health & Safety Act (Part 2);

"Complainant(s)" means the individual or group of individuals who submit a complaint;

"Councillor" means a duly elected member of Council under the Municipal Government Act to represent a Division of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 who continues to hold office;

"County Work Locations" includes any area in which employees are engaged in work for the County of Grande Prairie. This includes offices, shops, County-owned vehicles, remote workspaces, or any location in which an employee is performing work for the County;



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“Discrimination” means a distinction, whether intentional or not, directed at a person or class of persons based on prohibited grounds such as race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. Discrimination relates to the personal characteristics of an individual or group with the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on, or withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, and advantages that are available to others;

“Employee” includes a person directly or indirectly employed by the County or any person affiliated with the County including volunteers, and independent contractors;

“Good faith” means done in an honest and sincere way, without malice or intent to deceive;

“Harassment” includes unwelcomed physical, threatening, or intimidating verbal conduct because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation;

“Investigator” means a director or designate, manager, County representative, or Human Resources team member, who assists, leads, or conducts an investigation related to bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence;

“Manager” means a person in authority and in charge of others and includes a manager, supervisor, and foreman;

“Prohibited Grounds” means race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation;

“Psychological Safety” means the absence of harm, threat of harm, or risk to mental well-being;

“Respectful Workplace” means an environment that values integrity, professionalism, fairness, understanding, diversity, and accountability for one’s action;

“Respondent(s)” means an individual or individuals about whom a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence is made;

“Retaliation” means to hurt or attempt to hurt somebody in return, to deliberately harm or attempt to harm somebody in response or revenge for an action he or she has done;

“Sexual Harassment” means any unwelcome sexual behaviour that adversely affects, or threatens to affect, directly or indirectly, a person’s job security, working conditions, or prospects for promotion or earnings; or prevents a person from getting a job, living accommodations, or any kind of public service;

“Support Person” means an independent third party who can provide practical and emotional support to the respondent or complainant. Examples of a support person include co-worker, an employee of the County, or a member of the public;

“Violence” means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury whether at work or work-related.



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## Procedure

1. To promote and encourage a respectful workplace, the County expects its Employees and Councillors to:
  - 1.1. Ensure the highest standard of conduct amongst its Employees and Councillors to maintain and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the County.
  - 1.2. Treat others in the workplace with professionalism, respect, and dignity and not engage in any form of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence.
  - 1.3. Be respectful and considerate in interactions with one another, as well as with customers, contractors, and the public. Incivility will not be tolerated.
  - 1.4. Ensure a safe work environment that is free from all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence.
  - 1.5. When aware of an incident or receive a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence involving themselves, co-workers, or members of the public, report it to their Director, Manager, or human resources department.
  - 1.6. Use appropriate conduct and language in County Work Locations and follow acceptable workplace standards while contributing to a positive work environment.
  - 1.7. Ensure their conduct will not compromise the integrity, reputation, or credibility of the County.
  - 1.8. Not act in a manner which the Employee or Councillor knew or ought reasonably to have known would harm or cause offense, humiliation, degradation, or embarrassment, or which generally causes a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment or adversely affects the health and safety of an Employee(s) or Councillor.
  - 1.9. Identify hazards to psychological safety that could cause harm to the Employee's or Councillor's mental health as part of the hazard identification process. Such identified hazards must be assessed and controlled as part of the hazard assessment process.
  - 1.10. Assist in preventing incidents of harassment and violence.
  - 1.11. Participate in worksite risk assessments and implement control measures to mitigate risks as required.
  - 1.12. Cooperate with Directors, Managers, and other County representatives regarding this Policy.
  - 1.13. Be familiar with and comply with this Policy, and report incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence to their Directors, Managers, or human resources.



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## Appropriate Workplace Behaviours:

2. In general, behaviours that are encouraged are those which support and create a healthy, respectful workplace and its related business objectives.

## Inappropriate Workplace Behaviours:

3. The following behaviours are prohibited in the workplace:
  - 3.1. Incivility
  - 3.2. Bullying
  - 3.3. Discrimination
  - 3.4. Harassment, including sexual harassment
  - 3.5. Violence
4. See Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours Procedure for examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.

## Incivility in the Workplace

5. Incivility in the workplace can be signs of or precursors to bullying and psychological harassment. If not addressed, incivility can lead to negative consequences such as unsafe work environments and lost productivity. The County will ensure that incivility will be eliminated as much as possible and will promote a respectful workplace.
6. A respectful workplace covers a range of behaviours that shows the difference of how a conversation or actions can change from respectful to disrespectful. The seriousness of disrespectful conduct escalates from left to right. Employees and Councillors need to be aware of how their actions may be interpreted and cause issues within the workplace and how it applies to this policy.

Respectful Workplace Continuum	Misunderstandings	Incivility	Conflict	Covert psychological bullying	Overt psychological bullying	Physically bullying	Racial discrimination	Psychological sexual harassment	Physical sexual harassment	Physical violence
	Miscommunication that results in a person feeling wronged	Act of rudeness to a peer	Verbal or written argument between two workers	Omission of a peer from activities	Name calling in-person or online, known as cyber bullying	Physically preventing a person from moving	Use of racial pejorative terms to describe a peer	Making comments to a person about their body	Touching a person in a sexual, non-consensual way	Throwing an object at another person

Source: Howatt HR

## Workplace Bullying

7. Workplace bullying is a repeated pattern of negative behaviour intended to intimidate, offend, degrade, or humiliate a particular person or group. Bullying may include the use of force, coercion, threats, abuse, or aggression. There are different types of bullying including physical, verbal, social (spreading rumors), and cyberbullying. The behavior is often repeated and habitual. Workplace bullying is often subtle, so it is important to be aware and alert when identifying bullying.



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8. Bullying usually causes psychological rather than physical harm. It can also be the assertion of power through aggression. It is not a result of accidental exclusion or slight and is rarely comprised of one event.
9. To determine whether or not workplace bullying has occurred, each situation must be looked at reasonably and objectively, based on the specific facts. Bullying does not include action motivated through the exercise, in good faith, of the County's managerial/supervisory rights and responsibilities, such as defining performance expectations, coaching, offering objective feedback, performance appraisal, work assignments, and the implementation of disciplinary action. It also does not include mutually accepted social interactions provided the interactions are respectful and there is no negative impact on the work environment.
10. Anyone can be a bully including a manager, supervisor, co-worker, subordinate employee, client, member of the public, contractor. A person may engage in bullying behaviour to further their agenda at the expense of others, deny responsibility for their behaviour, or target someone they feel is a threat.

### **Discrimination**

11. Discrimination occurs when actions or behaviours result in unfavourable treatment, or which have a negative impact on an individual or group because of one or more of the prohibited grounds listed in the Human Rights Act. All persons are treated equally at the County in dignity, rights, and responsibilities without regard to race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation.
12. Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional but regardless will not be tolerated. The County will ensure that all County Work Locations are free from all types of discrimination. The County has a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory words or actions, including sexual harassment and discrimination.
13. It is not discrimination when a refusal, limitation, or preference is based on a bonafide occupational requirement or when it is shown that the alleged discrimination was reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances.
14. The County also has an Anti-Racism Policy which acknowledges its role and responsibility in protecting Employee and Councillor rights to be free from racial discrimination and racism.

### **Harassment**

15. Harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct by an Employee or Councillor, that was known or ought to have reasonably been known would harm or cause offense,



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humiliation, degradation, or embarrassment, or which generally causes a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment or otherwise adversely affects the health and safety of an Employee or Councillor.

16. Harassment can include verbal or physical abuse threats, derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendo, or taunts. Harassment can also be a form of discrimination when it relates to any prohibited grounds of discrimination including the Alberta Human Rights Act. Harassment can also arise from displaying pornographic images, racist or offensive signs or images, practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, and unwelcomed invitations or requests. Bullying can also be harassment when the behaviour focuses on treating people differently because of protected rights in Canada.
17. Harassment may arise from a single event or a sequence of events over time. It does not include actions in good faith, of the County's managerial/supervisory rights and responsibilities. Reasonable actions taken by Managers or supervisors while managing and directing Employees are not considered harassment.

### **Sexual Harassment**

18. Sexual harassment is any single or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcomed behaviour that is sexual in nature and has negative effects. It is based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. It can be any unwelcome sexual behaviour that adversely affects, or threatens to affect, directly or indirectly, a person's job security, working conditions, or prospects for promotion or earnings; or prevents a person from getting a job, living accommodations, or any kind of public service

### **Workplace Violence**

19. Workplace violence can put an Employee's or Councillor's or a group of Employees' health and safety at risk for physical or psychological harm.
20. Acts of violence can take the form of threats or physical contact. The threat of violence, either apparent or concealed, can be just as detrimental and damaging as the physical act itself. Acts of violence may occur as a single event or may involve a continuing series of events and create a risk to the health and safety of an Employee or Councillor or multiple Employees. For the procedure for dealing with violence and threats from the public, please review Appendix B.
21. In the event of physical violence, verbal threats to life, or weapons, the Lockdown Procedure is to be implemented.

### **Domestic Violence**

22. Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom the person has or has had a personal relationship, including



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dating, marriage, adult interdependent partnerships, custody, blood relationships, and adoption.

23. Behaviours can range from subtle, intimidating behaviours to violent acts that result in physical harm or death. Domestic violence can include physical violence, sexual abuse, financial control, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and using electronic devices to harass and control.
24. Domestic violence becomes a workplace hazard when it occurs at or spills over into, the workplace. It may put the targeted worker at risk and may pose a threat to co-workers. Domestic violence may cause productivity and performance issues while at work. When a domestic violence incident occurs in County Work Locations, the organization will be required to investigate. If the investigation shows that an Employee commits an act of domestic violence on County property, they may be subject to corrective action, up to and including dismissal for just cause.
25. Employees are eligible to take Domestic Violence Leave as provided by the Alberta Employment Standards Act. This leave allows an Employee to take job-protected leave to seek medical attention or counseling for physical or psychological injury caused by domestic violence for themselves or a dependent, to obtain services from a victim services organization, to relocate, or to seek legal or law enforcement assistance.

### **Education of Policy**

26. The County is committed to informing all Employees and Councillors of the existence of the Respectful Workplace policy and taking steps that are reasonable to inform its Employees and Councillors of the importance of psychological safety and a safe and respectful workplace. Employees and Councillors will be trained on how to recognize signs of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence. Employees and Councillors are also trained on how to deal with immediate management of situations including protecting themselves, and their co-workers. If they feel threatened at all, initiate the Lockdown Procedure, and call 911.
27. Employees and Councillors will receive training on how to conduct incident investigations, respond to emergencies, resolve problems, and how to recognize signs of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence.
28. Employees or Councillors that are dealing with concerns regarding respectful workplace issues are invited to speak with their supervisor or Human Resources at any time. The County also has an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) that Employees and Councillors can access confidentially at any time. Contact Human Resources if you need support in access this program.



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## Documentation

29. Employees and Councillors are to keep a written record of incidents (dates, times, locations, possible witnesses, what happened, response to the situation). The Employee or Councillor should also document what action (if any) was taken to stop the inappropriate workplace behaviour. It is important to note that a record of events is not necessary to file a complaint, but a record can assist the complainant to provide more details.

## Investigation Procedure

30. Please see Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints. This is the process that the County will take in investigating internal complaints and concerns.
31. The County will also investigate a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence which is made by a customer against an Employee or Councillor, or an individual affiliated with the County. See Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from Customer.
- 31.1. The Human Resources department may decide not to proceed with an investigation if:
- 31.2. There is no indication that the complaint would fall under the scope of this policy
- 31.3. If there is a significant delay between when the alleged events occurred and the filing of a complaint (more than 6 months)
32. If an investigation determines that the complaint was made in bad faith, the Complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Alternate Resolution

33. While the County prefers to resolve respectful workplace situations internally, in cases where the offensive conduct mirrors the grounds contained in Alberta's Human Rights legislation, a Human Rights complaint may also be filed up to one year after the alleged incident(s) occurred. In the case where the same incident was investigated by the County, the Respondent's department will reimburse the respondent for legal costs to a maximum set by the Chief Administrative Officer in defending the complaint. The Employee or Councillor will need to be actively employed by the County to receive reimbursement for legal costs if approved by the Chief Administrative Officer.

## Protecting Our Employees

34. To protect the interest of our Employees and Councillors, all information will remain confidential except where required by law.
35. Regardless of the outcome of a complaint made in good faith, the County will ensure that there is no retaliation, intimidation, or harassment directed towards any Employee or Councillor who makes a complaint under this policy or serves as a witness to an incident.



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This includes harassment, demotion, unwanted transfer, or denial of opportunities within the organization. If any Employee or Councillor feels that they are being retaliated against, they are to notify human resources or the Chief Administrative Officer as soon as possible.

36. If an employee has an injury or adverse symptoms resulting from a workplace incident addressed in this policy, they are welcome to consult with a health professional of their choice for treatment and referral. If treatments are required by a health professional during work hours, the employee will be compensated for work time missed and the use of accrued sick time is not required.
37. If a respectful workplace incident has had a negative impact on a team or department, the organization will take steps to support Employees and Councillors and improve the workplace by taking such actions as debriefing with a qualified medical professional, bringing awareness to the situation, or education/training where required.

### **Restoration of the Workplace After an Investigation**

38. The County will attempt to minimize any negative impact from an investigation and to re-establish a positive working environment. Measures will be taken to protect our Employees and Councillors, maintain confidentiality, and restore the workplace. Workplace restoration may include:
  - 38.1. Re-establishing respectful working relationships
  - 38.2. Build trust amongst employees after an investigation
  - 38.3. Minimize the disruptive impact of an investigation
39. This will depend on the nature of the investigation, the willingness of the parties, and the working relationship of those involved. Once both the respondent and complainant have been advised of the outcome of the investigation, the County will help the parties re-integrate properly to the workplace. Re-integration of the workplace may include coaching sessions to educate on responsibilities and expectations going forward, conversations between the respondent and the complainant to help repair collaboration and the working environment or take steps to address systemic concerns (improved communication, respect, increased transparency) as an outcome of the investigation. The County will assist in both the short and long-term needs of all involved in an investigation.

### **COMPLIANCE**

40. Any non-compliance with County policies could result in corrective action as per Policy L7 Personnel Policy, Section 19: Corrective Action and Dismissal. This may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Non-compliance with this administrative directive includes but is not limited to:
  - 40.1. Failure to self-report an act of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence to a Director or Manager.



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- 40.2. Failure by a Manager or Director who is aware of an incident or complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence to conduct an investigation.
- 40.3. Intentional interference with or deliberately impeding the investigation of a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence by any person for whom the County is responsible.
- 40.4. Retaliation against a person who makes a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence by any person for whom the County is responsible.
- 40.5. Filing a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence in bad faith.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**Chief Administrative Officer** is responsible for:

- Supporting, promoting, and fostering the principles of this Policy in all their work and interactions;
- Maintaining confidentiality and employee privacy regarding this policy;
- Fostering an organizational culture that promotes psychological health and safety including a harassment-free work environment.

**Directors, Managers, and Supervisors** are responsible for:

- Fostering an organizational culture that promotes psychological health and safety including a harassment-free work environment;
- Setting an example about appropriate workplace behaviour;
- Ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that employees under their supervision are not subject to harassment or violence;
- Ensuring that this policy is applied in a timely, consistent, and confidential manner;
- Ensuring managers, supervisors and employees are educated and trained on this policy;
- Being knowledgeable about and able to recognize the signs of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence;
- Ensuring every reported incident of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence is investigated;
- Ensuring situations are dealt with sensitively and confidentially;
- Identifying any situations that may cause concern regarding an employee's ability to safely perform his or her job functions and discuss any such situations with the Human Resources Manager or designate;
- Maintaining confidentiality and employee privacy regarding this policy;
- Providing appropriate support for employees who are affected by this policy;
- Ensuring that all employees are held accountable for their actions;



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- Conducting periodic worksite inspections which take into account any factors related to potential workplace violence.

**Human Resources** is responsible for:

- Providing guidance and support through training opportunities for all staff;
- Maintaining confidentiality and employee privacy;
- Investigating any allegation of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence situations as brought forward by employees.

**Employees/Councillors** are responsible for:

- Abiding by the provisions of this policy;
- Treating others in the workplace with respect;
- Participating in training as required;
- Cooperating with an investigation into a violation of this policy;
- Maintaining confidentiality and employee privacy regarding this policy;
- Reporting any complaints of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence immediately to their Director, Manager, or Human Resources department.

## References

<b>Legal Authorities</b>	Alberta Human Rights Act Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Occupational Health and Safety Act (Part 2) & Code (Part 27)
<b>Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.</b>	L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy Safe Operating Procedure – Lockdown Procedure
<b>Other</b>	Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours

## Revision History

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
March 7, 2022	Adoption Date CM20220307.022



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## Schedule 'B' – Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer

<b>Procedure:</b>	Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer
<b>Associated Policy:</b>	Policy L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Procedure Department(s):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Last Amended:</b>	N/A

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### Purpose

A procedure to assist Employees and Councillors to respond and report in the event a customer shows threatening behaviour to a County of Grande Prairie Employee or Councillor.

### Procedure

1. If a member of the public becomes verbally aggressive or irate to a County employee:
  - 1.1. Attempt to calm and defuse the individual.
  - 1.2. Use active listening techniques to help understand the problem and come to a solution
  - 1.3. All employees have the right to be treated with respect. Politely advise the individual that you will not accept any verbal abuse. If necessary, you can end the conversation or ask the individual to leave. If the customer escalates and is believed to be a threat to personal safety or has made a direct threat to you, immediately leave the area, call 911, and initiate the County's lockdown procedure. Inform your Manager/Director of the incident as soon as possible.
  - 1.4. If a threat of physical violence is made by a member of the public to a County employee, the employee should immediately leave the area. If the employee cannot leave the area, the employee should call for help, push a panic button if accessible, and attempt to stay as far away as possible from the member of the public. If a weapon is drawn, initiate the lockdown procedure and call 911.
  - 1.5. Following an altercation with a customer, notify your Director/Manager, the Human Resources Manager, or the Safety Coordinator. Complete a Worker Safety Report Form. These reports will assist in identifying problem areas that may require changes to the work practices and area.
  - 1.6. Employees who receive a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence from a member of the public must immediately forward the complaint to the Director or Manager of their department.



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- 1.7. Directors and Managers are to follow the formal complaint procedure outlined in Administrative Directive A: Respectful Workplace for reporting a complaint regarding bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence

### Tips to De-escalate Difficult People

2. Try to manage the flow of the conversation. If the customer is shouting, speak softly. If they are speaking quickly, try to slow down the speed of the conversation.
3. Ask for and use the customer's name. Introduce yourself as well.
4. Agree that there is a problem. Don't make excuses.
5. Apologize if required.
6. Avoid the use of triggers. Do not tell the person to calm down instead say "I can see that you are upset".
7. Use active listening skills including using reflective questions and summarizing and paraphrasing what was said to you.
8. Indicate with non-verbal cues that you are listening to what they are saying.
9. If you are unable to address the customer's concern or issue, you may need to bring another employee into the conversation that may have the information or authority to better respond to the customer's needs. Failure to do so will result in calling 911.
10. For more information, refer to De-Escalating Difficult People in the County's Employee Safety Handbook.

### References

<b>Legal Authorities</b>	Occupational Health and Safety Act (Part 2) & Code (Part 27)
<b>Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.</b>	Policy L19 - Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Other</b>	Respectful Workplace Procedure Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours

### Revision History

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
March 7, 2022	Adoption Date CM20220307.022



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## Schedule 'C' – Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints

<b>Procedure:</b>	Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints
<b>Associated Policy:</b>	Policy L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Procedure Department(s):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Last Amended:</b>	N/A

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## Purpose

A procedure for conducting investigations for internal complaints.

## Definitions

“Allegation” means a statement or complaint, made without giving proof, that someone has done something wrong or illegal;

“Bad Faith” means the intent to deceive or to be intentionally dishonest. A complaint made in bad faith may be frivolous or vexatious. A frivolous complaint is petty, insignificant, completely without factual basis, has no prospect of success. A vexatious complaint is a complaint that brings up an issue that has already been decided, or one that is without reasonable cause, brought maliciously to harass another person;

“Bullying” means a repeated pattern of unwelcome behaviour perpetrated by one or more individuals that is intended to intimidate, embarrass, offend, degrade, or humiliate a particular group or person;

“Business Purpose” means something which is in the best interest of the County. A justifiable reason for doing something or taking a particular course of action such as obtaining, gathering, and using information for carrying out the administration of the County to create a safe workplace or viable operations;

“Complaint” means employee or customer makes an allegation of a contravention or offense against the Respectful Workplace Policy, Alberta Human Rights Act, or Occupational Health & Safety Act (Part 2);

“Complainant(s)” means the individual or group of individuals who submit a complaint;

“Councillor” means a duly elected member of Council under the Municipal Government Act to represent a Division of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 who continues to hold office;



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“County Work Locations” includes any area in which employees are engaged in work for the County of Grande Prairie. This includes offices, shops, County-owned vehicles, remote workspaces, or any location in which an employee is performing work for the County;

“Discrimination” means a distinction, whether intentional or not, directed at a person or class of persons based on prohibited grounds such as race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. Discrimination relates to the personal characteristics of an individual or group with the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on, or withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, and advantages that are available to others;

“Employee” includes a person directly or indirectly employed by the County or any person affiliated with the County including volunteers, and independent contractors.

“Good faith” means done in an honest and sincere way, without malice or intent to deceive.

“Harassment” includes unwelcomed physical, threatening, or intimidating verbal conduct because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation;

“Investigator” means a director or designate, manager, County representative, or Human Resources team member, who assists, leads, or conducts an investigation related to bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence;

“Manager” means a person in authority and in charge of others and includes a manager, supervisor, and foreman;

“Respectful Workplace” means an environment that values integrity, professionalism, fairness, understanding, diversity, and accountability for one’s action;

“Respondent(s)” means an individual or individuals about whom a complaint of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence is made;

“Retaliation” means to hurt or attempt to hurt somebody in return, to deliberately harm or attempt to harm somebody in response or revenge for an action he or she has done;

“Sexual Harassment” means any unwelcome sexual behaviour that adversely affects, or threatens to affect, directly or indirectly, a person’s job security, working conditions, or prospects for promotion or earnings; or prevents a person from getting a job, living accommodations, or any kind of public service;

“Prohibited Grounds” means race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation;

“Psychological Safety” means the absence of harm, threat of harm, or risk to mental well-being;

“Support Person” means an independent third party who can provide practical and emotional support to the respondent or complainant. Examples of a support person include co-worker, an employee of the County, or a member of the public;



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“Violence” means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury whether at work or work-related.

### Procedure

1. If an Employee or Councillor feels that they have experienced or witnessed a violation of the Respectful Workplace Policy, they have a responsibility to wherever possible, tell the person to stop. It is important that the alleged offender be made aware that their conduct or actions are offensive to them. Employees and Councillors are encouraged to resolve issues informally between themselves and the other Employee(s) or Councillors and if necessary, with the assistance of their Manager.
2. Employees or Councillors who have reason to anticipate a violent or threatening situation are expected to immediately report the situation to their Manager or other appropriate authorities. If a threat of physical violence is made, the Employee or Councillor that was threatened should leave the area immediately. If the threatened Employee or Councillor cannot leave the area, the Employee or Councillor should call for help, push a panic button if accessible, and attempt to stay as far away as possible from the other Employee. If a weapon is drawn, initiate the Lockdown Procedure and call 911. All instances of threatened or actual attempts of workplace violence are required to be reported on the County's [Worker Safety Report Form](#).
3. An Employee or Councillor can choose to deal with the complaint informally or formally through an investigation. In the case of an informal process, the Manager or Director will work directly with the Employee to determine an appropriate and acceptable resolution to the complaint and involve others as required. A formal investigation will only be used when appropriate and after discussion with the Complainant.
4. If, after asking the person to stop their behaviour, the unacceptable behaviour continues, the Employee or Councillor is to file a formal complaint by reporting the problem to the Manager, Director, or Human Resources.
5. An Employee or Councillor who is informed that their behaviour is considered a violation of this policy should take this seriously and modify their behaviour immediately. Assistance is available from Human Resources in the form of training or coaching, where required.

### Informal Process:

6. Complainant will speak directly to the Respondent and ask them to stop the behaviour that is unwelcome, either verbally or in writing.



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7. Document the complaint and keep a record detailing the incident. Write down factual dates, times, witnesses, location, what was said, etc.
8. Complainant will talk to their Supervisor or Manager if they feel at risk, unsafe, or uncomfortable directly speaking with the Respondent. Also, if the unwelcomed behaviour continues, the Employee or Councillor should speak to their Supervisor or Manager as soon as possible.
9. If the Complainant does not feel comfortable discussing with their Manager or Supervisor, they can also reach out to Human Resources for support.
10. If the matter is unable to be resolved at a departmental level or if the Employee or Councillor wishes to proceed with a formal complaint, the Employee or Councillor should contact the Human Resources Department.

#### **Formal Process:**

11. A Complainant will submit a signed, written complaint outlining the allegations of the violations of the Respectful Workplace Policy. It is to include detailed specifics on the incident(s) including date, times, locations, possible witnesses, what happened, response to the situation, and will be submitted to the Human Resources department.
12. Once a written complaint is received, the Human Resources department will open an investigation file. The investigation may be performed by an internal or external Investigator. Investigations are usually conducted by two individuals including the Human Resources Manager (or designate) and a Director or Manager.
13. The investigation will be kept strictly confidential. An investigation will be undertaken as soon as possible in a fair, respectful, and timely manner. All necessary steps will be taken to resolve the complaint. All formal complaints will be investigated as complaints are taken very seriously.
  - 13.1. Once the formal complaint is received and reviewed, the Investigator will first conduct interviews with the Complainant, and Respondent so that each party will have opportunity to provide information regarding the complaint. If the Respondent refuses to cooperate in the interview, the investigation will still occur. If deemed necessary, the Respondent or Complainant can request a Support Person to be present in the investigation process. The role of a Support Person is to provide the Respondent or Complainant with practical and emotional support but not advocate or represent them during the investigation interview. The Support Person's information is to be provided to the Investigators in advance of the interview to ensure that there is not a conflict that may jeopardize the integrity or credibility of



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the interview. The Investigators will determine if the Support Person will be allowed in the interview.

14. Any Employee or Councillor who may be a witness or is announced as a witness (by the Complainant or the Respondent) who may be able to provide information directly related to the complaint will also be interviewed.
15. The Complainant, the Respondent, and any witnesses who may be able to provide relevant information will be interviewed. All Employees and Councillors must provide complete and truthful statements. Only the Complainant and the Respondent will be notified of the conclusion of the investigation.
16. If evidence from the investigation supports the complaint, the Respondent will receive appropriate corrective action ranging from education on the unacceptability of the behaviour and how to change it, to an appropriate level of disciplinary action, or any combination. The County believes in its Employees and Councillors and strongly supports an educational process and working with Employees and Councillors to facilitate any necessary behavioural changes. The County supports conflict resolution processes such as mediation, reconciliation, and coaching.
17. Investigations will be completed in a manner that ensures procedural fairness.
18. All formal internal investigations will be conducted as follows:
  - 18.1. Once the formal complaint is received and reviewed, an investigation team of two people (or more if required) will be selected by the Human Resources Manager. The Investigators must be competent and receive training in conducting investigations. Investigators will be responsible to ensure impartiality, fairness, diligence, and timeliness when dealing with the complaint.
  - 18.2. The Human Resources Manager (or delegate) will inform the Employee or Councillor named in the complaint (the Respondent) of the complaint received and the nature of the complaint within five (5) working days of the receipt of the complaint or as soon as reasonably practical. Depending on the circumstances of the investigation, the respondent or complainant may be moved to another department or put on paid administrative leave until the investigation is complete. This may happen if the Investigator believes the Respondent or Complainant is a threat to safety or unfit for duties. This may also happen if the Investigators believe the investigation would better benefit from the Respondent or Complainant's absence in the workplace during the investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the Employee or Councillor would be notified to return to work or be placed back in their department.



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- 18.3. Interviews will be conducted with the Complainant and the Respondent. If applicable, interviews with witnesses will follow.
  - 18.4. Once all facts and evidence have been compiled, the Investigators will review the information and come to a conclusion as to whether or not the complaint is founded. The findings of an investigation could be that the complaint is founded, not founded, or partially founded. Investigators may make recommendations for corrective actions and workplace restoration.
  - 18.5. An investigation summary report will be completed and placed in the investigation file.
  - 18.6. Both the Complainant and the Respondent will be advised of the results of the investigation. Due to confidentiality, both parties may not know the outcome of the investigation.
19. All records associated with investigations under this policy will be kept by Human Resources separate from other employee records, in secure storage. Any disciplinary action resulting from an investigation will be kept in the employee's human resources file.
  20. All complaints must be filed within 6 months of the alleged behavior leading to the complaint unless there are extenuating circumstances. Timelines may be extended by the Chief Administrative Officer if circumstances are warranted.
  21. It is the responsibility of the County to investigate an allegation of misconduct. The County may pursue an investigation if they become aware of a possible violation of this policy even if no formal or informal complaint has been received. Anonymous complaints of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or workplace violence may not be investigated.

#### **False or Frivolous Complaints**

22. Complaints that are found to be false, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith will not be tolerated and will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action or denial of County service.

#### **Retaliation**

23. Everyone has the right to report, in good faith, incidents of inappropriate workplace behaviour without fear of retaliation.
24. Retaliation by any person against anyone involved in informal or formal complaint processes will not be tolerated and will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal or denial of County services.



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25. This policy does not discourage or prevent any person from exercising their rights under any law, including the Alberta Human Rights Act.

### **Confidentiality**

26. Information gathered during an investigation for a respectful workplace complaint will be kept as confidential as possible. No information will be disclosed including nature of the complaint, name of the Complainant, person alleged to have committed the incident, and any witnesses except in circumstances where it may be required to investigate a complaint for business purposes, inform workers of a specific or general threat, or required by law to report. Every participant in the investigation process is expected to maintain confidentiality throughout the process and thereafter. Any breach of confidentiality by any person involved in an investigation will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. The County will ensure confidentiality and privacy rights are respected and protected.
27. Complainants are to be aware that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as the Respondent is entitled to know the nature of the allegation made against them. This is to ensure the Respondent receives a fair opportunity to respond to and answer the complaint.
28. Information may be shared with a third-party (WCB) if it is classified as a reportable claim.

### **Appeal Process**

29. Either the Complainant or the Respondent can appeal the decision of a respectful workplace investigation decision to the Chief Administrative Officer. This appeal is to be in writing within 14 calendar days from the time the Complainant and Respondent were advised of the findings of the investigation. It is also to state the reasons for the appeal.
30. The Chief Administrative Officer will review the appeal and all information related to the respectful workplace investigation and will make a decision within thirty calendar days of receiving the appeal. The Chief Administrative Officer can decide to change or uphold the decision from the investigation. The decision of the Chief Administrative Officer will be final.

### **Complaint Withdrawal**

31. A Complainant is not obligated to continue with a formal complaint at any point throughout the process and can withdraw their complaint at any time. However, the County reserves the right to pursue an investigation and resolution process with or without the Complainant's consent when there are sufficient concerns about the alleged behaviour. The County can take action to address the incident to ensure the health and safety of its Employees and Councillors and put preventative measures in place to ensure it does not happen again.



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## Roles and Responsibilities

The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible to authorize any timeline extensions and to address any appeals under this procedure.

Human Resources is responsible for investigations and record-keeping related to this procedure.

## References

<b>Legal Authorities</b>	Alberta Human Rights Act Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Occupational Health and Safety Act (Part 2) & Code (Part 27)
<b>Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.</b>	Policy L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Other</b>	Respectful Workplace Procedure Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours

## Revision History

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March 7, 2022	Adoption Date CM20220307.022



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## Schedule 'D' – Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques

<b>Procedure:</b>	Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques
<b>Associated Policy:</b>	Policy L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Procedure Department(s):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Last Amended:</b>	N/A

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### Purpose

The County is committed to minimizing risk and hazards and where reasonably practicable implementing controls for each position in the effort to prevent incivility, bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and violence. Respectful workplace prevention procedures include measures and procedures to protect workers from the hazard of incivility, bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and violence. It also includes a formal process for workers to report incidents or raise concerns.

### Procedure

1. The County will ensure reasonable steps are taken to resolve conflicts that include differences of opinion or minor disagreements between coworker informally as they are not generally considered to be workplace harassment.
2. The County will conduct risk assessments and control measures will be put in place to mitigate workplace risks related to harassment and violence as required from the assessment. Hazard assessments are developed with the involvement of employees, Managers, and the safety coordinator. Employees are provided with hazard identification for their position and mitigation strategies to address risks. The degree of risk may apply generally to the worksite, to a specific occupational group or to certain times of the day. Employees are encouraged to develop a [personal security plan](#).
3. The County's main components of its Violence and Harassment Prevention and Emergency Response Plan include:
  - this procedure;
  - safe work practices and safe operating procedures;
  - written procedures and policies;
  - training including Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention;
  - supervisory training for dealing with violence and harassment;



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- incident reporting and investigation training;
  - incident response and follow-up;
  - on-going review of the Emergency Response Plans;
  - Incident investigation protocol and emergency response.
4. Some common mitigation techniques can reduce bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and workplace violence towards County staff.

### Mitigation Techniques

- Review working alone procedure and adhere to check-in schedule throughout the performance of work;
- Conduct hazard assessments for all positions including consideration of hazards and risks related to psychological and physical safety stemming from violence and/or harassment and the like;
- Limit access to workplace entrances through security fob access;
- Ensure that staff entrances are well-lit;
- Keep cash held on site to a minimum;
- Vary the time of day that cash deposits are conducted;
- Ensure that there is always a second exit from a work location (where possible);
- Post clear signs to direct traffic for customers and visitors;
- Provide good lighting for interiors, exterior, and hallways;
- Ensure that windows are secured and locked from the inside;
- Provide identification badges for all employees, visitors, and contractors;
- Ensure building landscapes surrounding all buildings eliminate possible hiding places; Identify working alone hazard and implement controls through the hazard assessment process for all positions that are expected to work alone;
- Communicate regularly with Manager/Supervisor so the manager/supervisor knows when and where to expect the employee
- Use a buddy-system when working outside of normal working hours;
- Use phone, radio, or panic buttons for immediate assistance;
- Utilize the lock down procedure when necessary;
- Ensure counters or desks provide adequate distance between employees and potential aggressors;
- Set up work areas to be large enough so that “personal space” is not invaded;
- Maintain physical distancing between employees and customers; Evaluate the workspace prior to conversations whenever possible to ensure direct access to an exit, and avoidance of the positioning of an individual between the worker and the exit;
- Reduce noise in the work area to help to reduce aggression;



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- Avoid furniture and decorations that can be easily picked up or used as a weapon;
- Arrange furniture so that workers can be seen by co-workers if assistance is required;
- Complete training to assist with mitigating risks of violence and harassment including Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Training;
- Use the Employee Family Assistance Program for support;
- Be respectful in communication with others;
- Ensure proper communication etiquette (not excessive use of capital letters, all bold);
- If you see disrespectful behaviour, say something;
- Treat others with respect.

5. This prevention plan will be reviewed by the Joint Health and Safety Committee when an incident of workplace violence or harassment occurs, or annually, whichever is earliest.

### References

<b>Legal Authorities</b>	Occupational Health and Safety Act (Part 2) & Code (Part 27)
<b>Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.</b>	Policy L19 Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Other</b>	Respectful Workplace Procedure Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours

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## Schedule 'E' – Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours

<b>Procedure:</b>	Respectful Workplace Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours
<b>Associated Policy:</b>	Policy L19 – Respectful Workplace Policy
<b>Procedure Department(s):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 7, 2022
<b>Last Amended:</b>	N/A

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### Purpose

To provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours covered in the Respectful Workplace Policy. The inappropriate behaviours outlined here could also be referred to as potential hazards.

### Procedure

#### Appropriate Workplace Behaviours

1. In general, behaviour that are encourage are those which support and create a healthy, respectful workplace and its related business objectives.
2. Examples of appropriate workplace behaviours include, but are not limited to:
  - Demonstrating County values of being trustworthy, transparent, respectful, and collaborative;
  - Being policy, courteous and respectful of others. Treating others as they would like to be treated;
  - Respectful conflict (disagreeing and discussing to come to solution, agreeing to disagree, conflict resolution);
  - Recognition and appreciation of others;
  - Seeking to understand others' perspectives;
  - Listening openly to other points of view, even when you disagree;
  - Asking questions before making conclusions;
  - Taking responsibility for my behaviour;
  - Seeking others' input and ideas, and ensuring the active involvement of appropriate people in planning, decision-making and implementing initiatives;
  - When reviewing others' ideas, suggestions, or work, identifying what is positive or good about the proposal as well as where it can be improved;
  - Ensuring that decision-making considers relevant factors and is fair;
  - Recognizing and valuing diversity among workgroup members, customers, and citizens;



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- Sincerely apologizing to people when something you said or did may have offended them;
- Expressing appreciation and praising good work;
- Giving timely recognition of people's efforts and accomplishments;
- Sharing knowledge and information;
- Being inclusive;
- Mentoring or coaching or taking time to develop others; and
- Showing empathy for others.

## **Inappropriate Workplace Behaviours**

3. Inappropriate workplace behaviour is a single or repeated action that is objectionable or unwelcome and negatively affects an individual or the workplace. Inappropriate workplace behaviour may create a poisoned workplace. Understanding different types of inappropriate workplace behaviour is key to evaluating and adjusting our own actions and responding and acting appropriately.
4. There are five (5) types of inappropriate workplace behaviour addressed in this policy. They are:
  - Incivility
  - Bullying
  - Discrimination
  - Harassment
  - Violence
5. Examples of these are outlined below.
  - 5.1. Incivility. Actions of incivility may include, but are not limited to:
    - Talking over someone;
    - Gossiping;
    - Negative body language (eye-rolling, dirty look, closed posture);
    - Withdrawing (not sharing your views or refusing to participate in a discussion);
    - Using all capital letters or bold font in emails;
    - Checking email or texting during a meeting unless for a valid business purpose which is communicated to the other participants. The County recognizes that there are times staff must be on alert for emergency response needs or attend meetings as presenter and are not required to be engaged for the entire meeting and that multi-tasking may be acceptable in some circumstances. Checking email or texting during a 1:1 meeting is not appropriate;
    - Condescending or talking down to someone; and
    - Leaving a mess in common workspaces.
  - 5.2. Bullying: Bullying actions may include, but are not limited to:
    - spreading malicious rumours, gossip, or innuendos;
    - excluding or isolating someone socially;



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- intimidating a person;
  - undermining or impeding someone's work;
  - stealing credit for work or ideas;
  - withholding or not providing information where it is needed by the other person;
  - intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying, or stalking;
  - insulting or putting down a person;
  - bumping the target out of way or on the way past when it could be avoided;
  - belittling the target;
  - setting unrealistic guidelines; setting someone up to fail;
  - mocking (making fun of someone's laugh, style of walking, name, etc.);
  - taunting, teasing, and name-calling;
  - talking about the target behind their back;
  - yelling at or pointing at the target;
  - criticizing without work-related purpose;
  - saying unwelcome things loud enough so the target will hear the comments;
  - damaging, sabotaging, or hiding someone's possessions or tools;
  - abuse of authority to threaten job security or endanger one's career; and
  - hazing.
- 5.3. Discrimination. Based on one or more prohibited grounds, actions may include, but are not limited to:
- Excluding an employee from workplace activities or projects;
  - Refusing to work with another employee;
  - Denial of hiring, promotion, work assignment, career development, or training;
  - Treating an employee unfairly compared to other employees; and
  - Excluding fully qualified candidates during the recruitment process.
- 5.4. Harassment may include but is not limited to:
- Angry shouting/yelling;
  - Abusive language;
  - Physical, verbal, or e-mail threats or intimidation;
  - Aggressive behaviours (e.g., slamming doors, throwing objects);
  - Excluding, shunning, or impeding work performance;
  - Retaliation;
  - Unreasonable criticism or demands;
  - Insults or name-calling;
  - Public humiliation; and
  - Communication that is demeaning, insulting, humiliating, or mocking.
- 5.5. Sexual Harassment, may include but not limited to:
- verbal abuse or threats associated with behaviour of a sexual nature;
  - unwelcome remarks, requests, jokes, or invitations of a sexual nature;



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- staring, leering or inappropriate observations of an individual of a sexual nature;
  - displaying or posting pornographic, offensive, or derogatory materials of a sexual nature in the workplace;
  - pinching, patting, or rubbing;
  - comments or innuendo of a sexual nature;
  - unwelcome dirty jokes;
  - exposing oneself in the workplace;
  - any direct or implied demands of a sexual nature; and
  - any behaviour, conduct, or activity of a sexual nature which is un-welcome or un-invited.
- 5.6. Violence in the workplace may include but is not limited to:
- verbal or written threats (e.g., verbally threatening to attack a worker, leaving threatening notes or sending threatening emails to express an intent to inflict harm on a worker, uttering threats);
  - threatening behaviour (e.g., shaking a fist in a worker's face, using a weapon at work, trying to hit a worker, trying to run down a worker using a vehicle or equipment such as a forklift, destroying property, or throwing objects);
  - physical attack or aggression (e.g., hitting, shoving, pushing, or kicking a worker, throwing an object at a worker, kicking an object the worker is standing on such as a ladder);
  - domestic violence; and
  - sexual violence.
6. County Employees and Councillors are expected to maintain a high standard of ethical and professional conduct. Repeated and/or deliberate acts of inappropriate behaviours could have damaging consequences in the organization.

## Exceptions

7. Inappropriate workplace behaviour does not include any reasonable conduct of an employer, leader or supervisor related to the normal management of employees or workplaces. Such reasonable conduct may include:
- Allocating work according to specific job-related requirements;
  - Following up on work absences;
  - Requiring performance to job standards;
  - Enforcing workplace policies and procedures;
  - Evaluating or measuring performance;
  - Denying training or leave requests with good reason;
  - Discussing disciplinary action in private;
  - Dismissing, suspending, demoting, and reprimanding with just cause; and
  - Providing constructive feedback.



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## References

<b>Legal Authorities</b>	Alberta Human Rights Act Occupational Health and Safety Act (Part 2) & Code (Part 27)
<b>Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.</b>	Policy L19 Respectful Workplace
<b>Other</b>	Respectful Workplace Procedure Response and Reporting Procedure – Threat from External Customer Investigation Procedure for Internal Complaints Respectful Workplace Prevention Plan and Mitigation Techniques

## Revision History

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
March 7, 2022	Adoption Date CM20220307.022