



Town of Stavelly – Policy #03-14
Policy Area: Employment
Respectful Workplace, Violence and Harassment Policy

POLICY TITLE: Respectful Workplace, Violence and Harassment Policy

Date Approved by Council: NEW

Resolution No:

Last Review Date:

Replaces: NEW

Next Review Date: Every 3 years or as required by changes in legislation or municipal operations.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Stavelly is committed to providing and maintaining a respectful, healthy, and safe workplace that is free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, retaliation, and violence. Every individual has the right to be treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect while engaged in work on behalf of the Town.

The Town will take reasonable steps to prevent, address, and respond to workplace harassment and violence in accordance with applicable legislation and municipal policy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to promote and maintain a respectful workplace by establishing expectations for professional behaviour and providing a process for reporting, investigating, and resolving concerns involving workplace harassment, violence, bullying, discrimination, and retaliation.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals performing work or providing services on behalf of the Town of Stavelly while engaged in municipal business or representing the Town, including:

- Council
- Employees
- Fire Department Members
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Students
- Consultants



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DEFINITIONS

Bad Faith Complaint:

A bad faith complaint is a complaint that is knowingly false, deliberately misleading, malicious, or made for the purpose of harming another individual rather than addressing a genuine workplace concern.

A complaint that is made in good faith, but is not substantiated following an investigation, shall not be considered a bad faith complaint.

Bullying:

Bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed toward an individual or group that creates a risk to a person's health, safety, or well-being. Bullying may include verbal abuse, humiliation, intimidation, exclusion, spreading malicious rumours, undermining a person's work, or other behaviour intended to intimidate, control, or demean another person.

A single serious incident may also constitute bullying where its severity warrants intervention.

Discrimination:

Discrimination means treating an individual or group unfairly, adversely, or differently based on a protected ground identified in the Alberta Human Rights Act, including race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation.

Respectful Workplace:

A respectful workplace is one where all individuals are treated with dignity, courtesy, fairness, and professionalism. A respectful workplace promotes cooperation, inclusion, open communication, and mutual respect while supporting a safe and healthy work environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, retaliation, and violence.

Retaliation (Reprisal)

Retaliation means any adverse action, threat, intimidation, discrimination, or other negative treatment directed toward a person because they have, in good faith:

- Reported a concern;
- Participated in an investigation;
- Acted as a witness;
- Requested assistance; or
- Exercised a right under this policy or applicable legislation.

Retaliation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.



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Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, request, or physical contact of a sexual nature that could reasonably be expected to offend, humiliate, intimidate, or create an uncomfortable, hostile, or intimidating work environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes;
- Inappropriate touching or physical contact;
- Displaying sexually explicit material;
- Repeated unwanted invitations or requests;
- Sexual advances;
- Comments about a person's body or appearance; or
- Any conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with an individual's ability to perform their work.

Workplace Harassment:

Workplace harassment means any single serious incident or repeated objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying, or action directed at a person that the individual knows, or ought reasonably to know, would offend, humiliate, intimidate, or adversely affect the dignity, psychological or physical well-being of another person.

Workplace harassment does not include reasonable management actions carried out in a fair and respectful manner, including performance management, coaching, corrective action, discipline, work assignments, scheduling, or operational direction.

Workplace Violence:

Workplace violence means the threatened, attempted, or actual use of physical force against a worker that causes or could cause physical injury, or any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe they are at risk of physical injury while engaged in work-related activities.



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Worker:

For the purposes of this policy, Worker means an employee, volunteer, firefighter, contractor, student, or any other individual performing work or providing services on behalf of the Town of Stavelly.

EXPECTATIONS

All individuals covered by this policy shall:

- Treat others with dignity, courtesy, fairness, and respect.
- Communicate professionally, honestly, and respectfully, even during disagreements.
- Foster a workplace that values cooperation, inclusion, teamwork, and mutual respect.
- Resolve workplace disagreements constructively through appropriate communication and established reporting processes.
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, discrimination, intimidation, retaliation, violence, or any other behaviour that could reasonably be expected to create an unsafe, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- Respect the rights, opinions, and contributions of others, recognizing that differences of opinion may be expressed respectfully and professionally.
- Support a workplace culture where concerns may be raised in good faith without fear of retaliation.

All individuals share responsibility for contributing to a respectful workplace and for addressing concerns promptly, professionally, and in accordance with this policy.

REPORTING

The Town encourages individuals to report concerns as soon as reasonably possible so they may be addressed in a fair, respectful, and timely manner.

Where appropriate, individuals are encouraged to first attempt to resolve workplace concerns informally through respectful communication. Where informal resolution is unsuccessful, inappropriate, or the nature of the concern warrants formal intervention, concerns shall be reported in accordance with this policy.



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Reporting Structure:

Complaints shall normally be reported as follows:

- **Employees** shall report concerns to their immediate supervisor.
- **Fire Department members** shall report concerns through the Department's chain of command, beginning with their immediate officer or the Fire Chief, where appropriate.
- **Supervisors and Department Heads** shall report concerns involving employees to the Chief Administrative Officer.
- **Complaints involving the Fire Chief** shall be reported directly to the Chief Administrative Officer.
- **Complaints involving the Chief Administrative Officer** shall be reported to the Mayor.
- **Complaints involving a member of Council** shall be addressed in accordance with the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw and applicable legislation.

Where a complaint involves the individual's immediate supervisor, a member of the reporting chain, or where the individual reasonably believes reporting through the normal process is not appropriate, the complaint may be reported directly to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Individuals making a complaint are expected to provide complete and truthful information to the best of their knowledge.

Individuals are encouraged to report concerns as soon as reasonably possible after the alleged incident occurs.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Town is committed to addressing complaints in a fair, objective, and timely manner.

Where appropriate, complaints may be resolved informally. Where formal investigation is necessary, the Town may conduct an internal investigation or appoint an independent third party, depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint.

All investigations shall be conducted:

- fairly and impartially;
- in a timely manner;
- with due regard for confidentiality;
- in accordance with applicable legislation, municipal policies, and the principles of procedural fairness.



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All parties involved in a complaint or investigation are expected to cooperate fully and provide honest and accurate information.

Where appropriate, the Town may implement interim measures to protect the health, safety, or well-being of individuals while an investigation is ongoing.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Town recognizes that complaints involving workplace conduct are sensitive and shall make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy of all individuals involved.

Information relating to a complaint or investigation shall be shared only with those who require the information to investigate, respond to, resolve, or make decisions regarding the matter, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

All individuals involved in a complaint or investigation are expected to maintain confidentiality and shall not disclose information unnecessarily or discuss the matter with individuals who do not have a legitimate need to know.

Nothing in this policy prevents the Town from disclosing information where required by law or where necessary to protect the safety of workers or the public.

PROTECTION AGAINST REPRISALS

The Town prohibits retaliation against any individual who, in good faith:

- reports a concern under this policy;
- participates in an investigation;
- provides information or acts as a witness; or
- exercises a right under applicable legislation or Town policy.

Retaliation, intimidation, threats, or any adverse treatment against an individual for making or participating in a good faith complaint will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

A complaint that is not substantiated following an investigation shall not, by itself, be considered evidence of bad faith or grounds for disciplinary action.



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BAD FAITH OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS

The Town encourages individuals to report workplace concerns honestly and in good faith.

Knowingly making a false, malicious, or misleading complaint, deliberately providing false information during an investigation, or using this policy for an improper purpose may constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

A complaint made honestly and in good faith shall not be considered a bad faith complaint solely because the allegation is not substantiated following an investigation.

DISCIPLINE

Violations of this policy may result in corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with the Town's Employee Discipline Policy, Fire Department Code of Conduct, applicable employment

RELATED LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following legislation, bylaws, and municipal policies, as amended from time to time:

Legislation

- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code
- Alberta Human Rights Act
- Access to Information Act (ATIA)
- Protection of Privacy Act (POPA)
- Municipal Government Act

Town of Stavelly Policies

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Fire Department Code of Conduct
- Fire Department Operational Guidelines (SOGs)
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Employee Discipline Policy
- Privacy Policy



RESPONSIBILITIES

Workers

Workers are responsible for:

- treating others respectfully;
- complying with this policy;
- reporting concerns;
- cooperating in investigations.

Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for:

- promoting respectful behaviour;
- addressing concerns promptly;
- reporting complaints and incidents in accordance with this policy;
- maintaining confidentiality.

Chief Administrative Officer

The CAO is responsible for:

- administering this policy;
- ensuring investigations occur when appropriate;
- appointing independent investigators when necessary;
- ensuring appropriate corrective or disciplinary action is implemented where warranted.