

# Council Code of Conduct

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## Policy statement

This Code of Conduct is a general standard. It augments the laws which govern the behaviour of Members, and it is not intended to replace personal ethics.

## Purpose

Since its inception in 1857, Council has demanded a high level of integrity and ethical conduct from its Members. The Town of Oakville's exemplary reputation has relied upon the good judgement of individual Members of Council. While tacit understandings have served well for many years, a written Code of Conduct helps to ensure that all Members share a common basis for acceptable conduct. Formalized standards help to provide a useful reference guide and a supplement to the legislative parameters within which Members must operate. Further, they enhance public confidence that the town's elected representatives operate from a base of integrity, justice, and courtesy.

## Scope

### 1. General

All Members shall serve their constituents in a conscientious and diligent manner. No Member shall use the influence of office for any purpose other than for the exercise of ~~his/her~~their official duties.

## **2. Gifts and Benefits**

Members shall not accept fees, gifts or personal benefits that are connected directly or indirectly with the performance of duties as elected Members, except compensation authorized by law. This Section does not apply to tokens, mementos, souvenirs, or such gifts or benefits that are received as an incident of protocol or social obligations that normally accompany the responsibilities of office.

## **3. Confidentiality**

All information, documentation, or deliberations received, reviewed, or taken in Closed Sessions of Committees and Council are confidential. Members shall not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, either in verbal or written form, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office, except when required by law to do so, and shall not permit any persons other than those who are entitled thereto to have access to information which is confidential.

Particular care should be exercised in releasing information including, but not limited to, the following:

- personnel matters;
- information about suppliers provided for evaluation which might be useful to other suppliers;
- matters relating to the legal affairs of the town;
- sources of complaints where the identity of the complainant is given in confidence;
- items under negotiation;
- schedules of prices in contract tenders;
- information deemed to be personal information under *MFIPPA*.

The list above is provided for example and is not exclusive.

## **4. Use of Town Property**

No Member shall use for personal purposes any town property, equipment, supplies, or services of consequence other than for purposes connected with the discharge of town duties or associated community activities of which Council has been advised.

No Member shall obtain financial or political gain from the use or sale of town-developed intellectual property, computer programs, computer hardware and software, the town's website, technological innovations, or other patentable items, while an elected official or thereafter. All such property remains the exclusive property of the town and must only be used for town business.

## **5. Work of a Political Nature**

No Member shall use town facilities, services or property for ~~his/her re-election~~ campaign purposes, except in accordance with the town's Use of Corporate Resources during a Municipal Election Procedure. No Member shall use the services of town employees for ~~his/her re-election~~ campaign purposes during hours in which the employees are in the paid employment of the town.

## **6. Conduct at Committee and Council**

During Committee and Council Meetings, Members shall conduct themselves with decorum by demonstrating respect for Delegates and for fellow Members. Members shall be courteous and not distract from the business of the Committee or Council Meeting. Members shall not enter into debate with Delegates or presenters and may be called upon by the Committee/Mayor as per section 13.4, Rules of Order of the Procedure By-law.

## **7. Representing the Town**

Members shall make every effort to participate in the activities of the Local Boards, Committees and other bodies to which they are appointed.

## **8. Influence on Staff**

Members shall be respectful of the fact that staff work for the whole corporation and are charged with making recommendations that reflect their professional expertise and corporate perspective, without undue influence from any individual Member or faction of Council.

## **9. Business Relations**

No Member shall borrow money from any person who does business with the town unless such person is a Credit Union or is an institution or company whose shares are publicly traded and who is in the business of lending money. No Member shall act as a paid agent before Committee or Council or any agency, board, or committee of the town, except in compliance with the terms of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

## **10. Encouragement of Respect for the Town and its By-laws**

Members shall encourage public respect for the Town and its by-laws.

## **11. Harassment**

Harassment of another Member, staff or any member of the public is misconduct. It is the policy of the town that all persons be treated fairly in the workplace in an environment free of discrimination and of personal and sexual harassment.

Harassment may be defined as any behaviour by any person, including a co-worker, that is directed at or is offensive to another person on the grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability and any other prohibited grounds under the provisions of the *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19*, as amended from time to time.

## **12. Interpretation**

Members of Council seeking clarification of any part of this Code of Conduct should consult with the Clerk, Corporate Counsel or the Integrity Commissioner.

## **References and related documents**

Employee Code of Conduct

Council – Employee Relations Policy

*Municipal Act, 2001*

*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*