

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE (OPS) CODE OF CONDUCT

The OPS Code of Conduct articulates the standards of behaviour needed to build and maintain an inclusive, equitable, and respectful workplace¹ that is free from racism, discrimination, and harassment, and where the dignity, human rights, health, and safety of individuals in OPS workplaces are protected and employees feel welcome.

1. Purpose

The OPS is committed to providing a workplace¹ that is free from all forms of racism, discrimination, and harassment.

The purpose of the OPS Code of Conduct is to:

- establish expectations for appropriate behaviour in the workplace to foster an environment of integrity and respect, and
- promote personal responsibility and accountability for conduct in the workplace.

2. Scope

The OPS Code of Conduct applies to all employees in ministries and Commission public bodies. It covers all forms of conduct in the workplace, including verbal, non-verbal (gestures) and written communication.

Other individuals² in the workplace such as political staff, stakeholders, and those with whom we do business, provide services to, and enter into service agreements with, will be called upon to treat OPS employees with respect and behave in alignment with this code of conduct.

¹ As per the Respectful Workplace Policy section 11, 'workplace' means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works and sites at which work-related activities or events take place, for example, off-site training locations, conferences, work-related social events and business travel.

² As per the Respectful Workplace Policy sections 10.13 and 10.14, managers/supervisors are to inform employees and other workers that disrespectful behaviours, workplace harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, and to advise members of the public, as applicable, including visitors to OPS facilities or individuals conducting business with the government, that they are expected to be respectful and not discriminate against or harass employees, other workers, and other members of the public.

The provisions of this code of conduct complement and do not replace other codes of conduct that may apply to certain OPS employees and their respective roles (e.g., ministry specific or other professional codes of conduct).

The OPS Code of Conduct is to be read as a companion document to the related OPS policies, directives and guidelines. If provisions in this document are inconsistent with applicable legislation (including the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006) and/or related OPS policies, directives and collective agreements, the governing legislative and policy authorities will apply. Similarly, if there is a conflict or inconsistency between the OPS Code of Conduct and a professional regulatory body's standard of qualification, practice and conduct, the professional regulatory body's provisions, as necessary to promote and protect the public interest, prevail.

3. Values

Individuals are expected to act according to the [OPS values](#) of inclusion, integrity and excellence.

4. Expectations

As public servants who uphold the public trust, our behaviour matters because what we do reflects on all of us. Our actions are what define our workplace culture. We are all responsible for reading and understanding this code of conduct and contributing to a healthy, safe, inclusive, equitable, anti-racist and respectful workplace that protects rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code are: age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, record of offences, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding) and sexual orientation.

Please refer to Appendix A for policies related to expected behaviour at OPS workplaces, including the Respectful Workplace Policy.

4.1. Standards of Behaviour

4.1.1 Expected Behaviour

Regardless of role, employment status or tenure, all employees are expected to:

- act with integrity and respect the dignity and rights of others,
- comply with all applicable legislation, regulations, directives, policies and guidelines,
- behave in a respectful and inclusive manner,
- consider the needs and perspectives of others and learn how written

communications, spoken words, and actions might be received and may unconsciously or unintentionally express a prejudiced attitude, and

- contribute to a workplace culture that is inclusive of all employees and protects their rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

4.1.2. Encouraged Behaviour

Employees are encouraged to:

- show empathy, kindness, and respect in our day-to-day activities,
- foster a sense of belonging for everyone, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous, Black, and other racialized individuals, as well as people from diverse ethnic and cultural origins, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, and
- speak up to help create an environment in which we can hold ourselves accountable if or when something harmful is said or done.

4.1.3. Unacceptable Behaviour

Disrespectful, racist, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

- participating in or condoning any form of workplace harassment, discrimination, reprisal, or bullying,
- engaging in dismissive, intimidating, or threatening behaviour,
- making gestures and statements which could be offensive or demeaning to another person, or could be reasonably perceived that way (e.g., profane language; derogatory name-calling; using insulting terms, comments, or behaviour; inappropriate jokes; shouting, shaming, or mocking others),
- excluding others from participation in work-related activities, and
- circulating rumours which could be harmful or hurtful to another person.

4.2. Practices

All employees are encouraged to:

- consider how their words and actions affect others and commit to ongoing learning to be a more inclusive colleague and/or leader,
- maintain an environment where conflict and differences are addressed respectfully and civilly,
- draw attention to, raise concerns and/or call out actions or words (where possible) in good faith that don't live up to the expectations in this code of conduct,
- be open to receiving feedback and learning about the behaviours needed for healthy workplace relationships, including unlearning myths, stereotypes and unconscious biases, and correcting behaviours where appropriate, and
- be accountable and champion a positive work environment.

Leaders at all levels: foster an environment where employees feel free to speak openly and are heard and acknowledged; and address issues, escalating those that could negatively affect workplace culture, while allowing for expression of views and concerns.

Managers and executives also have additional responsibilities to:

- model appropriate behaviour,
- discuss the OPS Code of Conduct and expected behaviours with staff regularly to reinforce learning,
- take prompt and effective steps to address incidents of inappropriate conduct, and
- follow-up and communicate as appropriate on the actions taken.

Employees: take responsibility and accountability for actions and behaviours in the workplace towards colleagues and the public; communicate appropriately with others; and participate as required in solutions.

5. Compliance with the OPS Code of Conduct

Employees are expected to consult with their manager, or other management representative, should they need clarification on what is expected of them.

- For employees, non-compliance may lead to interventions such as education or mediation or to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- Non-compliance by contractors or vendors can lead to termination of their contract. In some cases, non-compliance can lead to legal action.

5.1 Early Intervention and Prevention

- Where there are behaviours (e.g., workplace violence, workplace harassment and discrimination, etc.) that are addressed by legislation or policy and/or are criminal in nature, these must be addressed through the relevant processes (see appendix A).
- For other workplace behaviours that do not align with this code of conduct, consequences shall be proportionate and progressive with a focus on prevention and early intervention. Depending on the specific factors and individuals' level of comfort, this could involve:
 - an employee talking to the person(s) engaging in the behaviour if they feel safe doing so (i.e., let them know that the behaviour is unwelcome),
 - an employee talking to their manager or another management representative (e.g., the next-level manager) who is not involved in the issue,
 - an employee talking to their bargaining representative for more information (applies to represented positions only), and

- a manager having a meeting/discussion with the parties involved, and offering education, training and/or other supports.
- Managers who observe or become aware of inappropriate conduct in the workplace are:
 - expected to take timely action to address the issue,
 - reminded of the importance of documenting the issue, discussions and actions taken,
 - encouraged to seek the advice and guidance of a Human Resources (HR) or Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (WDHP) Advisor, as needed, and
 - expected to provide support and create a safe space for dialogue, where possible.
- Confidential support services are offered through the Employee and Family Assistance Program provider, TELUS Health (previously known as LifeWorks), and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:
 1-844-880-9142 for service in English: TTY 1-877-338-0275
 1-844-880-9143 service en Français: ATS/ATME 1-877-338-0275
[WorkHealthLife](http://www.workhealthlife.com) (URL: www.workhealthlife.com)
- Employees can request a consultation with a specialist for advice on addressing conflict issues in the workplace.

5.2. Consequences

- Non-compliance with the OPS Code of Conduct by employees may lead to the following actions being taken by the Employer:
 - Interventions to address behaviour and encourage change (e.g., training, counselling, restoration, etc.)
 - Verbal counsel/letter of counsel (non-disciplinary)
 - Letter of reprimand
 - Disciplinary suspension
 - Discharge or termination of employment
- Other individuals who have failed to comply will be subject to appropriate action up to and including removal from the workplace.

6. Reprisal & Use of the OPS Code of Conduct

There shall be no reprisal, including threatening or retaliating against an employee or other worker(s) who, in good faith, assert or report concerns regarding violations of this code of conduct or those who assist or cooperate in an investigation of such concerns.

7. Governing and Applicable Legislation, Related Policies and Procedures (see Appendix A)

Appendix A: Governing and Applicable Legislation, Related Policies and Procedures

Governing and Applicable Legislation

- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006](#)
- [Anti-Racism Act, 2017](#)

Related Policies and Procedures

- [Human Resource Management Directive](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Policy](#) (Policy to Support a Respectful Workplace and Prevent Workplace Harassment and Discrimination)
- [I am experiencing a workplace issue that I think may be WDHP related](#)
- [Anti-Racism Policy](#)
- [Policy on Preventing Barriers in Employment](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#)
- [Employment Policy](#)
- [Disability Accommodation Policy](#)
- [Ethics and Conduct directives and guidance](#) (including Conflict of Interest, Disclosure of Wrongdoing, Oaths, Political Activity)
- [Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy](#)
- [Social Media Guidelines](#)
- [Corporate Policy on Recordkeeping](#)
- Other [Corporate Directives and Policies](#)

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