

# Council-Staff Relations Policy

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Approved By: City Council  
Category: City Clerk and Solicitor  
Approval Date:  
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## Policy Statement

The City of Ottawa will promote a respectful, tolerant and harassment-free relationship and workplace between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation, guided by the Code of Conduct for Members of Council, the Employee Code of the Conduct, the Violence in the Workplace Policy, the Harassment in the Workplace Policy and the Procedure By-law.

## Purpose

This policy provides guidance on how the City of Ottawa ensures a respectful, tolerant and harassment-free relationship and workplace between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation.

## Application

In accordance with Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, this policy applies to all Members of Council and officers and employees of the corporation.

## Policy Requirements

The relationship between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation is guided by the following:

1. Code of Conduct for Members of Council

The Code of Conduct for Members of Council establishes the ethical behaviour expected of Members of Ottawa City Council and the citizen members of the Transit

Commission. A Code of Conduct has also been established for the Citizen Members of the Built Heritage Sub-Committee.

Section VII of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council, titled, "Conduct Respecting Staff" states as follows:

"Members of Council shall be respectful of the role of staff to provide advice based on political neutrality and objectivity and without undue influence from an individual Member or group of Members of Council.

Members of Council should not:

- Maliciously or falsely injure the professional or ethical reputation, or the prospects or practice of staff;
- Compel staff to engage in partisan political activities or be subjected to threat or discrimination for refusing to engage in such activities; or
- Use, or attempt to use, their authority or influence for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, coercing, commanding or influencing any staff member with the intent of interfering in staff's duties."

## 2. Employee Code of Conduct

The Employee Code of Conduct is founded on the notion of ensuring integrity in public service through the recognition and promotion of the fundamental principles of transparency, impartiality, respect and accountability.

The Impartiality section of the Employee Code of Conduct states as follows:

"Ottawa City Council is the elected voice of the citizens of the City of Ottawa. Its members have been elected to set the policy direction of the municipality. The public has an interest in ensuring that City of Ottawa employees are committed to carrying out the will and decisions of City Council, and that public servants are, and are perceived to be, impartial in carrying out their duties. Given the public interest in an impartial public service, employees must exercise restraint in any criticism of City of Ottawa policy and consider how their public comments may affect the public perception of the City.

### We Do

- We recognize that City Council is the elected voice of the citizens of the City of Ottawa and we respect the decisions of City Council; and
- We distinguish between or personal comments or opinions and our jobs with the City.

### We Do Not

- Make comments that disparage or harm the reputation of the City, Council or our co-workers;

- Claim to speak on behalf of the City unless we have been authorized to do so; and
- Make personal comments using City letterhead, our City e-mail address or anything else that implies a connection between our personal comments or opinions and the City.”

### 3. Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Policy

The Violence in the Workplace Policy states as follows:

“The City shall not tolerate violence directed at employees by members of the public, between employees, or by an employee towards a member of the public. The City shall take all reasonable precautions to minimize the occurrence of violence in the work environment and shall ensure that employees and their supervisors manage any such occurrences appropriately.”

The Harassment in the Workplace Policy states as follows:

“The City of Ottawa prohibits harassment from anyone in the workplace, including prohibiting harassment in employment, in the provision of goods and/or services, and in the administration of contracts as defined by human rights legislation. This Policy prohibits workplace harassment under any of the categories defined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and/or the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.”

### 4. Procedure By-law

The Procedure By-law establishes rules, procedure and conduct within Council and Standing Committee meetings. Specifically, Subsection 42(1)(a), titled, “Conduct of Members in Council,” states as follows:

“No Member shall:

Speak disrespectfully of the Reigning Sovereign, or of any Member of the Royal Family, or of the Governor General or the Lieutenant-Governor of any province, or of a fellow Member of Council or staff.”

## **Responsibilities**

Members of Council and officers and employees of the corporation are required to adhere to this policy and its governing provisions, including the Code of Conduct for Members of Council, the Employee Code of the Conduct, the Violence in the Workplace Policy, the Harassment in the Workplace Policy and the Procedure By-law.

## **Monitoring/Contraventions**

The City Clerk and Solicitor shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this policy. Upon receipt of a complaint and/or concern, the City Clerk and Solicitor shall notify:

1. In the case of officers and employees of the corporation, the Manager, Director or General Manager responsible for the employee and the Director, Human Resources; or
2. In the case of Council, the Integrity Commissioner.

Where there is a discrepancy between the Council-Staff Relations Policy and the Code of Conduct for Members of Council or the Employee Code of Conduct, the language of the Code prevails.

## **References**

Code of Conduct for Members of Council  
Employee Code of Conduct  
Violence in the Workplace Policy  
Harassment in the Workplace Policy  
Procedure By-law

## **Legislative and Administrative Authorities**

Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as revised by Bill 68 requires City Council to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the relationship between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation. The Council-Staff Relations Policy identifies the legislation, policies, procedures and practices that the City complies with in order to promote a respectful relationship between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the City of Ottawa.

## **Enquiries**

City Clerk and Solicitor  
City of Ottawa  
Telephone: 3-1-1 (TTY: 613-580-2401)