



The Corporation of
The Village of Burns Lake
It's Only Natural!

P.O. Box 570, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0
Phone: (250) 692-7587
Fax: (250) 692-3059
E-mail: village@burnslake.ca

PER8

Department: Personnel

Title: Standards of Conduct

Purpose: To provide a consistent expected standards of conduct for all employees, council and council committees of the Village of Burns Lake.

Standards of Conduct

This policy statement applies to all employees, council, and council committees of the Village of Burns Lake. The policy statement supports the objective that Village of Burns Lake employees exhibit the highest standards of conduct.

Employees¹ will exhibit the highest standards of conduct. Their conduct must instill confidence and trust and not bring the Corporation of the Village of Burns Lake into disrepute. The honesty and integrity of the Village of Burns Lake demands the impartiality of employees in the conduct of their duties.

The requirement to comply with these standards of conduct is a condition of employment. Employees who fail to comply with these standards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or the removal of Village of Burns Lake funding.

Agencies and organizations funded by the Village of Burns Lake shall be required to adhere to these standards of conduct when their activities are representing or may be perceived as representing the Village of Burns Lake.

Loyalty

Village of Burns Lake employees have a duty of loyalty to the government as their employer. They must act honestly and in good faith and place the interests of the employer ahead of their own private interests.

¹ "Employees" in this policy shall mean all Village of Burns Lake employees (including department heads, supervisors, unionized and non-unionized employees), Council members, Village of Burns Lake committee members.

Confidentiality

Confidential information, in any form, that employees receive through their employment must not be disclosed, released, or transmitted to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive the information. Employees with care or control of personal or sensitive information, electronic media, or devices must handle and dispose of these appropriately. Employees who are in doubt as to whether certain information is confidential must ask the immediate supervisor before disclosing, releasing, or transmitting it.

The proper handling and protection of confidential information is applicable both within and outside of government and continues to apply after the employment relationship ends.

Confidential information that employees receive through their employment must not be used by an employee for the purpose of furthering any private interest, or as a means of making personal gains. (See the Conflicts of Interest section of this policy statement for details.)

Public Comments

Village of Burns Lake employees may comment on public issues but must not engage in any activity or speak publicly where this could be perceived as an official act or representation of the Village of Burns Lake (unless authorized to do so by the Chief Administrative Officer).

Employees must not jeopardize the perception of impartiality in the performance of their duties through making public comments or entering into public debate regarding Council policies. Village of Burns Lake employees must not use their position in government to lend weight to the public expression of their personal opinions.

Political Activity

Village of Burns Lake employees may participate in political activities including membership in a political party, supporting a candidate for elected office, or seeking elected office. Employees' political activities, however, must be clearly separated from activities related to their employment. If an employee is elected as a Village of Burns Lake or Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako representative, they must resign from their position with the Village of Burns Lake.

If engaging in political activities, employees must remain impartial and retain the perception of impartiality in relation to their duties and responsibilities. Employees must not engage in political activities during working hours or use government facilities, equipment, or resources in support of these activities.

Partisan politics are not to be introduced into the workplace; however, informal private discussions among co-workers are acceptable.

Service to the Public

Village of Burns Lake employees must provide service to the public in a manner that is courteous, professional, equitable, efficient, and effective. Employees must be sensitive and responsive to the changing needs, expectations, and rights of a diverse public in the proper performance of their duties.

Workplace Behavior

Employees are to treat each other with respect and dignity and must not engage in discriminatory conduct prohibited by the Human Rights Code. The prohibited grounds are race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual

orientation, age, political belief or conviction of a criminal or summary offence unrelated to the individual's employment.

Further, the conduct of Village of Burns Lake employees in the workplace must meet acceptable social standards and must contribute to a positive work environment. An employee's conduct must not compromise the integrity of the Village of Burns Lake.

All employees may expect and have the responsibility to contribute to a safe workplace. Violence in the workplace is unacceptable. Violence is any use of physical force on an individual that causes or could cause injury and includes an attempt or threatened use of force.

Employees must report any incident of violence. Any employee who becomes aware of a threat must report that threat if there is reasonable cause to believe that the threat poses a risk of injury. Any incident or threat of violence in the workplace must be addressed immediately. Employees must report a safety hazard or unsafe condition or act in accordance with the provisions of the WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when an employee's private affairs or financial interests are in conflict, or could result in a perception of conflict, with the employee's duties or responsibilities in such a way that:

- the employee's ability to act in the public interest could be impaired; or
- the employee's actions or conduct could undermine or compromise:
 - the public's confidence in the employee's ability to discharge work responsibilities; or
 - the trust that the public places in the Village of Burns Lake.

While the government recognizes the right of Village of Burns Lake employees to be involved in activities as citizens of the community, conflict must not exist between employees' private interests and the discharge of their Village of Burns Lake duties. Upon appointment to the Village of Burns Lake, employees must arrange their private affairs in a manner that will prevent conflicts of interest, or the perception of conflicts of interest, from arising.

Employees who find themselves in an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest must disclose the matter to their supervisor or manager. Examples of conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An employee uses government property or equipment or the employee's position, office, or government affiliation to pursue personal interests or the interests of another organization;
- An employee is in a situation where the employee is under obligation to a person who might benefit from or seek to gain special consideration or favour;
- An employee, in the performance of official duties, gives preferential treatment to an individual, corporation, or organization, including a non-profit organization, in which the employee, or a relative or friend of the employee, has an interest, financial or otherwise;
- An employee benefits from, or is reasonably perceived by the public to have benefited from, the use of information acquired solely by reason of the employee's employment;

- An employee benefits from, or is reasonably perceived by the public to have benefited from, a government transaction over which the employee can influence decisions (for example, investments, sales, purchases, borrowing, grants, contracts, regulatory or discretionary approvals, appointments);
- An employee accepts from an individual, corporation, or organization, directly or indirectly, a personal gift or benefit that arises out of employment with the Village of Burns Lake other than: the exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together; tokens exchanged as part of protocol; the normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions; or the normal exchange of gifts between friends; or An employee accepts gifts, donations, or free services for work-related leisure activities other than in situations outlined above.

The following four criteria, when taken together, are intended to guide the judgment of employees who are considering the acceptance of a gift:

- The benefit is of nominal value;
- The exchange creates no obligation;
- Reciprocation is easy; and
- It occurs infrequently.

Employees will not solicit a gift, benefit, or service on behalf of themselves or other employees.

Allegations of Wrongdoing

Employees have a duty to report any situation relevant to the Village of Burns Lake that they believe contravenes the law, misuses public funds or assets, or represents a danger to public health and safety or a significant danger to the environment. Employees can expect such matters to be treated in confidence, unless disclosure of information is authorized or required by law (for example, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act). Employees will not be subject to discipline or reprisal for bringing forward to the Chief Administrative Officer, in good faith, allegations of wrongdoing in accordance with this policy statement.

Employees must report their allegations or concerns as follows:

- Members of the CUPE local must report in accordance with the current collective agreement
- Other employees must report **in writing** to the Chief Administrative Officer, who will acknowledge receipt of the submission and have the matter reviewed and responded to in writing within 30 days of receiving the employee's submission. Where an allegation involves the Chief Administrative Officer, the employee must forward the allegation to the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer.

Where an employee believes that the matter requires a resolution and it has not been reasonably resolved by Chief Administrative Officer, the employee may then refer the allegation to the appropriate authority.

If the employee decides to pursue the matter further then:

- Allegations of criminal activity are to be referred to the police;

- Allegations of a misuse of public funds are to be referred to the Auditor General;
- Allegations of a danger to public health must be brought to the attention of health authorities; and
- Allegations of a significant danger to the environment must be brought to the attention of the Environmental Protection Officer.

Legal Proceedings

Employees must not sign affidavits relating to facts that have come to their knowledge in the course of their duties for use in court proceedings unless the affidavit has been prepared by a lawyer acting for government in that proceeding or unless it has been approved by Village Council. Employees are obliged to cooperate with lawyers defending the Crown's interest during legal proceedings. A written opinion prepared on behalf of government by any legal counsel is privileged.

Working Relationships

Employees involved in a personal relationship outside work which compromises objectivity, or the perception of objectivity, should avoid being placed in a direct reporting relationship to one another. For example, employees who are direct relatives or who permanently reside together may not be employed in situations where:

- A reporting relationship exists where one employee has influence, input, or decision-making power over the other employee's performance evaluation, salary, premiums, special permissions, conditions of work, and similar matters; or
- The working relationship affords an opportunity for collusion between the two employees that would have a detrimental effect on the Employer's interest.

The above restriction on working relationships may be waived provided that the Chief Administrative Officer is satisfied that sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure that the Employer's interests are not compromised.

Human Resource Decisions

Employees are to disqualify themselves as participants in human resource decisions when their objectivity would be compromised for any reason or a benefit or perceived benefit could accrue to them. For example, employees are not to participate in staffing actions involving direct relatives or persons living in the same household.

Outside Remunerative and Volunteer Work

Employees may hold jobs outside government, carry on a business, receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position, or engage in volunteer activities provided it does not:

- interfere with the performance of their duties as a Village of Burns Lake employee;
- bring the local government into disrepute;
- represent a conflict of interest or create the reasonable perception of a conflict of interest;
- appear to be an official act or to represent Village of Burns Lake opinion or policy;

- involve the unauthorized use of work time or Village of Burns Lake premises, services, equipment, or supplies; or
- gain an advantage that is derived from their employment with the Village of Burns Lake.

Responsibilities

Chief Administrative Officer

- Advise employees of the required standards of conduct and the consequences of non-compliance;
- Promote a work environment that is free of discrimination;
- Deal with breaches of this policy statement in a timely manner, taking the appropriate action based upon the facts and circumstances;
- Waive the provision on working relationships under the circumstances indicated; and
- Delegate authority and responsibility, where applicable, to apply this policy statement within their organization.

Department Heads and Supervisors

- Advise staff on standards of conduct issues;
- Engage the Chief Administrative Officer as may be appropriate in the circumstances; and
- Contribute to a work environment that is free of discrimination.

Employees

- Objectively and loyally fulfill their assigned duties and responsibilities, regardless of the party or persons in power and regardless of their personal opinions;
- Disclose and resolve conflicts of interest or potential conflict of interest situations in which they find themselves;
- Maintain appropriate workplace behavior;
- Avoid engaging in discriminatory conduct or comment; and
- Check with their supervisor or manager when they are uncertain about any aspect of this policy statement.

Approved: [December 8, 2009]

Amended: [Click here to enter text.]