



# P O L I C Y

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Policy Title <b>RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE</b>	Date: <b>July 11, 2024</b>	Resolution No. <b>C/347/24</b>

## Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the standards for creating a vibrant, healthy, safe and caring work environment.

Lacombe County recognizes its responsibility to create and maintain a positive, healthy and safe working environment in which all people are treated with dignity, honesty and respect. At the County, everyone has a right to be treated fairly and with respect. As well, everyone has a responsibility to treat others fairly and with respect.

Lacombe County recognizes that conflicts, disagreements or inappropriate behaviours in the workplace may occur. It is expected that these issues will be resolved in a manner that contributes to a healthy and productive workplace. To create and maintain a respectful workplace we must all contribute by demonstrating professionalism, cooperativeness, and respect.

A respectful workplace is one that values the diversity and the human rights of others related to their race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income and sexual orientation. A respectful workplace values courteous conduct, positive communication between people, and collaborative working relationships.

Lacombe County is committed to a proactive approach of workplace respect and of providing employees with an environment free from the hazards of harassment and violence or if that is not reasonably practical, controlling the hazards, including physical or psychological bullying, intimidation, harassment, threats of violence, violence, and other disrespectful behaviours.

Every employee can expect to be treated respectfully in the workplace. No employee shall cause or participate in disrespectful actions or comments. It is the responsibility of all County staff to take preventative actions to ensure a respectful workplace including resolving disrespectful workplace issues at the earliest opportunity. Behaviours and/or situations that run contrary to a respectful workplace are deemed unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

## Guidelines/Procedures:

### 1. Scope

Disrespectful behaviours have the potential to occur between various people and at different work sites.

#### 1.1. People:

- a) Lacombe County employees;
- b) County Council and members of the public appointed to County committees;

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- c) Contractors providing services to the County;
- d) Suppliers delivering materials to the County;
- e) Members of the public who are on County property and/or accessing County services; and
- f) Volunteers.

1.2. Places:

- a) County buildings, facilities and work sites;
- b) Locations visited by employees while on County business, including conferences, meetings, vendor/supplier and customer sites;
- c) Locations of work-based social gatherings; and
- d) Social networking and other electronic communication mediums.

**2. Inappropriate Workplace Behaviours**

Inappropriate behaviours do not support a respectful workplace. Such behaviour serves no valid work related purpose, can create a corrupted work environment and will not be tolerated.

There are three categories of inappropriate behaviour addressed in this policy, as follows:

2.1 Disrespectful Behaviour

Disrespectful behaviour refers to conduct, comments, actions or gestures which are humiliating, offensive, hurtful, rude or belittling. Disrespectful behaviour affects the employee’s dignity, and emotional well-being. It is seen as hostile, or unwanted.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a) Written or verbal comments, actions, gestures or other behaviours which are humiliating, offensive, hurtful or belittling;
- b) Bullying or intimidation;
- c) Abusing authority and imposing arbitrary punishment;
- d) Harsh tone of voice and using abusive, threatening, derogatory or profane language;
- e) Attempting to discredit or cause damage to an employee’s employment or reputation;
- f) Intentionally withholding information critical to job performance; and
- g) Disrespectful body language.

Disrespectful behaviour does not include: consensual banter or consensual relationships, performance reviews, counseling, and/or discipline imposed by the employer.

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## 2.2 Discrimination/Harassment

Workplace discrimination and harassment means any single or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affect the worker's health and safety, and includes:

- i. Conduct, comment(s), bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation; and
- ii. A sexual solicitation or advance.

It excludes any reasonable conduct of the employer of a supervisor in respect of the management of workers or a work site.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a) Denial of equitable treatment in hiring or in the terms, conditions or benefits of employment;
- b) Failing to accommodate an individual protected under the *Alberta's Human Rights Act* and the *Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act*;
- c) Unwelcome sexual advances, requests, comments, physical contact such as unnecessary touching, pinching or jostling or gestures that are suggestive or persistent staring that is of a sexual nature;
- d) Racial, sexual orientation, disability related harassment; and
- e) Displays of pornographic or other sexual materials in the form of pictures, electronic mediums, graffiti, cartoons, or sayings.

## 2.3 Violence Causing or Threatening to Cause Injury to People or Damage to Property

Violence is the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic and sexual violence.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a) Vandalism or deliberate destruction of County property;
- b) Any act, gesture or statement that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that there is risk of injury to themselves or another person. Any statement, either verbal or written, that is reasonably intended by a person to be menacing or taunting in nature; and
- c) Violent acts that cause, or may cause, physical harm or emotional distress to a County employee, County Councillors, public members of County committees, contractors, suppliers, members of the public and County volunteers. Behaviours that are threatening to personal safety or are violent require immediate action to prevent escalation and to ensure the safety of others.

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- d) Domestic violence, including physical, sexual abuse, financial control, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, using electronic devices to harass or control; and
- e) Sexual violence including any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a worker's sexuality using coercion.

Behaviours that are threatening to personal safety or are violent require immediate action to prevent escalation and to ensure the safety of everyone at the worksite.

### 3. Employee Responsibilities

As an employee of Lacombe County, you are responsible for creating and maintaining a respectful workplace. Employee responsibilities include:

- a) Refraining from causing or participating in harassment or violence;
- b) Attempting to resolve the problem by speaking directly with the person(s) and informing them that their behaviour is unwelcome and must stop.
- c) Setting an example by respecting the dignity and rights of all employees and members of the public at all times;
- d) Accepting responsibility for your actions, reactions, behaviours and impact on others. Recognizing and refraining from actions that offend, embarrass or humiliates others;
- e) Not making allegations of a disrespectful behaviour that are frivolous or vindictive;
- f) Working towards a solution if disrespectful workplace issues arise; and
- g) Immediately reporting to a supervisor and, if appropriate, the RCMP if there is an imminent threat or risk of violence that could compromise an individual's safety.

### 4. County Manager, Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Others in a Leadership Role Responsibilities

The County Manager, Directors and Supervisors have additional responsibilities in creating and maintaining a respectful workplace environment. They include:

- a) As far as reasonably practical, ensuring the workers under their supervision are not subjected to harassment or violence at the work site;
- b) Being a role model for corporate behaviour standards;
- c) Ensuring all employees within their area of responsibility are aware of the expectations outlined in this policy;
- d) Ensuring compliance with the Respectful Workplace Policy within their area of responsibility;

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- e) Taking appropriate action in a prompt, impartial and confidential manner when disrespectful workplace issues come to their attention;
- f) Supporting all parties involved in resolving issues under the Respectful Workplace Policy; and
- g) Making sure no person suffers reprisal as a result of making a complaint, or for providing information.

## 5. Council and Councillor's Responsibilities

Council is responsible for providing overall direction through the adoption of policies and procedures to promote a respectful workplace environment.

Councillors are responsible for being a role model for corporate behavior standards.

## 6. Public, Contractors, Suppliers, Volunteers and Visitors to County Work Sites Responsibilities

All parties visiting or working at County work sites are expected to refrain from inappropriate behaviours toward employees, elected officials, and persons acting on behalf of the Lacombe County.

## 7. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Lacombe County will investigate all warranted reported incidents of harassment and violence with matters of a criminal nature being referred to the Police.

### 7.1 Lacombe County Employees:

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to the discipline process outlined in Policy AD(17) which may include dismissal. All situations will be assessed based on the merits of each individual circumstance.

### 7.2. Public Committee Members/Contractors/Suppliers/Members of the Public/County Volunteers:

Members of the public who are on County property and/or accessing County services, visitors to County facilities, or individuals conducting business with Lacombe County are expected to adhere to this policy. This includes refraining from inappropriate behaviour towards employees, elected officials, and persons acting on behalf of the Lacombe County. If inappropriate behaviour occurs, the County will take appropriate action to ensure a respectful workplace. This could include barring the person from facilities or discontinuing business with contractors or suppliers.

### 7.3. Members of Council

Members of Council who have violated this policy will be subject to the Compliance and Enforcement Section of the Council Personal Code of Conduct.

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**8. Process for Dealing with Inappropriate Workplace Behaviours**

This policy and supporting procedures are not intended to discourage an employee from exercising their legal rights pursuant to any other law, including the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

**8.1 Disrespectful Behaviours**

In the event that suspected disrespectful workplace behaviours are occurring the process outlined in Administrative Directive “Procedure for Dealing with Disrespectful Workplace Behaviors” is to be implemented.

**8.2 Discrimination/Harassment and Violent Behaviours**

Instances of suspected discrimination, harassment or violence shall be dealt with according to the Administrative Directive “Procedure for Dealing with Discrimination, Harassment or Violence.”

**9. Policy Review**

Pursuant to the *Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code*, the Respectful Workplace Policy, and the harassment and violence prevention plans supporting documents shall be reviewed with the consultation of the Health and Safety Committee. The required review of the harassment and violence prevention plans shall take place on the earliest of the following: when an incident of harassment or violence occurs, the Health and Safety Committee recommends a review or at least every three years.

Approved: May 10, 2007 - Policy AD(24) Workplace Violence  
Revised: November 8, 2013  
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