

Respectful & Inclusive Workplace Policy

COPPUL is committed to providing a collegial working environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity. Each employee has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that is courteous, equitable, and free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and other disrespectful behaviour.

The purposes of this policy are to:

- promote respect and dignity for all employees of COPPUL;
- maintain a working environment that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and other disrespectful behaviour;
- recognize the shared responsibility of all COPPUL employees to maintain a positive, respectful, and inclusive environment;
- establish a mechanism for receiving complaints of discrimination, bullying and harassment and other disrespectful behaviour;
- provide a procedure by which COPPUL will address such complaints.

Definitions

Bullying and Harassment

Under this policy, “bullying and harassment” includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards another that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause the other to be humiliated or intimidated. Bullying and harassment may include repeated incidents that adversely affect a person’s psychological or physical well-being and/or a single instance so serious that it has a lasting, harmful effect on a person. It excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees; harassment may occur because of an abuse of authority, but supervision, direction or management of employees undertaken in a good faith manner for a work-related purpose does not constitute harassment. For detailed definitions and examples, see the B.C. Public Service’s [“Define Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment”](#).

Complainant

A person who believes they have been harassed, bullied or discriminated against and who seeks recourse under this policy.

COPPUL Directors

For the purposes of this policy, “COPPUL Directors” includes COPPUL members elected or appointed to the Board of Directors.

COPPUL Employees

For the purposes of this policy, “COPPUL Employees” includes permanent and contract employees, interns, practicum students and independent contractors.

Discrimination

Unjust or prejudicial treatment based on any of the prohibited grounds set out in the [BC Human Rights Code](#): Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political belief or conviction of a criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to their employment.

Disrespectful Behaviour

Behaviour that is discourteous, impolite, insensitive, abrasive and/or rude, and that may reasonably be expected to humiliate, undermine, distress or cause offence to an individual(s) and others who witness the behaviour.

Respectful Behaviour

Behaviour which recognizes the value in each person and treats others with fairness and dignity. This includes acting and communicating with responsibility and accountability, honesty, compassion and empathy, civility, and regard for the safety and well-being of others.

Respectful & Inclusive Workplace

A respectful and inclusive workplace is a physical or virtual environment in which diversity is valued, human dignity is upheld, and considerate behaviour is fostered, ensuring that all employees feel safe, comfortable, and respected as individuals. In respectful workplaces, integrity, fairness, collaboration, professionalism and trust are the norm. Respectful and inclusive workplaces are characterized by:

- Courteous, compassionate and considerate behaviour towards others;
- Values of diversity, inclusion and equity for all;
- Communications and activities that are thoughtful, inclusive and sensitive;
- Constructive feedback and resolution of differences;
- Freedom from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Respondent

A person against whom an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying is made under this policy.

Scope & Application

This policy applies to all COPPUL employees and directors, and any physical or virtual environment in which COPPUL employees may meet or communicate for work-related activities (including workplace social functions), including email, videoconference and social media.

Roles & Responsibilities

Under this policy, all COPPUL employees and directors are responsible for co-creating and maintaining a respectful workplace.

All COPPUL employees are responsible for:

- treating others with respect and dignity, including listening to and acknowledging diverse perspectives and maintaining a respectful and courteous tone and manner;
- not engaging in discrimination, bullying, or harassment;
- reporting discrimination, bullying, or harassment by others; and
- cooperating in any investigations and/or remedial actions.

The COPPUL Executive Director is responsible for:

- treating others with respect and dignity, including listening to and acknowledging diverse perspectives and maintaining a respectful and courteous tone and manner;
- not engaging in discrimination, bullying, or harassment;
- creating a respectful work environment by taking reasonable steps to ensure it is free from incivility, discrimination, bullying, or harassment;
- intervening when discrimination, harassment, bullying or disrespectful behaviour is observed, whether or not it is reported;
- facilitating, supporting and participating in the investigation process of reported incidents;
- cooperating in any investigations and/or remedial actions; and
- providing staff training on workplace discrimination, bullying and harassment.

COPPUL Directors are responsible for:

- treating others with respect and dignity, including listening to and acknowledging diverse perspectives and maintaining a respectful and courteous tone and manner;
- not engaging in discrimination, bullying, or harassment;
- facilitating, supporting and participating in the investigation process of reported incidents; and
- conducting regular reviews of this policy.

Procedures

Direct Resolution of Minor Disputes

COPPUL recognizes that from time to time disagreements or conflicts may arise in the workplace. When this occurs, it is expected that the disagreeing parties will try to resolve disagreements or conflicts in a timely way with respectful and open discussion.

Informal Resolution of Incidents of Disrespectful Behaviour

In less serious incidents involving disrespectful behaviour, an informal complaint resolution process will be applied. An informal resolution process may include the following actions by the Executive Director or, when the Executive Director is the subject of the complaint, the Board Chair and/or Vice-Chair:

- Meeting separately with each person involved in the complaint and review concerns;
- Meeting together with all persons to facilitate a conversation to resolve the issue;
- Reviewing policies and reinforcing expectations of respectful conduct;
- Seeking commitments from persons that they will conduct themselves in a respectful manner;
- Following up, where appropriate, with persons after the resolution process to ask whether commitments have been adhered to;
- Terminating the informal resolution process if there is no sufficient basis to proceed.

Reporting Incidents of Discrimination, Bullying or Harassment

Incidents of workplace discrimination, bullying or harassment should be reported directly to the employee's supervisor or to the Executive Director, or when the Executive Director is the subject of the complaint, to the Board Chair and/or Vice-Chair. The complainant should provide details of the incident in writing, including:

- Name(s) of the complainant(s) and contact information
- Name(s) of the respondent(s) position and contact information if known
- Names of witnesses (if any), or other persons with relevant information to provide about the incident and contact information (if known)
- Details of the incident(s) including date(s), frequency and location(s)
- Any supporting documents relevant to the complaint.

Formal Resolution of Incidents of Discrimination, Bullying or Harassment

If the complainant requests a formal resolution (or in cases of serious misconduct), a formal investigation may be undertaken if the Executive Director or Board Chair / Vice-Chair determines that the complaint falls within the policy. The investigation will be undertaken by an appropriate employee or external resource as determined by the Executive Director and/or Board Chair / Vice-Chair.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the investigation may entail interviewing the complainant, witnesses, and the respondent, and a review of documents or other evidence. At the conclusion of an investigation, the Executive Director or Board Chair / Vice-Chair will determine whether any remedial action such as discipline is warranted and share the key findings and remedies of the investigation with the complainant and respondent.

Consequences of Workplace Discrimination, Bullying or Harassment

Employees that are found to be engaging in behaviours that do not comply with this policy will be supported to change the behaviours; supports may include education, training and/or access to employee assistance programs. Employees that are unwilling or unable to amend such behaviours, or are found responsible for serious breaches of the policy, will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment or contract.

Confidentiality

Handling complaints of discrimination, bullying or harassment requires the collection, use and disclosure of sensitive personal information. Confidentiality is required so that those who have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment will be free to come forward with their complaint and also so that the interests of those involved in the complaint are protected. Anyone involved in complaints of discrimination, bullying or harassment must make every effort to keep all information pertaining to the complaint confidential except to the extent necessary to properly and fairly investigate and resolve the issue.

Confidentiality is not the same as anonymity. While every effort will be made to preserve the confidentiality of the complaint, complainants must recognize that respondents will be made aware of the details of the complaint, including the name of the complainant, and will be given an opportunity to respond. In addition, an investigator may interview other persons who may have relevant information about and/or who may have witnessed the relevant incident(s). Names and details will be identified as necessary to conduct a proper and fair investigation and implement any corrective and/or remedial action.

All information pertaining to complaints filed under this policy is deemed to be protected from disclosure under relevant legislation. COPPUL will treat all disclosed information related to a complaint as submitted in confidence and will keep this information in a secure location, accessible only by the Executive Director, or the Board Chair and Vice-Chair in the case of a complaint against the Executive Director.

Vexatious Complaints

COPPUL recognizes that false accusations of discrimination, harassment or bullying may have serious impacts on innocent people. Anyone who makes a frivolous, vindictive or vexatious complaint may be found to have violated this policy and be subject to corrective measures, up to and including termination of employment or contract.

Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual for initiating a complaint, providing information, or otherwise participating or cooperating in an investigation under this policy, or for associating with someone who has done so, is prohibited and may be subject to corrective measures, up to and including termination of employment or contract. For clarity, the prohibition against retaliation includes any adverse actions that may be taken against an employee in response to their participation in a complaint or investigation.

Employee Rights

A COPPUL employee who initiates a complaint under this policy retains the right to pursue resolution through the appropriate provincial human rights tribunal or workplace safety board. COPPUL is not obligated to provide financial support or any other resources for such employee-initiated processes.

Questions?

Questions about this policy may be directed to the COPPUL Executive Director.

Related Policies & Guidelines

COPPUL Community Code of Conduct Policy

Approved by COPPUL Board of Directors: 3 December 2025

Date of Next Review: December 2027