
CATEGORY: HUMAN RESOURCES

SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL

SUBJECT: CODE OF CONDUCT

A. PURPOSE

This policy establishes a code of conduct for those persons engaged in employment or conducting business on behalf of the Region of Peel. Further, this policy highlights reporting obligations of those persons.

B. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees working for the Region of Peel including all Volunteers who perform service at the Region of Peel.

The word "Employee" when used throughout this policy will mean Employee or Volunteer and "Employees" shall have a corresponding meaning.

This policy covers a variety of topics on work-related conduct, there are however additional policies to reference for guidance on a broader set of work-related conduct issues, they include:

- [HR02-04 - Human Resources – Respectful Workplace;](#)
- [HR03-07 - Human Resources - Workplace Alcohol and Drugs;](#)
- [F30-01 - Business Expense Accounts - Employees;](#)
- [F35-00 - Financial Management Policy - Purchasing By-law;](#)
- [I10-01 – Acceptable Use of Technology;](#)
- [I30-02 - Communication with the Media;](#)
- [G00-01 - Strategic Plan;](#) and
- [G00-15 – Use of Mail and Courier Services](#)

C. POLICY

1. Compliance and Interpretation

As a condition of employment with the Regional Municipality of Peel, herein referred to as the "Region", employees are to comply with the Region's Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures. When in doubt, employees have the responsibility to seek clarification from their supervisor, or if necessary, from Human Resources, the Office of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Solicitor or Regional Internal Audit. Violations of the Region's Code of Conduct will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge and legal prosecution.

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Employees are encouraged to discuss any situations of existing or potential non-compliance, involving themselves or others, with their supervisor or their department head, the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Solicitor, the Regional Internal Auditor or the Chief Administrative Officer.

2. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when, in the course their duties, an employee is called upon to deal with any matter in which he or she has a direct or indirect personal interest, whether or not the employee acts or intends to act in a way which is inconsistent with the interests of the Region.

A direct personal interest is an interest through which the employee may derive an economic benefit or avoid an economic loss.

An indirect personal interest arises where the potential economic benefit, or avoidance of economic loss, would be experienced by another person or corporation having a financial relationship with the employee. This may include, but not be limited to, ownership of shares or other securities, or the loan of money or property by, or to, the employee. An indirect personal interest also occurs when the potential benefit, or avoidance of loss, would be experienced by a person who is a relative or spouse of the employee, or based upon the facts of the particular case, the employee could reasonably be considered to have a personal interest in the economic well-being of that other person.

A personal interest in common with all or part of the residents of the Region of Peel, by virtue of residency in the Regional area, or a personal interest in common with all or a substantial portion of the employees of the Region of Peel, by reason of the terms and conditions of employment, will not be considered to create a conflict of interest.

3. Declarations of conflicts of interest

Each employee shall make prompt and full disclosure in writing to the employee's immediate supervisor of any conflict of interest, including a description of the nature of the direct or indirect personal interest, and the identity of any persons or corporations in respect of which there is a personal interest. Upon receiving disclosure of a conflict of interest, the immediate supervisor shall take such steps as may be reasonable in the circumstances, to ensure the employee is not required to deal with the matter giving rise to the conflict of interest. It must be

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remembered that a conflict of interest will most often arise without any wrongdoing or improper conduct on the part of the employee. Therefore, employees shall not be disciplined or treated adversely for making prompt and full disclosure of the circumstances.

4. Breach of Trust

An employee who, in the course of their duties, seeks to advance a direct or indirect personal interest, whether or not there is a detriment to the Region, commits a breach of trust. A breach of trust would include:

- (a) influencing or attempting to influence the Region to contract with a person, partnership or corporation for any purpose in which the employee has an undisclosed direct or indirect personal interest, or for which the employee reasonably anticipates receipt of some payment, compensation, gift, benefit or favour of any kind whatsoever;
- (b) accepting from any person or corporation any profit, commissions or other payments or favours in the way of price or other advantages, such as loans, services, travel, entertainment or gifts, which are not in accordance with the policies respecting gifts and entertainment in section 5:
 - i. a person or corporation has had, has, or may reasonably be expected to have, or desire to have, any contract with the Region; or
 - ii. a person or corporation is seeking any decision, act, advice, comment, endorsement or anything whatsoever from the Region, its employees or Regional Council;
- (c) accepting from any person or corporation any share of profits, commissions or other payments or favours in the way of price or other advantages, such as loans, services, gifts, travel or entertainment in exchange for referral of third parties to any such person or corporation.

A breach of trust is just cause for immediate dismissal without notice and employees will be disciplined for breach of trust.

5. Gifts and Entertainment - Employees' Responsibility

- (a) Employees shall not seek or accept any gifts, entertainment, payments, fees, services, valuable privileges, or other favours from any person or business organization that has any dealings with the Region, except as provided for

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herein, such as employees may accept entertainment usually associated with accepted business practices if it:

- is infrequent; legitimately serves a definite business purpose; is appropriate to the business responsibilities of the individuals involved; and is not in violation of a policy directly prohibiting receipt of gifts, in effect in any business unit.

(b) An especially strict standard is expected with respect to gifts, services or considerations of any kind from clients and suppliers. Entertainment at the expense of clients or suppliers beyond that contemplated in (a) above should not be accepted under any circumstances. Suppliers will be reminded periodically of this corporate policy.

(c) Staff may participate in a client/supplier sponsored event when there is a valid business purpose and it is approved by the Department Head. When staff are invited to attend an event such as a golf tournament including Regional tournaments, a dinner, or conference and where the event costs are paid by a supplier, staff must seek Department Head approval prior to accepting such invitations (in the case of a Commissioner, CAO approval is required). Employees' attendance at such events may be sponsored by the Region at the discretion of a Department Head or employees may elect to attend at their own cost and on their own time.

(d) It is never permissible to accept a gift in cash or cash equivalent of any amount (i.e. stocks or other form of marketable securities).

6. Gifts and Entertainment - Gifts from the Region to others

Modest gifts, favours and entertainment may be given to others at the Region's expense only if they are consistent with accepted business practice, such as providing vendors with a better understanding of Regional operations. The Region must avoid the appearance of improperly influencing any relationship.

7. Purchase of Alcohol

(a) Purchase of alcohol where the cost will not be covered by the Region

The cost for alcohol will not be paid by the Region at Regional events or business meetings where Regional staff are the only event or meeting participants. At such events, alcohol may be consumed only if the cost is

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paid by staff and the alcohol is consumed responsibly.

(b) Purchase of alcohol where the cost may be covered by the Region

Alcohol may be purchased and the cost paid by the Region at events or business meetings where Regional staff are on Regional business and are meeting with external staff, stakeholders, business partners, and the like. When alcohol is consumed and paid for by the Region, the cost must be reasonable and the consumption of alcohol must be done responsibly.

Staff are reminded to consult other related policies which apply to the consumption of alcoholic beverages in Regional Facilities, such as:

- Corporate Policy HR03-07 – [Workplace Alcohol and Drugs](#)
- Corporate Policy B00-01 – [Alcohol Served at Events](#)

8. Outside Business Activity

Employees considering, or already engaged in any outside business, or income producing activity, must be aware of the following possible points of conflict:

- Employees may not participate in outside business or financial activities that compete, or potentially compete, with services offered by the Region.
- Where such outside activity exists, there is the potential for a conflict of interest as described herein. In the case of a conflict of interest, which impairs the employee's ability to carry out the employee's duties on a regular basis, employees may be asked to transfer to other duties, or choose between continued employment at the Region and the outside activity.
- Conflicting outside employment or activities may lead to discipline up to and including immediate dismissal.
- Employees participating in an outside business will not use the Region's time, facilities, technology or property (i.e. photocopying, stationery, stenographic, etc.) for the benefit of that business.
- Proprietary or confidential information, or data acquired through employment, may not be used, or disclosed in any personal external activity.

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- Responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest, or the perception of conflicts of interest arising from outside activities, lies with the individual employee. If in doubt, the employee should discuss the situation with his or her supervisor. It is expected that employees will act in the best interest of the Region at all times.

9. Abiding by the Law

In acting on behalf of the Region, no employee shall take any action which they know, or reasonably should have known, violates any applicable law or regulation.

The operation of the Region of Peel is subject to many complex and changing provincial and federal laws. Ignorance of the law is not a valid defence if the law has been violated. The Region's standard operating procedures, even if of long standing, do not take precedence over legal obligations. Appropriate recommendations for change will be brought forward where a practice is in clear conflict with an overriding legal obligation.

Any time an employee is uncertain about the application or interpretation of a law or regulation, that employee will consult the appropriate supervisor, who in case of doubt will seek the advice of Legal Services. Legal Services is to be informed immediately where litigation, or a prosecution of the Region, or of Regional employees in connection with their Regional duties, is either threatened or becomes reasonably foreseeable as a possibility. This requirement is not applicable to proceedings where representation of Regional interests is customarily undertaken by the responsible operating department, unless special circumstances appear to warrant advice from legal counsel.

(a) Fraud

All employees of the Region are responsible for immediately reporting grounds for suspected fraud, breach of trust and other forms of wrongdoing to their supervisors, or more senior management, up to and including the Chief Administrative Officer, as appropriate. The Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Solicitor, or the Regional Internal Auditor may also be informed of such grounds for suspicion. Appropriate protection for the confidentiality of such information will be observed.

Prior to taking action on suspicions of wrongdoing, management should seek the advice of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Solicitor, or

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the Regional Internal Auditor, to protect the Region's interests in subsequent disciplinary actions; to protect the rights of the person under suspicion; and to assist in preventing further losses or damage to the Region.

All suspected wrongdoing will be investigated fully, and all persons accused or suspected of wrongdoing will be treated fairly. All employees are required to cooperate fully with law enforcement and regulatory officials.

Department heads are required to prepare a report of the results of completed investigations of discovered wrongdoing to the Chief Administrative Officer, the Commissioner of Corporate Services, the Regional Solicitor and the Regional Internal Auditor along with the steps being taken to reduce the risk of wrongdoing in the future.

All wrongdoing which involves misappropriation of money or property must be reported to the Manager, Loss Management and Insurance Services as soon as possible to permit the initiation of any claim of indemnity which the Region may have available to it.

(b) Accounting Principles and Practices

The Regional Municipality of Peel's accounting books and records shall be maintained with the utmost integrity, reflecting accurately and punctually all transactions, assets and liabilities of the Corporation. All business records, expense accounts, invoices, vouchers, bills, payroll and employee records, and other reports are to be prepared with care and honesty. False or misleading entries in the books and records of the Region, or any unrecorded bank accounts, are strictly prohibited. No secret or unrecorded cash funds or other assets will be established or maintained for any purpose. No transaction is to be concealed from management or the Region's internal or external auditors. Satisfactory accounting and auditing procedures and controls must be maintained, and full compliance with statutory requirements regarding internal and external audit procedures is imperative.

10. Information

(a) Internal Information

It is every employee's responsibility to ensure that all information they communicate, whether by reports, memos or orally, is as accurate as possible. No employee shall willfully mislead other employees, Councillors, or

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the public, about any issue of corporate concern. Only with proper authority will employees give or release to anyone not employed by the Region, or to another employee who has a need for it, confidential data or confidential information acquired in the course of that person's duties with the Region.

Any information which is personal information, or might reasonably be regarded as having been disclosed to the employee in confidence, or as being of a sensitive nature, or as imparting to the person in possession of such information an advantage not available to the public generally, must not be used or disclosed, except in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), and after consulting with a Freedom of Information Coordinator.

Employees shall not, on the basis of advance information, acquire any interest in property for speculation or investment.

(b) Protection of Proprietary Information

Employees frequently have access to proprietary information of the Regional Municipality of Peel or of others which is confidential and must be protected from unauthorized or inadvertent disclosure. This includes but is not limited to information contained in business strategies and plans; pending proposals or contracts; unannounced services; research results; financial projections; client and prospect lists; proposed acquisitions and divestitures; computer programs and software; engineering expertise; know how; inventions and the like. Safeguarding of such information is a high priority responsibility of all employees, as is respecting any proprietary or copyright conditions that may exist.

Such information may be given or released only to employees who have a need for such information, or otherwise in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Employees are not to divulge the proprietary information of their former employers. Employees, whether currently employed or after they leave the employment of the Region, will not disclose any proprietary information of the Region or of any other person where such information was acquired during employment with the Region, unless the release or disclosure is properly authorized by the Region, individual, or firm owning the information.

Employees of the Region shall not directly or indirectly, disclose or use, at

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any time, either during or subsequent to their employment with the Region, any proprietary information, or data obtained in the course of their employment (whether or not acquired or developed by the employee), unless they have obtained the written consent of the Region for the disclosure or use. Information acquired by employees in the course of their employment is the exclusive property of the Region. The collection, use or disclosure of any information must be in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. All rights and title to any tangible or intellectual property produced by an employee during the course of employment shall remain with the Region.

11. Employee Political Activity

Employees of the Region must be politically neutral while undertaking their duties at work or while wearing a Region of Peel uniform, or anything with a Regional logo or branding.

All employees have the right to take part in political activity and electioneering, but only on their own personal time.

During working hours, employees shall not engage in any political activity such as canvassing, campaigning, or fundraising for federal, provincial, municipal, school board or regional elections, or while wearing a Region of Peel uniform.

Employees are prohibited from using Regional assets, resources, vehicles, or property while engaging in any political activity.

12. Employees Running for Political Office: Regional Council, Other Municipal Council, School Board, Provincial or Federal Seat

Employees running for election for Regional Council, Provincial or Federal Seat must take an unpaid leave of absence before filing nomination papers. The unpaid leave of absence will begin on the day the nomination papers are filed and will end on voting day.

Employees running for election in other municipal councils or school boards are not required to take an unpaid leave of absence. However, if time off work is needed, the employee must take an unpaid leave of absence or use accumulated vacation or existing banked time-in-lieu of overtime.

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Employees are required to give their supervisor written notice at least two (2) weeks in advance of the begin date of the unpaid leave of absence, vacation and/or time-in-lieu of overtime use.

Employees may request a payout of any accumulated vacation pay or banked time-in-lieu of overtime pay which was earned prior to the unpaid leave of absence. Contributions to the Ontario Municipal Employee Retirement System (OMERS) are not made during an unpaid leave of absence. Employees will have the option to purchase the service period for OMERS purposes, at the employee's expense (for both the employer and employee portions) as per OMERS regulations.

During unpaid leaves of absence, employees will not have access to any regional resources, including the work space.

If the employee is elected to Regional Council, Provincial or Federal Seat, the employee will be deemed to have resigned from Region of Peel employment immediately and before taking declaration to office.

If the employee is elected to another municipal council or school board, the employee is not required to resign but is subject to all the provisions of the Region of Peel's Code of Conduct policy, specifically noting the conflict of interest sections (C.2. and C.3.), and all other applicable employee policies and performance expectations. Regional employees, who are elected officials in another municipal council or school board, require their supervisor's approval to arrange appropriate time off work for political responsibilities.

If the employee is not elected to Regional Council, another Municipal Council, School Board, Provincial or Federal Seat, the employee will be required to return to their position at the Region of Peel after the leave has expired (i.e. the day following voting day). The leave of absence period will not be counted in determining the length of service for any purpose and the service before and after the leave shall be deemed to be continuous for all purposes.

13. Solicitation of the Region's Employees

Any solicitation of employees, or distribution of non-work related materials of any kind to employees, on Regional premises or during working hours, requires the prior approval of management. However, an individual employee may solicit or distribute materials to the employee's coworkers with prior approval,

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provided that the activity and materials are not disruptive to the workplace environment, and further provided, that no employee will approach a person for such purposes who reports to him or her, whether directly or indirectly, unless the materials are of a charitable nature.

The response to requests for contributions addressed to employees will, at all times, remain a personal decision.

Facilities such as electronic mail, voice mail, internal mail and bulletin boards are for Regional business and sponsored activities, and are restricted to those activities, unless other use is approved by management.

14. Use of Real or Personal Property of the Region

Employees shall not make use of any real or personal property of the Region for their personal benefit, gain, political activity or campaigning, or enjoyment, other than property specifically provided by the Region for such use as a benefit of employment.

Employees shall only use the Region's property, equipment, supplies, and services for activities associated with the discharge of their duties, unless proper authorization has been granted.

No employee shall sell, transfer, publish, disclose, display, or otherwise make available computer programs, purchased software programs, technological innovations, or other intangible property or rights owned, or used, by the Region either while in employ of the Region, or thereafter.

All such property or rights, and any other printed or computer records prepared by an employee during Regional time will remain the exclusive property of the Region of Peel (e.g. control logs, forms, daily calendars).

Upon termination of employment, employees shall deliver to the Region all correspondence, drawings, documents, and all other property belonging to the Region, including data and software, which may be in the employee's possession, or under his or her control. This includes property made or prepared by the employee, and relating in any way to the affairs of the Region.

All employees using personal vehicles for business purposes as well as those using Regionally owned or operated vehicles must be aware of and in

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compliance with provincial regulations and rules for driving. Employees must have a valid driver's license, of the appropriate class, for the vehicle they are operating and must notify their supervisor in the event that they do not meet the licensing requirements. Employees using Regionally owned and operated vehicles are to consult with their departmental policies and procedures for further details on operating Regional vehicles and equipment.

Employees shall not use real or personal property of the Region or regionally owned or operated vehicles for any political activity or campaigning.

Employees shall be bound by all Regional policies relating generally to use of corporate resources, as well as specific policies and guidelines including but not limited to social media guidelines, facility rentals and mobile sign usage.

15. Ownership of Intellectual Property

If the subject matter of an outside interest or activity relates in any way to the employee's work for the Region, or if it arises from confidential information acquired in the course of employment with the Region, then all inventions, products, processes and ideas that the employee has developed will belong to the Region. Employees will be required to sign documents confirming ownership by the Region.

16. Consultants, Representatives and Agents

When it is necessary to engage the services of an individual or firm to consult for, or otherwise represent the Region, special consideration must be given to avoiding conflicts of interest between the Region and the person or firm to be employed. Hiring of consultants, and the appointment of representatives and agents, must be in accordance with the Region's Purchasing By-law. Consultants, representatives and agents of the Region must not act on the Region's behalf in any way that is inconsistent with our Code of Conduct or any applicable laws or regulations, including Regional by-laws and policies.

17. Standard of Behaviour

(a) All Employees

In addition to all other responsibilities addressed in this Code of Conduct policy, employees are expected to behave in accordance with the [Regional](#)

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Values in all of their interactions with co-workers, clients, volunteers, Council, residents, community agencies, external groups and with other Regional staff. Employees are to conduct themselves in a professional manner and in doing so effectively represent the Region with clients and suppliers and in all dealings in the community.

(b) Management Staff

Staff with supervisory responsibilities and in leadership roles providing direction to others must adhere to a high standard of care and judgement in all communications and interactions with staff. Such care and judgement includes maintaining exclusively professional relationships with other Regional employees, contractors and other stakeholders and declaring any perceived or real conflicts of interest that may arise due to changes in the nature of relationships, such as unacceptable reporting relationships that result from a change in the nature of a relationship.

Management staff shall not use their position to gain inappropriate access to employees or inappropriately influence or interfere with staff in matters outside of normal work requirements. Such behaviour may be construed as abuse of authority. By way of example, this includes but is not limited to inappropriate interference or influence in the hiring process, adjusting staff schedules or having staff attend Peel-sponsored events for reasons that are not legitimate business purposes, or accessing staffs' personal contact information for reasons that are not business related.

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