



Our City Our Core Values Our Code of Conduct

Transparency

Impartiality

Respect

Accountability

Integrity

TRANSPARENCY • IMPARTIALITY • RESPECT • ACCOUNTABILITY

A message from the City Manager



As an employee of the City of Ottawa I share your commitment to preserving the public's trust and confidence in the City, staff and the work we do to serve the community. The City of Ottawa's *Code of Conduct* has been specifically developed with two objectives in mind: to advance the goal of preserving public trust and confidence in the City and to assist employees in applying the City's core values in the completion of their work.

It is built on the understanding that we can and should demonstrate to the citizens of Ottawa that we are working to standards that are designed to strengthen public trust and confidence in our work and the services we deliver.

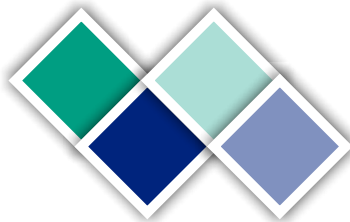
The principles set out in the *Code of Conduct* guide the work we do. As you read through these pages you will see that the *Code of Conduct* does not provide all the answers; instead it acts as a touchstone for questions, and reminds staff how the City's core values can be applied in various situations.

What makes this organization great, is its employees. This *Code of Conduct* benefits the organization by supporting and helping employees better serve the residents of Ottawa.

I believe that the *Code of Conduct* reflects the fact that staff work to the highest ethical standards as public servants every day. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and dedication to our organization and the important work that we do.



Kent Kirkpatrick



Integrity

This is the foundation of public service. Public service is a public trust. A public service that does not have integrity will never gain the public trust.

This *Code of Conduct* reflects the shared values that we hold as public servants for the City of Ottawa: the values that preserve the integrity of our municipal government.

*If you have integrity, nothing else matters.
If you don't have integrity, nothing else matters.*
- Alan Simpson

Our Shared Values

Integrity is the foundation of public service and our shared values are the pillars that support it.

As City employees, we are proud to perform our work with:

- ◆ Transparency
- ◆ Impartiality
- ◆ Respect
- ◆ Accountability

Without all of these, there can be no integrity.

Why is it important to have a Code of Conduct?

A *Code of Conduct* sets out the core values we apply to our everyday experiences. When we demonstrate these values, we build a City with integrity that has the trust and confidence of the public.

City employees have, and should be seen to have, the highest standards of ethical behaviour – anything less undermines our integrity, our effectiveness, and ultimately our reputation.

Nothing in this *Code* is meant to conflict with the City's obligations to its employees under its various collective agreements or employment contracts. Similarly, some employees (including doctors, nurses, engineers, lawyers and accountants) may have professional obligations and should seek clarification from both their manager and their professional associations in the case of a perceived conflict.

As employees of the City of Ottawa, this is our Code.

This *Code of Conduct* does not answer every question that is going to come up. Rather, it is designed to promote ethical decision-making and behaviour, to make us think about how ethics guide us in doing our jobs and to reinforce the expectations of us. It is about making ethics and integrity part of the way we think about doing our jobs.

Ethical behaviour is not about finding all the right answers – it is about asking all of the right questions, like:

- Am I putting my own interests before the City's?
- Would I make the same decision if my managers, the public or the media were watching me?
- Will I owe someone a favour if I do this?
- Would I be offered this if I weren't an employee of the City?

If you have a question or if you're looking for guidance, ask your manager or ask the City Solicitor.

Ask until you get an answer.



Transparency

*Whenever you do a thing,
act as if all the world were watching.*
- Thomas Jefferson

Why is transparency important?

As public servants we are accountable for what we do and our accountability is ensured by transparency. We must be open and honest in dealing with our managers, the public and City Council. We owe it to the public to not just do our jobs well, but to be open and honest about what we do.

What we do...

Where there might be a conflict between our personal interests and those of the City, we disclose that fact immediately and seek guidance from our managers.

We abide by the laws and City policies that apply to such things as the retention of records and freedom of information.

We provide full disclosure when offering information.

We understand that, over time, circumstances can change and we may need to disclose again: the obligation to disclose is a continuing one.

Related Policies

Disposal of Fleet Vehicles and Equipment
Purchasing By-law



Impartiality

Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you.

- H. Jackson Brown, Junior

Why is impartiality important?

As public servants, we have to do our jobs with the City of Ottawa's best interests in mind, not our own. We have to do our jobs without bias, without favour and without allowing outside interests to conflict with work decisions.

What we do...

We make work decisions without consideration of our personal interests or those of our family and friends.

When buying goods or services, we comply with the City's procurement by-laws and policies.

We ensure that our outside activities do not conflict with our jobs.

We do not...

Participate in decisions that benefit ourselves or our friends and family.

Supervise members of our family or make decisions that affect their employment.

Accept gifts, hospitality or entertainment from people who do, or want to do, business with the City.

Related Policies

Concurrent Employment

Gifts and Entertainment

Hiring and Employment of Family Members

A NOTE ON FAMILY

The City of Ottawa recognizes how important our families are to us, and the importance of close family relationships. We need to be aware that, in this *Code of Conduct*, the interests of our families are also our own interests.

What is important is making sure that we do not use our positions as City employees to give preferential treatment, whether it is to ourselves, our families or our friends.

The City takes a broad approach to the term “family” and it may include relatives beyond what might generally be considered “immediate family”, such as cousins, in-laws, etc.

If in doubt about something, ask your manager.

Impartiality - Avoiding conflicts of interest

Why is this important?

Avoiding conflicts of interest is one of the fundamental principles of ethical behaviour. Public confidence in the City can exist only if employees are known to be acting in the public interest, rather than pursuing their own interests.

If faced with a situation where you could directly benefit from a decision you make, you need to disclose your interest to your manager and remove yourself from the decision-making process.

The need for disclosure and withdrawal from the decision-making process applies not only to financial interests, but includes any personal benefit, or any benefit to your family and friends.

You also have to be mindful that there are situations where it might look to someone else that you have conflicting interests.

Ask yourself this question: Would someone who knew all of the details of the situation think I might have a conflict of interest?

If the answer is “yes”, then disclose the situation to your manager.

After you have disclosed an actual or potential conflict of interest, you need to avoid any involvement in the matter. That is why disclosure is important: so that others know not to involve you as well.

Impartiality - Employment matters

Why is this important?

We encourage public confidence by ensuring that City business is conducted fairly and free from nepotism. This leads to a shared expectation that all hiring, promotions, performance appraisals and discipline will be undertaken in an impartial manner. Impartiality in employment matters also helps to ensure that the City respects its collective agreement obligations.

The City does not allow family members to be:

- Supervised by or subordinate to one another
- Given preferential treatment in being recruited or selected for vacancies
- Appointed to positions where job responsibilities are incompatible with positions occupied by other family members

If you find yourself in a situation like those described above, or in any other situation that could raise a concern with nepotism, you should disclose it to your manager.

Impartiality - Outside activities

Why is it important?

The City of Ottawa encourages employees to become involved in their community, including participation in such things as community organizations, advocacy groups or charitable associations.

However, it is also possible that some outside activities can interfere with our ability to do our jobs or may undermine the neutrality of the City. It is our shared responsibility to prevent situations where the perception of conflict of interest exists.

What we do...

We remove ourselves from decisions that might affect, or might be seen to affect, the interests of other groups or organizations that we participate in.

We seek a leave of absence if we want to run for elected office, even if it is outside the City or with another level of government, board or committee.

We do not...

Take on other work that,

- Conflicts with our City hours of work
- Interferes with the efficient performance of our duties
- Competes with City services
- Creates a real or perceived conflict of interest with our City duties

Impartiality - The duty of loyalty

Why is loyalty important?

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.

What 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.

We distinguish between our 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.

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.



Respect

Find out what it means to me.
- Aretha Franklin

What does it mean at the City of Ottawa?

We are guardians of public funds and responsible for delivering a wide range of important public services, which are supported by members of the public through their taxes. We owe the public nothing less than our full commitment to doing the best job we can.

Our own actions reflect on our co-workers and define our workplace. We have an obligation to help build pride in our City, to respect the dignity and diversity of our colleagues and to treat them as we would like to be treated ourselves.

While it takes hard work to gain the respect of others, even small lapses can erode confidence in the City. To ensure that our conduct does not diminish respect for ourselves, our co-workers and for the City, we maintain and exemplify the highest standards of behaviour.

Related Policies

Corporate Vehicle and Equipment Idling
Equity and Diversity
Hospitality (Internal) for City Employees
Personal Use of City Vehicles
Petty Cash Funds and Change Floats
Responsible Computing
Violence in the Workplace
Workplace Harassment

Things we do to show respect...

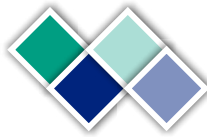
- We devote ourselves fully to our jobs during our working hours and do not allow our personal activities (e.g. reading a magazine, surfing the internet, etc.) to interfere with our work.
- We ensure that all property (including cash, cheques, documents, inventories and equipment) in our care as part of our job is properly secured and protected at all times.
- We handle sensitive and confidential information with care and disclose only in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").
- We are honest, polite and courteous when we deal with people, whether they are members of the public, City Council or our co-workers.
- We recognize that we are the public face of the City, so we dress appropriately.
- We foster an atmosphere of collegiality and support our co-workers in their work.
- We provide excellent customer service every day.

We do not...

- Harass or intimidate others. The City has absolutely no tolerance for this kind of behaviour.
- Download or install personal software without prior written consent from management.
- Manipulate, falsify, alter or amend documents, information or records for fraudulent purposes.
- Access, distribute or display inappropriate material (including sexually explicit, discriminatory, abusive, defamatory or obscene material) using City property, including the City's computer network.
- Publicly disparage the City, our co-workers or City Council.

Related policies

Access to Employee Files Procedures
Re-employment



Accountability

The ancient Romans had a tradition: whenever one of their engineers constructed an arch, as the capstone was hoisted into place, the engineer assumed accountability for his work in the most profound way possible: he stood under the arch.

- Michael Armstrong

Why is accountability important?

This *Code of Conduct* sets out a vision of City of Ottawa employees as transparent, respectful and impartial. We are proud to live these principles in our work every day and we encourage accountability in this regard. We know that breaches of the values set out in this *Code* can only erode our reputation and, ultimately, our integrity. We owe it to the taxpayer and to ourselves to be accountable for our actions.

What we do...

- We know the *Code* and comply with its principles.
- We disclose breaches of the *Code* immediately, whether they are committed by ourselves or a co-worker.
- We fully cooperate with investigations into alleged wrongdoing.
- We understand that breaches of the *Code* shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- We seek interpretation of the *Code* from the City Clerk and Solicitor's office.
- We make observance of the *Code* part of our daily work and review the *Code* as part of our annual performance planning cycle.

We do not...

- Retaliate against anyone who has come forward with a complaint, or any witnesses to complaints.
- Assume that violations of the values in this *Code* are someone else's problem.

Reporting and Whistleblower Protection

If you become aware of a violation of the *Code of Conduct* or another City policy, you should report the matter to your manager, the City Solicitor, the City Manager or the Auditor General.

No employee will be disciplined for making a report in good faith about a violation of this *Code of Conduct* or another City policy, nor will the City tolerate any retaliation against an employee who has made such a complaint or participated in an investigation. However, an employee making false accusations will be disciplined.

Related Policies

Discipline – Corporate Policy
Fraud and Other Similar Irregularities