

TOWN OF STETTLER

<u>Prepared by:</u>	Corporate Identity Committee	<u>Number:</u>	II-7(i)
<u>Adopted by:</u>	Town of Stettler Council	<u>Original Policy:</u>	1997 05 06
		<u>Previous Policy:</u>	2020 01 07
		<u>Current Policy:</u>	2025 08 06

Title: **Employee Code of Ethics**

Purpose: To foster a workplace culture grounded in integrity, transparency, and respect by clearly outlining expected behavior standards, potential consequences, and encourage employees to bring forward ethical concerns through confidential reporting.

General Statement: Employees shall observe the highest ethical standards in the performance of their duties and shall put public interest above individual, group, or special interest and consider their occupation as an opportunity to serve society.

Policy Statement: Employees follow Town ethical standards and serve the interests of The Town and its citizens when carrying out the financial and operational duties of The Town by:

- (1) Treating coworkers, Council members, and the public with respect and dignity at all times;
- (2) Respecting and maintaining the confidentiality of information received in the course of their duties;
- (3) Conducting The Town's business in compliance with all laws, regulations, and other legal requirements;
- (4) Avoiding situations where a private or personal interest of an employee conflicts with the interest of The Town, including when a private or personal interest could reasonably appear to influence the objectivity or impartiality of work-related decisions. Otherwise, employees must disclose and seek direction from their supervisor regarding potential conflicts of interest;
- (5) Not accepting substantial or frequent gifts, discounts, or hospitality, which could reasonably be perceived to influence a business decision. Employees can accept gifts, discounts, or hospitality considered usual business practice, as long as they transparently report to their supervisor any value received greater than \$50;

- (6) Not using Town property or purchasing items on behalf of the town for personal benefit;
- (7) Not influencing or seeking to influence the hiring of friends or relatives; disclosure to and involvement of the CAO is required should a friend or relative be considered for hiring, discretion is provided to the CAO in this regard;
- (8) Not using confidential or “insider” Town information for personal benefit;
- (9) Avoiding off-duty conduct, including on-line and social media activity, public statements or actions in the community that could harm or damage The Town’s reputation, interfere with the employee fulfilling the employee’s work responsibilities, or reasonably lead to refusal, reluctance, or inability of other employees to work with them;
- (10) Not knowingly making false or misleading statements or allegations;
- (11) Exercising diligence to prevent, detect, and report suspected fraud; and
- (12) Bringing forward ethical concerns or reporting questionable conduct involving other Town employees or persons conducting business with The Town.

In addition to the above, there are a number of specific items for Employees to be aware of relative to following Town ethical standards:

1. Outside Employment

A Town employee may take additional employment including self-employment, unless this additional employment:

- a) Causes an actual or apparent conflict of interest;
- b) Is performed so that it appears to have been performed on behalf of the Town;
- c) Interferes with the performance of the employee’s duties for the Town;
- d) Involves the use of Town facilities or equipment including telephones;
- e) Involves an activity related to this additional or self-employment which is carried out during Town working hours;

- f) Involves activities which must be undertaken during business hours, in which case the employee must use vacation time, which will require approval.

2. Criminal Offenses

- a) Employees charged and/or convicted with a criminal offense will have their employment reviewed by the CAO and may face suspension or loss of employment.

3. Political Activity

- a) The Employee shall not actively campaign for a political candidate during working hours.
- b) Employees shall not campaign for a person seeking office as a Councillor or Mayor.
- c) Employees wishing to run for political offices may seek a leave without pay which shall be at the CAO's discretion.
- d) Employees elected to the Legislative Assembly, the House of Commons or Town of Stettler Municipal Council shall resign their position with the Town. Any Employees elected to a municipal office other than the Town of Stettler, School Board or Hospital Board shall not allow the interests of the elected body to conflict with the Town of Stettler.

4. Online and Social Media Activity

- a) While employees are not acting in an official capacity on their personal social media accounts, they are still viewed by the public as a representative of the Town and as such employees are expected to exercise good judgement, discretion, and professionalism when posting content online.
- b) Employees must not make online posts that:
 - i. Disclose confidential Town information;
 - ii. Undermine the Town's reputation, decisions, or public confidence in Town operations;
 - iii. Conflict with their role as a Town employee.
- c) Personal posts or online commentary that conflict with the employee's responsibilities to the Town, or that could interfere with workplace relationships or operations, may be subject to review under this policy.

Employees are expected to exercise sound judgment, and to be guided in their actions at all times by a sincere intent to be honest, forthright, and ethical in performing their duties and fulfilling their employment responsibilities. It is not possible to document all possible ethical concerns that could arise in the course of employment. Therefore, employees should seek guidance from their supervisor or Human Resources if they have any doubt about how this policy would apply in specific situations.

Employees face appropriate employer action when not following Town ethical standards, which may include disciplinary consequences up to and including termination, claims for restitution or reimbursement of losses, and/or referral to legal prosecution.

Employees with ethical concerns have reporting options available to them and are supported and protected from reprisal/retaliation, even if the reported concerns are later found to be without merit, as long as employees acted honestly and in good faith in bringing forward concerns.

Options for reporting include the ability to report serious allegations anonymously.

Penalties and Appeals:

This Code of Ethics is an integral part of an Employee's terms and conditions of employment. Failure by an Employee to comply with this code will result in corrective and/or disciplinary action being taken by the Town of Stettler. This may include a reprimand, suspension or dismissal.

When an Employee feels the corrective and/or disciplinary action taken by the Employer is excessive or unjust, the Employee may:

- grieve the action through the normal procedure in the respective Collective Agreement for bargaining unit members.
- appeal the decision and for non-union Employees the appropriate sections of the current Collective Agreement would be used for guidance purposes.

Definitions:

Fraud: An act committed by one who, by deceit, falsehood, or other fraudulent means, whether or not it is a false pretense, defrauds, or attempts to defraud The Town, whether ascertained or not, of any property, money, or valuable security, or any service. Fraud will typically involve the use of a dishonest act or omission in an attempt to gain some personal benefit or advantage, but can also include the abuse of authority, assigned to or entrusted upon an individual by The Town, to achieve an improper end.

Reprisal/Retaliation: Oral or written reprimand, suspension, termination, loss of advancement opportunities, change in duties, reduction in pay, change in reporting structure, change in work location, harassment, threats, coercion, interference, or intimidation, directed at an Employee because the Employee had, in good faith, made a report, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing with respect to a suspected violation of any Town Policy, Procedure, or other rule/expectation respecting the conduct of employees.