

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

*for Employees of the
Town of Renfrew*

POLICY STATEMENT:

All employees of the Town of Renfrew will adhere to the Code of Conduct Policy to ensure that there is no conflict between their personal interests and official duties. Failure to comply with any of these procedures may expose an employee to disciplinary action and/or action through the Courts.

BACKGROUND:

The Town has implemented this Code of Conduct Policy in order to both promote professionalism and to ensure that the relationship of trust that exists between staff, Council and the public remains an integral part of local government in Renfrew. Since its inception, local government has been understood to be an open, accessible and accountable form of government.

The purpose of this Policy is to document and formalize standards of ethical conduct as they apply to municipal employees. This policy embodies the basic principles of honesty, impartiality and common sense and recognizes that a municipal employee has a responsibility to uphold these principles.

The proper operation of a municipal government requires that employees be independent, impartial, and responsible to the citizens; that their positions not be used for personal gain and that the public have confidence in the integrity of municipal employees.

METHOD OF UPDATING THIS POLICY:

As new issues arise, the Code will be reviewed and modified according to current situations. Any comments or suggested revisions should be directed to the Administration Committee through the Town Clerk's Office.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Town.

Each employee is responsible for understanding and complying with this Code, and should seek clarification from their immediate supervisor, or the Town Clerk, on any segment they do not understand.

Each supervisor is responsible to ensure that every employee under their direct supervision has received a copy of this Code, and any points of confusion have been clarified.

GENERAL:

- 1) Employees will promote the goals, objectives and policies of the Town of Renfrew.
- 2) The Town expects a standard of dress and grooming from employees that is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances of their position within the Town of Renfrew.
- 3) Employees will acknowledge and recognize the dignity and worth of every person they serve, and with whom they speak.
- 4) Employees must provide service in a manner which respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, and adhere to the provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.
- 5) Employees will ensure, in the performance of official duties, equality of treatment to all persons and, shall refrain from showing preferential treatment to any person, group, or organization.
- 6) All Town of Renfrew employees in the course of their assigned duties must refrain from physical or verbal abuse or threats towards fellow employees or members of the general public.
- 7) Employees will disclose in writing to their Department Head any business, commercial, or financial interest where such an interest might be construed as being in actual or potential conflict with their official duties. This written disclosure is kept in the employee's personnel file for the duration of employment.
- 8) Employees will not engage in any business, dealing, or transaction or have a financial or other personal interest which is in conflict with the discharge of their official duties.
- 9) Employees shall not knowingly participate in any decision or promotion or make any recommendation, in which they or their family has any financial interest, except as a resident of the Municipality.
- 10) Employees may not knowingly sell goods, materials, or services to the municipality without the express permission of the Clerk.

- 11) Town of Renfrew employees may wish to report to their Department Head alleged breaches of conflict of interest committed by fellow Town of Renfrew employees.
- 12) Employees will not benefit from the use of information acquired or used, and that is not generally available to the public, during the course of official duties.
- 13) Employees shall safeguard and protect any confidential information which they are privy to as a result of their employment with the Town. Employees shall not disclose or otherwise release such confidential information to any person or agency other than authorized Town staff or officials, at any time during or following their employment, except as required by law.
- 14) Employees will not engage in any outside work, private employment, business, or undertaking for any person, group, or organization, which might interfere with the performance of their duties as a Town employee, without the prior approval of their Department Head and the Clerk.
- 15) Employees will not, except as specifically provided by policy, and with Department Head approval, use Town property or equipment for activities or purposes not associated with the discharge of official duties.
- 16) Employees may not use, take, acquire, or benefit from any property or asset owned, controlled or managed by the municipality for activities or purposes not associated with the discharge of official duties.
- 17) Amenities such as electronic mail, voice mail, internal mail, cell phones and bulletin boards are provided only for Town business and sponsored activities, and must not be used for personal business.
- 18) No employee shall sell, transfer, publish, disclose, display or otherwise make available computer programs, purchased software programs, technological innovations, or other tangible property or rights owned by the municipality.
- 19) Upon termination of employment, employees shall deliver to their supervisor all correspondence, images, drawings, documents, computer files, paper files, and all other property belonging to the Town which may be in the employee's possession or control. This includes property made or prepared by the employee and relating in any way to the affairs of the Town.
- 20) Nothing in the preceding conditions prevents the Town from implementing disciplinary measures for inappropriate activities not specifically listed.
- 21) Any employee, who is in doubt about the interpretation or application of this Code of Conduct, should seek clarification from their immediate supervisor, or the Town Clerk.

- 22) Employees are expected to report to work in a fit condition to carry out their work duties. Employees reporting to work in an unfit condition will be sent home without pay. The Town considers as being unfit if an employee is under the influence of alcohol or other substance which may affect their ability to perform adequately.
- 23) Employees shall work in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and shall ensure all applicable safety regulations and procedures are followed. They will not conduct their work activities in a manner that may cause injury to themselves or others, or damage equipment or property.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR:

- 1) The Town's employees are ambassadors of the Town. Thus, each employee must be conscious of the Town's public duty and their part in the discharge of that duty. They are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of ethical behavior and integrity.
- 2) Employees, as representatives of the Town, are expected to reflect a professional image. As with external relations, employees must be professional and courteous with their co-workers. They should be aware of the effect that their workplace behavior has on others. Employees are expected to be reasonable and fair in their expectations of each other, and resolve any conflict in a mature and professional manner.
- 3) An employee of the town may not be in arrears to the municipality for rates and service charges (i.e. personal purchases, rentals etc.) for a period longer than 3 months. A municipality may deduct any outstanding amounts from a staff member's salary after this period.

GIFTS, BENEFITS, AND ENTERTAINMENT:

- 1) Employees will not place themselves in a position where they could derive any benefit or gain from any Municipal contracts, persons, groups, companies, or organizations with which the Town does business.
- 2) Employees will not demand, accept, or agree to accept from a person, group, or organization that wishes to have business dealings with the Town, a nominal gift, benefit, favour, discount hospitality, or gratuity for personal benefit.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY:

The Town recognizes the right of employees to engage in political activities for all levels of government consistent with the following:

- 1) Employees may engage in any political activity as long as it does not impair, or is not perceived as impairing, the employee's ability to perform their duties impartially.
- 2) Political activity may only occur outside of employee's working hours.
- 3) Political activity may not occur by the employee while representing, or being perceived to represent the Town.
- 4) The actions of employees involved in any political activity shall not result in a corporate conflict.
- 5) An employee may be a candidate in a municipal election provided the requirements of the Municipal Act and Municipal Elections Act are followed.
- 6) No employee is allowed to actively campaign, solicit or promote any political candidate at the municipal, provincial or federal levels of government in the course of their regularly scheduled duties during the workday. Any political activity must occur outside of regularly scheduled hours for all Town employees.
- 7) An employee seeking the nomination or candidacy of any elected provincial or federal political office must request an unpaid leave of absence from the time of declaration of intent until the cessation of the political candidacy.
- 8) Town employees may run for and serve in municipal elected offices provided no conflict of interest exists between the elected office and the employee's responsibility to the Town. Employees will disclose in writing to the Clerk their intent to seek the role of elected official on a municipal government.
- 9) Employees will disclose in writing to the Clerk their interest to seek appointment to an Advisory Board or any other appointed Board.

STAFF/COUNCIL RELATIONS:

- 1) Employees shall deal with all members of Council in an objective, respectful and impartial manner at all times.
- 2) Employees must recognize that elected officials are responsible for the establishment of policy and that employees are responsible for implementation of the directives originating from Council.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY:

- 1) As part of effective management, each supervisor must ensure that employees reporting to them are aware of, and in compliance with, this Code of Conduct.
- 2) Prior to taking action on suspected breaches, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk. It is the responsibility of Management to ensure that each suspected wrongdoing is investigated and acted upon.

VIOLATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT:

- 1) The preceding guidelines and expectations, as well as the related policies, re-affirm the Town's commitment to integrity, objectivity and professionalism in delivering services to the public.
- 2) Maintaining the taxpayer's confidence and trust in local government and its employees is of the utmost importance. The high standards of conduct expressed in this document are intended to ensure that this public trust is not compromised. As such, every employee is expected to be fully aware of, and in compliance with, the Code and its related policies.
- 3) Violation of this Code is a serious matter and any employee in violation of this Code will be treated firmly, fairly and consistently. In addition, any employee who has contravened this Code shall be subject to such disciplinary actions (up to and including dismissal) as is deemed appropriate by Town Council under the circumstances.
- 4) If an employee is accused of violating this policy, the procedure will be as follows:
 - a) the employee will be encouraged to document their version of the alleged incident, including times, places, what happened and any witnesses.
 - b) the complainant will present their version of the alleged incident, in writing to the Clerk, in similar fashion. The Clerk will direct the matter to the appropriate Department/Committee.
 - c) the appropriate Department/Committee will deal with the issue as quickly as possible and make a judgment after reviewing, interviewing, investigating and confirming the details. Their recommendation for action will be presented 'in camera' for Council approval. If the complaint is unfounded and/or made in bad faith, this will surface and be dealt with during the investigative process.

- 5) Any employee under investigation for suspected fraud or other wrongdoing may be removed from the workplace, with or without pay, or be re-assigned to other duties pending completion of the investigation, depending on the particulars of the case and the best interests of the Town.

- 6) Nothing in this Code is intended to conflict with the Town's obligations to its employees under its collective agreements. Nor is this Code intended to undermine the firm commitment to the well-being and professional treatment of employees. However, public service is a public trust, and as an organization entrusted with public funds, it is critical that every employee re-affirm their commitment to the highest standards of ethical behavior. It is in this spirit that the Code is implemented.