

Respectful Workplace Policy**Report Purpose**

To seek Council approval on the updated HUM-001-032 Respectful Workplace policy as well as on the rescission of policy HUM-001-025 Discrimination and Harassment.

Recommendation

THAT HUM-001-032 Respectful Workplace policy, as set out in Enclosure 1 of the February 23, 2021 Human Resources report, be approved.

THAT policy HUM-001-025 Discrimination and Harassment be rescinded.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 8 - Foster an environment for safe communities
Governance Requirement

Report

The existing policy HUM-001-032 Respectful Workplace outlines Strathcona County's commitment to set, communicate and model clear expectations of employee behaviours in relation to other employees and to clients. The purpose of the updated Policy is to outline the framework for a respectful workplace and to inform employees of their right and obligation to work in a respectful environment. Below is a summary of the key revisions:

- Provides more detail regarding the expected behaviours of individuals who interact at Strathcona County workplaces including employees, elected officials, members of the public, and contractors.
- Highlights the importance and commitment to identify and eliminate or control the hazards of workplace violence and harassment.
- Highlights Strathcona County's commitment to provide appropriate respectful workplace training, education and awareness information for employees.
- Speaks to the commitment to ensure a process is available to raise complaints of workplace violence or harassment without fear of reprisal.
- Added clarity around investigations to highlight the commitment to appropriately investigate complaints of workplace violence or harassment and a commitment to take corrective action when conduct does not satisfy the established expectations.
- Clearly communicates to all individuals including employees and the public that disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated.

Review of the policy considered how complaints will be addressed whether they involve employees, contractors, elected officials or members of the public. Strathcona County is subject to provincial health and safety legislation which includes the prevention of violence and harassment in all Strathcona County workplaces (all Respectful Workplace complaints would be either a violence or harassment complaint). The approach contained in the policy and procedure is intended to solve problems while making it clear that a respectful workplace must be maintained.

The new procedure (which will be approved by the Chief Commissioner and is included as enclosure 2) addresses interactions between employees and members of the public. Throughout the development of the Respectful Workplace Policy, it became apparent that some employees require support while dealing with difficult members of the public and some members of the public need to know how concerns they might have about employee behaviour can be addressed. To support our employees and to provide additional clarity to the public a Respectful Workplace Procedure was drafted. The purpose of the procedure is to outline the following:

- Process for the public to escalate concerns when they believe employees are exhibiting concerning behaviour contrary to the intent of the Respectful Workplace Policy.
- Process for employees to follow when they believe members of the public are exhibiting concerning behaviour contrary to the intent of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

On October 20, 2020, Priorities Committee provide feedback on the draft policy HUM-001-032 and Procedure. Priorities Committee feedback was considered and integrated into the revised draft Policy; which includes a simplified definition of workplace harassment.

The updated Policy and new Procedure consolidates overlapping content from the existing Respectful Workplace and Discrimination and Harassment policies; and it addresses Occupational Health and Safety requirements with respect to workplace violence and harassment prevention. As a result, the existing Discrimination and Harassment policy (HUM-001-025) will no longer be required.

Council and Committee History

October 20, 2020	Priorities Committee provided input to the draft Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedure.
March 12, 2019	Human Resources (HUM) provided Priorities Committee with an overview of the proposed HUM policy framework and an update on the HUM policy review.
September 7, 2004	Council approved policy HUM-001-032 Respectful Workplace

Other Impacts

Policy: GOV-002-021 Mandatory Review of Bylaws and Policies requires that policies are reviewed on a 3-year cycle.

Legislative/Legal: The *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* s. 5 sets out that a municipality has the duties that are imposed on it by enactments and those that municipality imposes on itself as a matter of policy.

Interdepartmental: The policy review initiative involves all County departments.

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

Communication Plan

Communication to the public will occur through a press release and on the external website following Council approval of the Policy and Procedure. Communication to employees will also occur following Council approval and training will commence March 1, 2021.

Enclosure(s)

- 1 HUM-001-032 Respectful Workplace Policy (updated)
- 2 HUM-001-032P Respectful Workplace Procedure (new)
- 3 HUM-001-032 Respectful Workplace Policy (current)
- 4 Presentation – Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedure and Policy
for Rescission
- 5 HUM-001-025 Discrimination and Harassment