

## Whistleblower

**References:** Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 (MGA)  
Strathcona County Bylaw 27-2018: Council Code of Conduct  
HUM-001-001 Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics

### Policy Statement

Strathcona County is committed to a culture of trust and ethical behavior. The County is dedicated to accountable, ethical, and transparent governance that protects the organization, its people, and assets. Recognizing, however, that Wrongdoing may occur, the County is committed to fully investigating any allegations of Wrongdoing and providing a confidential and secure process to report Wrongdoing without fear of reprisal.

This policy applies to Employees and Contractors.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the disclosure and investigation of allegations of Wrongdoing and to provide a safe and confidential process to report Wrongdoing that protects Whistleblowers from reprisal for Protected Disclosures.

### Definitions

**Chief Commissioner** – the Chief Commissioner of Strathcona County.

**Contractor** – any person (including but not limited to an individual, partnership, association, or corporation) that has, or has had within the last two years, a contract with the County and includes that contractor’s directors, officers, employees, and volunteers.

**County** – means Strathcona County.

**Employee** – any person employed by Strathcona County on a permanent, non-permanent, full-time, or part-time basis; including all unionized, classified, management, and staff engaged through an employment contract, and includes any former employee whose employment was terminated due to a Protected Disclosure or knowledge of a Wrongdoing.

**Protected Disclosure** – a communication made in good faith that discloses information supporting, or believed to support, an allegation, or multiple allegations, of suspected Wrongdoing.

**Whistleblower** – the person who has knowledge of an activity believed to be Wrongdoing and reports the activity in good faith.

**Wrongdoing** – includes, but is not limited to, fraudulent activities or other actions leading to financial irregularities, unlawful acts, breach of policy, breach of Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics or Council Code of Conduct, acts or omissions that threaten the health or safety of Employees, the public or the environment, acts or omissions that show reckless or wilful disregard for proper management of public funds or assets and directing anyone to commit any of the foregoing.

## **Guidelines**

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It is the responsibility of every employee, who is aware of a Wrongdoing, to report the incident as soon as possible. Employees and Contractors are encouraged to report any suspected Wrongdoing. The Chief Commissioner will ensure that Whistleblowers have safe reporting options available to them and are protected from reprisal.

### **Protection from reprisal:**

- Whistleblowers, acting in good faith and in compliance with this policy, are protected from reprisal.
- Reprisal, harassment, or retaliation in response to a Protected Disclosure may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause.

### **Reporting:**

- Whistleblowers who believe Wrongdoing has occurred may make a Protected Disclosure. The Protected Disclosure should describe with as much information as possible the allegation, or multiple allegations, of suspected Wrongdoing.
- Unsubstantiated allegations of Wrongdoing that are proven to have been made knowing they are false, maliciously or otherwise in bad faith may result in disciplinary action, up to and including terminating an Employee for cause, or terminating a contract in accordance with its terms.
- To the extent reasonably possible, the County will treat a Protected Disclosure as confidential, and the Whistleblower's identity will be kept confidential. However, a Whistleblower's identity may have to be disclosed through the course of an investigation, to comply with the law, or to provide accused individuals with procedural fairness. Whistleblowers will be notified in advance if their identity is going to be released.

### **Investigation:**

- Allegations made in a Protected Disclosure will be assessed and, where there is sufficient information, will be formally investigated.
- Investigations into allegations made in a Protected Disclosure will be conducted in a timely and fair manner while maintaining confidentiality to the extent legally possible.
- The Whistleblower will remain updated on the general status of an investigation as appropriate throughout the process.

## **Policy Record**

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**Date of Approval by Council:**

**Resolution No:**

**Next Review Date:**

**Policy No:** GOV-002-046

**Last Review Date:**

**Replaces:** GOV-002-024

**Administrative Review:** Human Resources