

EDMONTON

The City of Edmonton  
Employee Code of Conduct  
Handbook and Guide

# CODE of CONDUCT



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**Edmonton**



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## Message From Simon Farbrother



Municipal government truly is the order of government that's closest to its citizens. Thousands of City staff interact with Edmontonians every day. That makes it all the more important that we share a standard of conduct and set of principles to guide our choices.

Our values are what unite us as a community. The City of Edmonton Code of Conduct represents the values we share.

Edmontonians have placed their trust in us. They have made a huge investment in the City's infrastructure and assets, and in us as City employees. We need to take care of that investment and use City equipment and our work time appropriately.

I've spent my entire career working in municipalities. It is a uniquely rewarding occupation, but we all need to understand the responsibilities that come with our jobs.

It is important that every City of Edmonton employee knows our Code of Conduct. It's your responsibility to follow it. If you have questions, talk to your supervisor or any of the contacts listed in the handbook. We are here to support you when you have questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Farbrother', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Simon Farbrother**  
**City Manager**

## Why Have a Code of Conduct?

The Employee Code of Conduct Directive/Procedure A1100C and this handbook collectively referred to as the “Code of Conduct” explain the expected rules of behaviour. It states values, provides guidance and recommends action so that all employees know exactly what is expected of them. The Code of Conduct creates an environment that encourages a specific standard of behaviour, lessens confusion and promotes equality within the work place.

When all employees are treated equitably – with dignity, respect and trust – they feel valued and are more likely to perform well and to enjoy their jobs. This, in turn, enhances our effectiveness as city employees, and promotes public confidence in the integrity of City services. The Code of Conduct and its related policies are critical to both our success and our reputation. As employees we are governed by all City Policies and Directives.

The information in this booklet is not new to you; it is the foundation upon which this organization is built. This Code of Conduct is simply a reminder of the policies and principles of conduct the City has always embraced.

A complete copy of the Employee Code of Conduct directive is available on the City’s web site [www.edmonton.ca](http://www.edmonton.ca)



## How Does the Code Affect Me?

The City of Edmonton acknowledges that it is only through the commitment of our employees that we are able to deliver quality service and maintain public trust. As our most valued asset, City employees must be above reproach in their professional dealings and must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour. It is with this in mind that every City employee is expected to be aware of, and comply with, the Code of Conduct.

## Disclosure

If you think you may be in violation of the Code, address the situation and make full and prompt disclosure to your supervisor. Any suspected non-compliance by another employee must also be promptly reported to your supervisor.

NOTE: *Anyone who knowingly makes a false accusation about non-compliance will be subject to disciplinary action.*

# Ethical Questions

The Code of Conduct can't outline every situation or relationship that might create a conflict of interest. Each of us must understand and be able to apply basic ethical standards. Employees are expected to carry out their duties in a manner which is beyond reproach and free from actual or perceived conflict of interest, favouritism, and any other unethical consideration. Rest assured that all of us, at some point, are faced with ethical dilemmas and must struggle to find an answer to the question, **“What is the right thing to do?”**

When in doubt, talk to your peers or to your supervisor(s). If you can't arrive at an answer or if your issue is too sensitive to discuss with a peer or supervisor, feel free to access the following City resources for advice:

- **General Manager(s)**
- **City Manager**
- **City Auditor**
- **Labour Relations or other Human Resource representatives**
- **City Chaplain**
- **Union/Association representative**
- **FOIP coordinator, or**
- **Corporate Security.**

# Appearances Before Council

We will not appear before City Council, or its committees or boards, on matters affecting an external organization, where we have any involvement that could be considered a conflict of interest.

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## What Does This Mean?

Employees who appear before City Council, its committees or boards on behalf of an outside organization must declare their involvement to the Office of the City Clerk as well as to their general manager.

## Why Is This Important?

If you are in a position to advise City Council, its committees or boards, your interest in a particular issue could be seen as favouritism or conflict of interest. It must be clear to everyone involved that your volunteer work is done as a private individual and not as a City representative.

## Things to Do

- **Let people in your community group know about the City's Code of Conduct**
- **Advise the Office of the City Clerk as well as your general manager of any appearance that may cause conflict between your job duties and outside activities**



## Frequently Asked Questions



**I belong to a non-profit organization. May I appear before City Council on its behalf?**



**Yes.** You have the right to appear, on your own time, before City Council, its committees and boards on behalf of public groups, such as community leagues, athletic organizations and charitable organizations. You also have the right to appear as a taxpayer, elector or owner on issues specified in the Municipal Government Act.



**May I appear before City Council on behalf of my private company?**



**Yes.** However, you must appear on your own time and declare your involvement to the Office of the City Clerk as well as to your general manager prior to the appearance.

## Related Resources

- **Discipline of City Employees Directive A1102**





# City Time and Assets

We will use and permit the use of City time and assets only for the performance of City duties or as approved by our supervisors. We will safeguard and protect City work time and assets. We will not use any City asset, including e-mail, internet services, or any other electronic communication devices, if the use could be offensive or inappropriate. Further, employees must devote themselves exclusively to the performance of their employment duties during paid working hours.

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## What Does This Mean?

City assets, which include all equipment and material owned or controlled by the City of Edmonton, must be properly taken care of and used only for City use or as approved by your supervisor. This includes but is not limited to: vehicles, telephones, electronic networks/equipment and any other electronic communication devices, computers, information, property, buildings, inventory, and financial assets.

## Why Is This Important?

The City, like any organization, cannot afford to waste time, money or resources. We serve all the citizens of Edmonton and, to do our jobs properly, we need to have all resources available at all times. Whether the asset in question is work time, a City vehicle or a computer, it must be ready and available to do the assigned task.



## Things to Do

- **Respect City assets and take proper care of them**
- **Use City assets only for City work**
- **Reimburse the City promptly for any personal costs (long distance calls, photocopying)**
- **Obtain approval for exemptions**

## Things NOT to Do

- **Take home City assets for personal use without prior approval**
- **Use your City vehicle for personal business**
- **Install personal software on City computers**
- **Download software from the Internet without prior approval**
- **Store large amounts of non-work-related data on City computers**
- **Access, communicate, distribute or display racial or ethnic slurs, threats, insults, obscenities, abuse, defamation or sexually explicit material on City computers**
- **E-mail or use of any other electronic communication device for non-work-related material without permission from your supervisor**



## Frequently Asked Questions



**Can I photocopy my son's hockey schedule for him and his teammates?**



One or two copies is not an abuse of City assets. Multiple copies, however, require supervisor approval and reimbursement to the City.



**Can I help myself to things the office is throwing away or declaring surplus?**



No. Articles in the garbage are still considered City assets. If you are interested in purchasing an item that has been declared surplus, contact the City's Surplus Disposal Agent.



**Can I use the Internet at work to plan my vacation and book my airline tickets?**



Yes, provided you do it on your own time (i.e. lunch, coffee breaks) and there are **no costs** to the City.



**Is it appropriate to sell chocolates or raffle tickets or collect money for charitable associations at my work site during normal working hours?**



This is acceptable, subject to approval by your immediate supervisor.



**Can I access City assets for occasional personal use? What about infrequent phone calls? Can I call my child's daycare or make a medical appointment?**



**Yes.** Incidental use of City assets for personal reasons is allowed as long as there is no negative impact on your performance, no abuse of paid work time or no added cost to the City. This includes telephone and cellular phone use.



**I have to take a City vehicle home at night. If the grocery store is not out of my way, can I stop in the City vehicle?**



Vehicles are provided for City work and, unless there is an emergency, employees should use their personal vehicles for errands. However, a short stop along your regular route to and from work is acceptable, with your supervisor's prior approval.

## **WARNING**

The City has **NO TOLERANCE** for abuse of its e-mail, Internet connections or any other electronic communication devices that could be deemed as offensive or harassing, such as hate material, racial and ethnic slurs, internet gambling and sexually explicit material. Accessing, creating, viewing, sending or downloading of these inappropriate sites will be dealt with severely. Any violation will result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

**Q Can I do personal work at my workstation during lunch hour?**

**A** Incidental use of your work station is permissible as long as you are doing the work on your own time and there is **no cost** to the City.

**Q What should I do if I receive chain letters or offensive jokes and pictures at my e-mail address at work?**

**A** Delete them immediately and tell the sender to stop sending them to your City address.

**Q What should I do if I see an employee siphoning gas from a City vehicle?**

**A** Report the incident to your supervisor or to Corporate Security.

## Related Resources

- **Acceptable Use of Communication Technology A1429C**
- **Corporate Records and Information Management Directive A1410C**
- **Corporate Security and Risk Management Manual**
- **Fraud and Misconduct – Reporting Investigation and Whistle-blower Protection Policy C522**
- **Handling City Money A1200B**
- **Hiring, Administrative Directive A1104A**
- **Operating and Maintaining City Vehicles and Equipment Directive A1416**

# Disclosure of Information

We will only collect, use and disclose information in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act), and only for the purpose of carrying out City duties.

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## What Does This Mean?

Many employees have access to personal information about other employees or access to confidential commercial or financial information of members of the public. This information must be kept confidential and secure, and must only be used for the purpose for which it was collected.

## Why Is This Important?

Employees have a responsibility to maintain and to protect confidential business or financial information of the public and information accessed about identifiable individuals. This includes but is not limited to:

- **Name, address, telephone number**
- **Race, ethnic origin**
- **Age, sex, marital or family status**
- **Medical history**
- **Employment history, and**
- **Personal opinions about identifiable individuals.**

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) governs the way Alberta municipalities release information. Employees are required to keep all personal information and all confidential business or financial information of the public confidential and to use it only for the purpose for which it was gathered. We cannot release this information without permission and we cannot use it for personal gain or benefit.

## Things to Do

- **Maintain confidentiality**
- **Keep information secure**
- **Use information only for the purpose for which it was collected**
- **Contact your FOIP coordinator for assistance on how to collect, use and disclose information**

## Frequently Asked Questions



**I have been asked to give a job reference for a former City employee. Can I share my opinions about this individual?**



**Yes**, with the employee's permission.



**Can I access another employee's file?**



**Yes**, but only for work-related purposes and if you are authorized to do so.



**I operate a small, home-based business that sells baby clothes. In my job, I have access to personnel files and I've noticed that a few City employees are on maternity leave. Can I call them at home to let them know I'm in business?**



**No.** Employees provide their phone numbers and family information to the City for work-related purposes. It is a severe breach of conduct to use this information for anything other than City work.



**I handle the Human Resource files for my office and discovered my co-worker's 40th birthday is coming up. Can I plan a surprise party?**



**No.** If you found out about the birthday through City records, the information is considered confidential and cannot be shared with colleagues or used to plan a party.



**I have information that suggests a contract was not handled according to City Policy. Should I tell the public or the media?**



**No.** This information should be directed to your supervisor or General Manager for clarification.

## Related Resources

- **City of Edmonton training course FOIP in the City**
- **Corporate Records and Information Management Directive A1410C**
- **FOIP Act**
- **FOIP Bylaw**
- **FOIP Coordinators**
- **Privacy Breach A1445**
- **Privacy Directive A1433**
- **Protection of Mobile Sensitive Data A1444**
- **Video Surveillance Directive A1435**








Smell Test

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# Smell Test

Each of us make work related decisions everyday. Sometimes, outside interests can make these decisions more difficult. When in doubt about what to do, ask yourself these questions:

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-  Will this result in a personal gain or benefit?
-  Could an outside person, co-worker, or the media perceive this action as unethical?
-  Will I owe somebody something as a result of this action?
-  Was this gift/action intended to influence my decision?
-  Would I hesitate to take this action or to allow my employees to take this action to my own company?

If you answered **“yes”** to any of these questions, you may have an ethical dilemma. Change your actions or seek advice. If you’re still not sure, **ASK** again and keep **ASKING** until you get an answer. A simple rule of thumb - “If in doubt, don’t.”



# Gifts and Gratuities

We will not accept or provide any gift, benefit or favour in exchange for special consideration or influence, or where it may be perceived to be in exchange for special treatment.

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## What Does This Mean?

Employees must not give or receive gifts in exchange for special consideration or favours.

## Why Is This Important?

Although most gifts come with no strings attached, there is always the chance that something is expected or perceived to be expected in return.

## Things to Do

- **Refuse cash tips**
- **Decline gifts that could be viewed as an exchange for a favour**
- **Ask your supervisor if you are unsure**



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q** **The City is in the process of awarding a contract and I am involved in the decision process. One of the bidders has offered to take me to an Oilers' game. Can I accept the invitation?**

**A** **No.** The perception is that the bidder could be given special consideration or favours in return for the ticket(s).

**Q** **I'm a collector in Waste Management. Some of the seniors on my route like to give me a cash tip at Christmas. I don't want to be impolite by rejecting what is a kind and sincere gesture. How should I respond? Can I accept any gifts?**

**A** Politely explain that you appreciate the gesture but that the City already compensates you. It is unacceptable to accept cash, loans, free services or individual discounts but civic employees may accept:

- **Small Christmas gifts (cards, cookies, chocolates)**
- **Advertising material (calendars, scratch pads, disposable pens, t-shirts, caps)**
- **Corporate discounts, and**
- **Protocol items.**

**Q** **The City paid for me to attend a conference and I won a door prize. Can I accept it? Can I accept an honorarium?**

**A** You can accept the door prize but, if the prize is of significant value, you should advise your supervisor. You are not permitted to accept a cash honorarium.

**Q** **I am helping to organize my department's annual golf tournament. Can I solicit local merchants for prizes? Can I solicit other departments for prizes?**

**A** **Yes.** You can solicit local merchants as long as you do not use a City vendor list. You can also approach other city departments for prizes.



# Other Employment

We will only engage in Other Employment that **does not** conflict with our City duties or the Code of Conduct, or put us in competition with services provided by the City.

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## What Does This Mean?

Other employment is permitted, but only with organizations not in direct competition with the City.

## Why Is This Important?

During paid working hours, your priority must be to City service, above all other financial interests. City employees are expected to be loyal to the City.

## Things to Do

- **Refuse work from the City's direct competitors**
- **Get written approval from your general manager or disability plan administrator before you accept outside employment during a leave of absence**



## Frequently Asked Questions



**I'm off work and receiving disability benefits. I can't do the heavy, physical labour my City job demands but I can run my home-based bookkeeping business. Is this a violation?**



**Yes.** Your disability management consultant must approve all outside employment while you're on disability leave.



**I work as a mechanic for the City of Edmonton and would like to get a part-time job as a mechanic. Is this permissible?**



**Yes.** You can take the job as long as the service is not in direct competition with the City and the service is not performed on City time.

## Related Resources

- **Attendance Management Directive A1108B**
- **Collective Agreements**
- **Discipline of City Employees Directive A1102**
- **Duty to Accommodate A1126**





# Personal Conduct

We will perform our duties with honesty and integrity and in a manner that is helpful, respectful and courteous. We will not behave in a manner that could result in a conflict of interest.

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## What Does This Mean?

Employees will do their jobs to the best of their ability, conduct themselves appropriately and will be considerate and helpful to all people, both internally and externally.

## Why Is This Important?

It takes the effort of each and every employee to make the City of Edmonton a great place to live, learn, work and play. The best way to maintain good working relationships is to treat every person the way you want to be treated.

This is particularly important for municipal employees because the public often sees us as ambassadors for the City. As such, it is our responsibility to care for the community and to make sure Edmontonians get the best value for their tax dollars. This means working to maintain the public's confidence by acting courteously and responsibly and by providing the best possible level of service.

## Things to Do

- **Practice common courtesies, such as “please” and “thank-you”**
- **Treat people as you want to be treated**
- **Represent the City in a positive way**
- **Be honest with people**
- **Make every person feel important**
- **Take on a customer-service focus**
- **Exercise diplomacy and tact when dealing with difficult people**
- **Respond promptly to requests for information**

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q** **Do I have to follow the Code of Conduct when I'm off duty but still in my City uniform?**

**A** **Yes.** When you are in uniform, the public identifies you as a City employee and may assume you are performing City duties.

**Q** **Can I stop for a beer on my way home from work if I'm wearing my City uniform?**

**A** **No.** Although you are on your own time, your uniform leads people to believe otherwise.

**Q** **Can I voice opinions that may criticize the City at a public meeting?**

**A** **Yes.** You have the right, as a citizen, to voice your opinion at any meeting you attend on your own time. You must not identify yourself as a City employee or use confidential City information. As an employee, you must not criticize the City as your employer or other city employees in public.

**Q** **In my job, I'm in regular contact with angry people. How do I deal with abusive and profane language?**

**A** Pay genuine attention to the person and project a positive, courteous attitude. Be helpful and do what you can to resolve the issue. If the aggressive behaviour continues despite your best efforts, ask for help.

## Related Resources:

- **City of Edmonton training courses**
  - Dealing with Difficult People
  - Assertiveness Skills
  - Business Etiquette and Professionalism
  - Managing Anger in the Workplace
- **Corporate Vision, Mission and Values**
- **Drug and Alcohol Directive A1128**
- **Duty to Accommodate Disabilities A1126**
- **Hiring A1104A**
- **Respectful Workplace A1147**



# Personal Gain, Benefit, or Favouritism

We will remove ourselves from any decision process that may result in actual or perceived personal gain or benefit. We will use information collected by the City for purposes consistent with the use for which it was collected. When we have access to confidential information, relating to any competition open to the public, we are ineligible to compete.

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## What Does This Mean?

Employees must remove themselves from any decision process that may result in actual or perceived personal gain, favouritism, or benefit. Awarding of City tenders, employment opportunities, land sales and disposal of surplus assets will be carried out impartially – without any advantage or favouritism to themselves or others.

## Why Is This Important?

All City business must be conducted fairly and impartially.

## Things to Do

- **Use information only for the purpose for which it was collected**
- **Declare any relationship you may have with persons or organizations doing business with the City (City Employees - Contracts with City A1203B)**
- **Remove yourself from any decision process that may result in actual or perceived personal gain, benefit or favouritism**

## Frequently Asked Questions



**My sister just bid on a City contract in my work area. What should I do?**



You must disclose your relationship to your supervisor at the beginning of the process. If you are in a position to evaluate the bid, influence the selection of the successful bidder or manage the bidder's performance, there is a potential conflict of interest. You will probably be asked to remove yourself from the decision-making process.

**Q In my job, I drive a City pickup truck that is being declared surplus. Can I buy it?**

**A Yes.** Once the City has properly declared the truck surplus and it is available for sale to the public at large, you may make an offer to buy it.

**Q My brother-in-law is qualified for a job I directly supervise. Can he be hired for that position?**

**A No.** According to Directive A1104, immediate family members may not work in the same section, branch or department, where direct supervision would create a conflict.

**Q I work in Corporate Services and my brother has a consulting agreement with another department. What should I do?**

**A Nothing.** Since you were not involved in the decision process that awarded his contract, there is no conflict.

**Q I have started a romantic relationship with my supervisor. What should I do?**

**A** You and your supervisor must promptly disclose this relationship to the manager of your work area. Supervision in this context extends to anyone within the supervisor's direct or indirect chain of supervision. The manager must take steps to address the supervisory-subordinate working relationship in order to remove actual or perceived favouritism: this may include modifying the reporting relationship and/or a change in position for one or both employees involved.

## Related Resources

- **City Employees – Contracts with City Directive A1203B**
- **Fraud and Misconduct Hot Line:**
  - By phone at 1-866-889-8297
  - By Internet at <http://www.clearviewconnects.com>
- **Hiring Directive A1104**



# Political Activity

We must not engage in any political activity or electioneering during normal working hours or at our place of work, without the written permission of our general manager.

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## What Does This Mean?

Political activities, such as canvassing, campaigning and fundraising, that aim to advance an individual's or group's interests will not be permitted in the workplace during normal working hours. All employees have the right to take part in political activity and electioneering, but only on their own time.

## Why Is This Important?

The fact that we work for a municipal government presents a unique situation; our workplace is a highly political environment where opinions vary widely and strongly, and can be a source of potential conflict. Furthermore, political discussions make many people uncomfortable. In order to respect all beliefs, political activity is not allowed in the workplace.

## Things to Do

- **Get written permission from your general manager before you engage in any political activity at your place of work**

## Things NOT to Do

- **Post, solicit, distribute, wear, or otherwise display political material or messages at your work site (This includes vehicles and equipment)**
- **Raise or contribute funds to any campaign that aims to advance a person's or group's political interests during working hours or while at your place of work**

## Frequently Asked Questions



**Can City employees run for political office?**



**Yes.** Procedures for this situation are outlined in City Directives.



**Can I campaign for a union position at my work site?**



All political activity and elections in the workplace, including union elections, require the approval of your general manager.



**Can I wear a badge with a political statement while I perform my City duties?**



**No.** Political propaganda is not permitted at your place of work.



**My spouse is running for political office. Can I accept contributions to the campaign while I'm at work?**



**No.** City employees are not permitted to raise or to contribute funds to political campaigns while at their place of work.

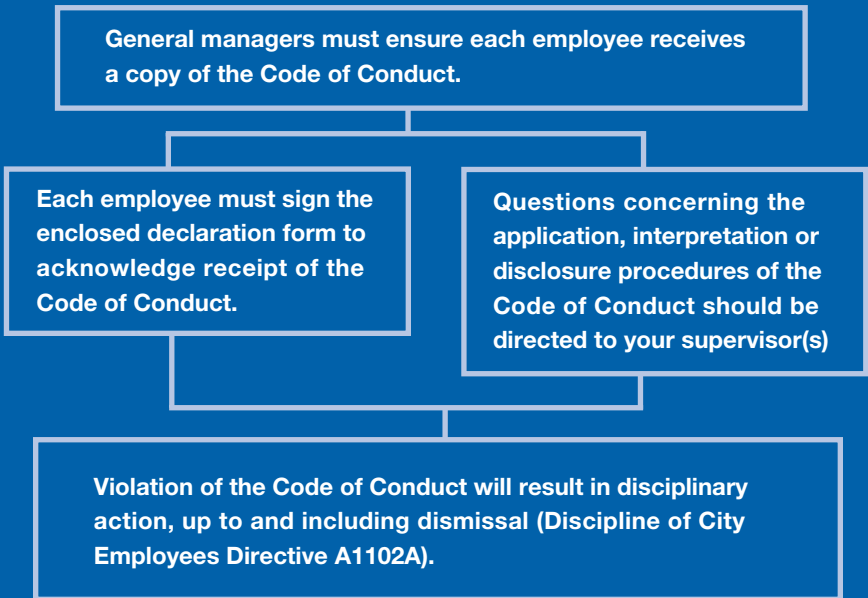
## Related Resources

- **City Directives (Leave of Absence)**
- **Labour Relations or other Human Resource representatives**
- **Local Authorities Election Act**
- **Municipal Government Act**

# Professional Codes of Conduct

Employees with professional affiliations – accountants, lawyers, engineers, auditors, safety officers and social workers – may be subject to more than one Code of Conduct. If a situation arises that may cause conflict or confusion between the applicable codes, ask your supervisor, Labour Relations Consultant or Human Resources representative.

## Compliance



**The Code of Conduct Project Team would like to extend a special thank-you to all City employees featured in this handbook.**

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