



**Policy Type:** Human Resources

**Policy #:** HR-200-02

**Approved by Council on:** June 25, 2018

## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct**

### **Policy**

The Town of Prescott acknowledges each member of our community, staff, clients, volunteers, and other members of our extended community, is unique and must be treated with respect, dignity, and compassion. Each employee must carry out his/her duties and responsibilities in a manner that recognizes a fundamental commitment to the betterment of the community and the wellbeing of its residents and the public he/she serves.

### **Objective**

To establish and communicate professional standards and guidelines that will assist employees of the Town of Prescott in the discharge of their duties and establish the expectations in their dealings with residents, visitors, corporations, and other business interests who have interaction with Town employees.

### **Guiding Principals**

A Code of Conduct sets out the core values we apply to our everyday experiences. When we demonstrate these values, we build a Town with integrity that has the trust and confidence of the public.

As Town employees we must commit to undertaking our work responsibilities in a manner which is consistent with our core values. In essence as we carry out our duties we must be:

- Respectful
- Accountable
- Impartial
- Transparent



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

Town employees have, and should be seen to have, the highest standards of ethical behaviour – anything less undermines our integrity, our effectiveness, and ultimately our reputation.

Nothing in this Code is meant to conflict with the Town's obligations to its employees under a collective agreement or employment contracts. Similarly, some employees may have professional obligations and should seek clarification from both their manager and their professional associations in the case of a perceived conflict.

This Code of Conduct does not answer every question that is going to come up. Rather, it is designed to promote ethical decision-making and behaviour, to make us think about how ethics guide us in doing our jobs and to reinforce the expectations of us. It is about making ethics and integrity part of the way we think about doing our jobs.

Ethical behaviour is not about finding all the right answers – it is about asking all of the right questions, like:

- Am I putting my own interests before the Town's?
- Would I make the same decision if my manager, the public or the media were watching me?
- Will I owe someone a favour if I do this?
- Would I be offered this if I weren't an employee of the Town?

If you have a question or if you're looking for guidance, ask your manager.

### **OUR VALUES**

#### **Respect**

We are guardians of public funds and responsible for delivering a wide range of important public services, which are supported by members of the public through their taxes. We owe the public nothing less than our full commitment to doing the best job we can.

Our own actions reflect on our co-workers and define our workplace. We have an obligation to help build pride in our Town, to respect the dignity and diversity of our colleagues and to treat them as we would like to be treated ourselves.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

While it takes hard work to gain the respect of others, even small lapses can erode confidence in the Town. To ensure that our conduct does not diminish respect for ourselves, our co-workers, and for the Town, we maintain and exemplify the highest standards of behaviour.

### **Things we do to show respect...**

- We devote ourselves fully to our jobs during our working hours and do not allow our personal activities (e.g. reading a magazine, surfing the internet, etc.) to interfere with our work.
- We ensure that all property (including cash, cheques, documents, inventories and equipment) in our care as part of our job is properly secured and protected at all times.
- We handle sensitive and confidential information with care and disclose only in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").
- We keep records of our important decisions.
- We are honest, polite, and courteous when we deal with people, whether they are members of the public, Town Council, or our co-workers.
- We are respectful of co-workers and Council members in our public conversations.
- We foster an atmosphere of collegiality and support our co-workers in their work.
- We provide excellent customer service every day.

### **We do not...**

- Harass or intimidate others. The Town has absolutely no tolerance for this kind of behaviour.
- Manipulate, falsify, alter, or amend documents, information, or records for fraudulent purposes.
- Access, distribute or display inappropriate material (including sexually explicit, discriminatory, abusive, defamatory, or obscene material) using Town property, including the Town's computer network.
- Publicly disparage the Town, our co-workers or Town Council.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

### **Accountability**

This Code of Conduct sets out a vision of Town of Prescott employees as transparent, respectful and impartial. We are proud to live these principles in our work every day and we encourage accountability in this regard. We know that breaches of the values set out in this Code can only erode our reputation and, ultimately, our integrity. We owe it to the taxpayer and to ourselves to be accountable for our actions.

### **What we do...**

- We know the Code and comply with its principles.
- We disclose breaches of the Code immediately, whether they are committed by ourselves or a co-worker.
- We fully cooperate with investigations into alleged wrongdoing.
- We understand that breaches of the Code shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- We seek interpretation of the Code from the Town Clerk and/or CAO.
- We make observance of the Code part of our daily work.

### **We do not...**

- Retaliate against anyone who has come forward with a complaint, or any witnesses to complaints.
- Assume that violations of the values in this Code are someone else's problem.

### **Impartiality**

Town Council is the elected voice of the citizens of the Town of Prescott. Its members have been elected to set the policy direction of the municipality.

The public has an interest in ensuring that Town of Prescott employees are committed to carrying out the will and decisions of Town Council, and that public servants are, and are perceived to be, impartial in carrying out their duties.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

Given the public interest in an impartial public service, employees must exercise restraint in any criticism of the Town of Prescott and consider how their public comments may affect the public perception of the Town.

### **What we do...**

- We recognize that Town Council is the elected voice of the citizens of the Town of Prescott and we respect the decisions of Town Council.
- We ensure clear and timely communication with members of Council by adhering to the Town's internal communication protocol.
- We distinguish between our personal comments or opinions, and our jobs with the Town.

### **We do not...**

- Make comments that disparage or harm the reputation of the Town, Council, or our co-workers.
- Claim to speak on behalf of the Town unless we have been authorized to do so.
- Make personal comments using Town letterhead, our Town e-mail, Town social media sites, or anything else that implies a connection between our personal comments or opinions and the Town.

### **Transparency**

As public servants we are accountable for what we do and our accountability is ensured by transparency. We must be open and honest in dealing with our supervisors, the public, and Town Council.

We owe it to the public to not just do our jobs well, but to be open, and honest about what we do.

### **What we do...**

- Where there might be a conflict between our personal interests and those of the Town, we disclose that fact immediately, in writing, and seek guidance from our supervisors.
- We abide by the laws and Town policies that apply to such things as keeping records of our important decisions, the retention of records, and freedom of information.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

- We provide full written disclosure when offering information.
- We understand that, over time, circumstances can change and we may need to disclose again: the obligation to disclose is a continuing one.

### **Reporting and Whistleblower Protection**

If you become aware of a violation of the Code of Conduct or another Town policy, you should report the matter to your manager or the CAO. No employee will be disciplined for making a report in good faith about a violation of this Code of Conduct or another Town policy, nor will the Town tolerate any retaliation against an employee who has made such a complaint or participated in an investigation. However, an employee making false accusations will be disciplined.

### **Scope**

All Town employees are expected to meet a standard of conduct that exemplifies professional integrity, justice, respect, honesty, and courtesy in the course of their work to ensure public confidence and trust is maintained. As such, all those covered by this policy are expected to serve the public well and respect the rights of others while discharging their duties on behalf of the Town.

This policy is intended to foster a positive work environment and culture and is intended to supplement any other requirements imposed by applicable legislation, standards of professional practice, or any other requirements imposed by relevant Town entities or departments.

**Note: For the entirety of this Policy, “Employee” refers to all employees, in all departments and locations.**



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

### Interpretation:

This Code is meant to support, but not replace, the use of good judgment regarding personal and professional conduct. The absence of a specific policy or regulation does not relieve any employee from the responsibility to exercise the highest standards in those situations.

### Definitions:

**Gift of Nominal Value:** A gift or benefit not over the material threshold of twenty-five dollars (\$25) such as mugs, pens or other small items with company logos, whether or not it was solicited or offered by an individual or business

### Roles and Responsibilities:

Each employee shares the obligation of ensuring compliance with this Code and are required to address any situations of existing or potential non-compliance with the Code of which they suspect or become aware. For further information on the escalation procedures see “Disclosure” and “Non-Compliance”.

## **Procedure**

### General Employee Responsibilities & Obligations:

Town employees interact with each other, clients, residents, community agencies, contractors, suppliers, and the public on a daily basis. Employees must be professional, polite, courteous, and respectful in each of these interactions. Town employees acting on behalf of the Town are the ambassadors of the Town; thus, each one must be conscious of the Town’s public duty and his/her part in the discharge of that duty and is therefore expected to conduct himself/herself with the highest degree of ethical behaviour and integrity.

All employees are expected to comply with all Town policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and directives.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

Every employee makes an important contribution to the organization. Employees are expected to work as team members and to listen to and value the input of other community members.

### Use of Town Property:

Town property should solely be used for the discharge of official duties which are supported by Council unless elsewhere exempted by approved Policy, or with the approval of the Department Head and CAO. Examples of Town property include but are not limited to equipment, supplies, or services for activities.

Town assets are to remain on Town property at all times unless it is necessary to take the items off site to perform the employee's job. When Town property is under employee care, the employee is accountable for keeping the items protected and secure at all times.

The Town's electronic networks are corporate assets and the employees must be aware that communications over the Town's electronic networks are not to be considered private communications. Please refer to the Town's "Appropriate Use, Care, and Security of Electronic Resources" Policy (Policy HR-200-09).

Employees shall return all Town owned property upon termination of his/her employment. This would include but is not limited to items such as: employee identification tags, cellphone/smart phone, computer hardware, computer software, Town issued clothing, etc.

### Confidentiality:

The privacy of each member of our community must be respected. Please refer to the Town's "Employee Confidentiality Statement" Policy (Policy HR-200-01).

### Workplace Health & Safety:

It is the responsibility of all involved to create a safe work environment. All safety rules, policies and procedures must be followed. Employees are expected to immediately report any hazardous or unsafe equipment or situations to their Supervisor/Department Head who, in turn, is expected to act upon the report.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

### Drug & Alcohol Abuse:

To preserve the health, safety, and well-being of employees and members of the public, the Town has zero tolerance for the use of, possession of, and those being under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or non-medical drugs when reporting to work or while on duty, or on any premises or in any vehicle of the Corporation.

### Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest is understood to occur if an individual's personal affairs, business, or relationships overlap with their professional functions. To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest, pecuniary interest or personal gain for the employee, their family, or associates, an employee is not permitted to carry out any assigned duties for which a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, is present without prior disclosure to their Supervisor/Department Head. Employees are required to report all conflicts of interest which may come to their attention to their Supervisor/Department Head. Please refer to the "Disclosures" section on for reporting procedures.

### External Commitments:

Employees are dedicated to ensuring the Town's success in meeting its goals in the community. To ensure continued commitment to service levels, employees are expected to avoid other employment, business activity, or other undertaking while on duty or if it interferes with the performance of his/her duties for the Town. Additionally, other employment or business activities should be avoided if it generates a conflict of interest, is in conflict with a by-law, policy, plan, or the interest of the Town, or if the individual derives some form of benefit by virtue solely of his/her employment with the Town.

Other employment means working for another employer, being self-employed, or working for charitable, or volunteer organizations which results in receiving or being eligible to receive profit, payment of compensation, or other benefit from that employer or charity.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

### Financial Benefit/Gifts:

In order to preserve the integrity of the Town, gifts and benefits are not to be accepted over a material threshold of \$25, whether or not it was solicited or offered by an individual or business. Employees must make decisions based on an impartial and objective assessment of each situation, free from the influence of gifts, favours, hospitality, or entertainment. (Please refer to exceptions below)

Employees must demonstrate transparency with regards to their relations with businesses and/or organizations who do business with the Town. No employee shall act as a paid agent before the Town or Council.

Employees shall recognize the need for their decision-making and actions to be viewed and perceived as impartial and transparent by refraining from having any pecuniary association with any business or organization that has interactions with the Town in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. This may include but not be restricted to borrowing, or receiving money, or gifts, directly or indirectly. Employees who believe they are placed in such a situation are expected to disclose the situation to their Supervisor/Department Head.

In the case of attendance at a social or recreational event, the employee is expected to utilize time off entitlements unless pre-approval has been granted by his/her Department Head or the CAO.

### Exceptions to Receipt of Financial Benefit/Gifts:

Employees may accept gifts with a maximum value of \$25, provided the gifts do not include money, cash, gift certificates, alcohol, services, or other negotiable items. Employees who accept a gift which meets this criterion must report this to their Supervisor/Department Head. However employees should not place themselves in a position where their loyalty or responsibility to the Town is viewed as being in jeopardy as a result of accepting gifts. Employees who believe they are placed in such a situation are expected to disclose the situation to their Supervisor/Department Head.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

This shall not prohibit employees from receiving promotional gifts or benefits of nominal value (for example coffee mugs or pens with a company's logo). It is also recognized that in the ordinary course of business it may be appropriate for a business or organization to pay for an employee's lunch. Receipt of such a gift or benefit in the course of business will not be considered a breach of these rules assuming that such receipt is infrequent, (as defined by less than three times per year by the same business) and nominal in nature (defined by less than \$50 in value). All nominal gifts shall exclude alcohol.

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.

### Public Engagements:

No employee shall charge a fee for taking part, during paid working hours, in a public speaking engagement such as a public radio/television broadcast, web site broadcast or conference to which he or she was invited as a direct result of his or her position as an employee. Accepting a nominal gift for a speaking engagement during paid working hours is not a violation of this policy. It is not a violation of the policy for employees to charge or accept a fee for speaking engagements during time off work which is unpaid unless such employees are representing the Town.

All requests that employees are invited to speak at a public engagement as a result of the discharge of duties as a Town employee must be pre-approved by his/her Department Head.

### Political Neutrality:

Employees are entitled to exercise their right to support or be involved in the political campaign of a municipal, provincial, or federal candidate, or party, provided they do so on personal time and do not hold themselves out as representatives of the Town. However, employees must be politically neutral in their official employment duties in order to sustain public trust in local government. Employees should obtain approval of senior management prior to speaking publicly on a matter where they may be perceived to be representing municipal policy.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

Employees are permitted to participate in any campaign or political activity provided they do so outside of normal working hours or during an authorized leave of absence without pay for this purpose. Such activity must be as a citizen and not as a representative of the Town, whether real, or perceived.

Employees shall treat all members of Council with professionalism and courtesy but must not favour, nor be seen to favour, the interests of one Councillor, or other elected official over the interests of Council as a whole. Employees shall observe the approved processes the Town has implemented for reporting confidential information and other matters to Council.

### Social Media:

The use of social media to promote, discuss or converse about Town business or events will be utilized by approved staff members only.

The use of social media by employees for personal use or non-approved use at work is not authorized.

It is the expectation of the Town that all employees will ensure that appropriate, supportive and positive comments be included on social media when referring to the Town.

### Unlawful Activity/ Fraud/ Breach of Trust:

Employees shall not engage in behaviour that is fraudulent or that constitutes a breach of trust with the Town. A fraudulent activity includes, but is not limited to:

- Using deceit to gain a personal advantage, pecuniary interest, or benefit for oneself and/or others.
- Illegally obtaining money, including the solicitation and/or acceptance of bribes or favours.
- Intentionally providing false, or incomplete, or withholding information from Council and/or Town officials.
- Intentionally circumventing Town policies or procedures to gain a personal advantage for oneself and/or others.
- Planning or participating in a theft of Town property, or the use of said property to aid, or conduct a theft of any kind.
- Inappropriate personal use of or intentional damage of Town property.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

- Undertaking any other illegal activity.
- Employees, when speaking publicly, whether on Town time or their own time should speak in a manner that supports the policies, procedures, and general environment of the Town of Prescott

### Disclosure:

Whenever an employee considers that he or she could be involved in a conflict of interest, whether real, or perceived, or in any matter associated with this policy, the employee shall immediately disclose the situation to his/her Department Head or the CAO in writing.

Any employee, Council member, or a member of the public has the right to identify any alleged non-compliance. Should an employee witness one of these actions taking place (or believe that it is occurring), he/she is obliged to report the issue to their Department Head. In cases where the Department Head is the person conducting the inappropriate behaviour, the employee will report the issue to the next level of supervision up to and including to the CAO. In the case of a matter involving the CAO, the matter shall be reported to the Mayor or two members of Council.

Employees will be corporately protected from any form of reprisal for reporting improper behaviour. Nor shall an employee experience any discriminatory, unfavourable treatment, be overlooked for promotions, future employment considerations, or have their existing position terminated providing that the allegations are not ultimately found to be intentionally malicious or frivolous in nature.

### Non-Compliance:

Upon receipt of an alleged contravention, the CAO in consultation with the employee's Department Head will, determine the form of the investigation to be conducted.

Additionally, the CAO will consult with the Department Head and Human Resources, should the contravention be verified, to determine the appropriate action, taking into account the circumstances.

Any transgression of a legal nature will be reported to the appropriate police authority.

Failure to comply with this or any other Town policy may result in discipline up to and including termination as per the HR-300-01 Discipline Policy.



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

Declaration: All employees are required to review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy by signing the declaration form (Appendix A).



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## **Human Resources – Employee Code of Conduct cont'd**

### **Appendix A - Declaration**

#### **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, acknowledge, and understand the following:

That I have received a copy of the Employee Code of Conduct Policy HR-200-02 and that I have read and understand the contents of this policy.

That the Employee Code of Conduct Policy HR-200-02 outlines the expectations of my conduct as an employee of the Town of Prescott and that I will abide by this policy.

That I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and seek any clarification regarding the Employee Code of Conduct Policy HR-200-02.

That any breach or contravention of the Employee Code of Conduct Policy HR-200-02 will be considered as grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal.

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Witness

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Employee Signature

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Date

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Employee Name (Print)