

Respectful Workplace Policy

DocID: PLCY_9

Version: 5.0

Category: Human Resources

Effective Date: October 7, 2024

This document contains discussions of workplace harassment, discrimination and violence which may be distressing or triggering to some individuals. Reader discretion is advised. If you find yourself in need of support while reading this document, please consider accessing the IESO's 24/7/365 [Employee & Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#).

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1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The *Respectful Workplace Policy* (the Policy) describes the IESO's commitment, in cooperation with its employees, to foster a workplace that is safe and respectful, and recognizes the dignity of every individual. A respectful workplace is one that is free of disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, harassment and violence.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Policy is to:
 - 1.2.1 Set expectations and standards of behaviour for a respectful, safe and supportive workplace;
 - 1.2.2 Define behaviours that may be offensive and that are prohibited by law and/or this Policy;
 - 1.2.3 Clarify roles and responsibilities with respect to promoting a respectful workplace;
 - 1.2.4 Improve and/or restore work environments and relationships affected by reports or complaints of disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, harassment or violence; and
 - 1.2.5 Address obligations outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (OHRC).

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all IESO employees, contractors and visitors and members of the IESO's Board of Directors when performing work on behalf of the IESO, whether offsite or onsite, and during IESO-related social and recreational activities where certain conduct could adversely affect the work relationship.
- 2.2 This Policy upholds the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the Code) and complies with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), and relevant legislation (including the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the *Criminal Code of Canada*), directives, policies, and collective agreements.
- 2.3 This Policy is not intended to discourage or prevent an employee from exercising any legal right, contacting the appropriate authorities (such as law enforcement), or filing a grievance in accordance with their applicable collective agreement.

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3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 The IESO is committed to fostering a workplace that values diversity and inclusion, dignity, courteous conduct, fairness, positive communication and professional working relationships. A respectful workplace is inclusive, equitable, accessible and free from disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, harassment and violence. This Policy reflects the IESO's commitment to:

- 3.1.1 **Prevention:** The IESO will take proactive measures to prevent all forms of disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace, whether demonstrated by or against any employee of the IESO or any other person as outlined in Section 2.0;
- 3.1.2 **Workplace Restoration:** After an incident involving a prohibited behaviour has been addressed, the IESO will ensure the measures in place to maintain respect in the workplace will be used to restore the elements of a positive, healthy working environment and constructive working relationships between employees;
- 3.1.3 **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** The IESO values the dignity and worth of every employee and is committed to creating a work environment that is safe, inclusive and respectful. As part of this commitment, the IESO will take every measure reasonable to maintain a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace that reflects the behaviours aligned with its core values and Code of Conduct, and meets the requirements set out in the OHSA and the OHRC;
- 3.1.4 **Demonstrating Sensitivity to Trauma:** The IESO is sensitive to the trauma that may be suffered by those participating in the reporting and resolution process, and will strive to minimize the risk of re-traumatization by providing with them with support in a compassionate and sensitive manner;
- 3.1.5 **Accountability:** The IESO will hold all persons listed in Section 2.0 accountable for their actions and behaviours, regardless of their position or level of authority; and,
- 3.1.6 **A Fair Process:** The IESO will respond to complaints in a fair, impartial and thorough manner, and will make decisions based on the evidence gathered. The IESO recognizes the importance of ensuring that all parties have an opportunity to be heard and participate in the process.

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3.2 Policy Violations

3.2.1 The IESO will not tolerate, ignore, or condone employees engaging in behaviour in the [workplace](#) that undermines the right of any person to be treated with respect.

3.2.2 Behaviours that will not be tolerated by the IESO include, but are not limited to, [workplace violence](#), [workplace harassment](#), [workplace sexual harassment](#), [discrimination](#), [intimidation](#), [bullying](#), [belittling](#), [microaggressions](#), or [marginalization](#), and [disrespectful behaviour](#) or behaviours contrary to the [IESO's core values](#).

3.2.3 [Reprisals](#) against an employee who raises concerns under this Policy, including with respect to any of the behavior(s), in 3.2.2, that will not be tolerated by the IESO.

3.2.4 The IESO may take corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for any violation of this Policy in accordance with the provisions that are set out in applicable collective agreements.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 Policy Owner

4.1.1 The CEO appoints the Vice-President, Human Resources as the owner of this Policy. The owner is the sole approver of this Policy.

4.2 Policy Steward

4.2.1 The Policy owner may delegate day-to-day responsibility for one or more aspects of this Policy, possibly including implementation, periodic review, or compliance, to a Policy steward.

4.2.2 The Policy owner delegates the Director, Organizational Design & Client Relations, as the steward of this Policy and as recorded in the Master policy.

4.3 Policy Reviewers

4.3.1 This Policy's reviewers, as stakeholders of this Policy, are Manager, Health & Safety and Labour Relations; Manager, Employee Experience and Culture; and Legal Counsel, IESO.

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4.4 Human Resources (HR)

Human Resources is required to:

- 4.4.1 Ensure all employees are aware of this Policy and its associated procedures;
- 4.4.2 Promptly provide support related to this Policy, including addressing questions or providing clarification;
- 4.4.3 Facilitate employee training in relation to this Policy and associated procedures;
- 4.4.4 Assess the risks associated with workplace violence, advise the Joint Health & Safety Committees of the results of the assessment(s), and conduct a reassessment of the risks as often as necessary to ensure the Policy and its associated procedures continue to protect employees from workplace violence;
- 4.4.5 Manage the day-to-day responsibilities of administering this Policy, including responding to any reports or complaints made with respect to behaviour(s) prohibited under this Policy, as outlined in the *Respectful Workplace Reporting & Resolution Procedure*; and
- 4.4.6 In cases of a potential conflict of interest concerning HR, move stewardship to an appropriate authority.

4.5 [Supervisors](#) (All people leaders at the IESO – represented and non-represented)

Supervisors are required to:

- 4.5.1 Create a workplace where people feel safe to raise their concerns about disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, harassment and violence and have them effectively addressed;
- 4.5.2 Understand their obligations under the OHSA's definition of a [competent person](#), ensure compliance with these requirements, and immediately seek clarification when they have questions;
- 4.5.3 Promote and take responsibility for fostering a workplace culture of respect, including setting a positive example of [respectful behaviour](#) and demonstrating the [IESO's core values](#);
- 4.5.4 Ensure workers participate in respect in the workplace-related training as required;
- 4.5.5 Be vigilant for signs of behaviour that detract from a respectful workplace through observation and information seeking, and take action to resolve them before they escalate; and

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4.5.6 Respond to any reports or complaints of behaviour(s) prohibited under this Policy, as outlined in the *Respectful Workplace Reporting & Resolution Procedure*.

4.6 [Workers](#) (All employees or contractors working at or on behalf of the IESO)

Workers are required to:

4.6.1 Review and understand this Policy and associated procedures and direct questions or required clarification to management, as needed;

4.6.2 Conduct themselves in a manner that affirms the dignity of others in the workplace, by complying with this Policy and demonstrating the IESO's core values;

4.6.3 Refrain from intimidating or retaliating against another worker for exercising a right under this policy or participating in the resolution process;

4.6.4 Review information and instructions related to this Policy and its associated procedures, and participate in Policy-related training as required;

4.6.5 Respond to or report alleged Policy violations they have experienced or witnessed, as outlined in the *Respectful Workplace Reporting & Resolution Procedure*; and

4.6.6 Exercise rights under this Policy in good faith.

5.0 Procedures

5.1 Reporting & Resolution Procedures

5.1.1 The IESO shall establish procedures that foster a safe and respectful workplace and address behaviours prohibited under this Policy.

5.1.2 The IESO's [Risk Assessment Procedure](#) outlines a systematic approach to recognizing, assessing and controlling [hazards](#) in the workplace, as well as monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of the measures in place.

5.1.3 The IESO's *Respectful Workplace Reporting and Resolution Procedure* outlines measures and procedures for:

- Requesting immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur;
- Reporting incidents of experienced or witnessed behaviour prohibited under this Policy;

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- Reviewing reported incidents to evaluate whether they constitute a prohibited behavior(s), and whether interim measures should be put in place;
- Providing recommendations for resolution, including corrective action; and
- Supporting workplace restoration by taking proactive steps throughout the process to establish or re-establish a respectful work environment and harmonious working relationships.

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6.0 Definitions

Terms	Definitions	What This Looks Like
Belittling	Dismissiveness of the importance of a person or thing; making the person or thing feel unworthy of serious attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making someone feel small, unimportant, inferior or minimized (e.g., showing disdain toward an employee's background or accomplishments)
Bullying	The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name-calling, teasing, sexual comments, taunting and threatening to cause harm• Spreading rumors about or manipulating someone• Excluding others on purpose (for example, not inviting someone to events or meetings that are relevant to the performance of their role)
Competent Person	A person who, (a) is qualified because of knowledge, training and experience to organize the work and its performance, (b) is familiar with the OHSA and the regulations that apply to the work, and (c) has knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health or safety in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A supervisor recognizes an employee has an inadequate workstation set-up and recommends the employee implement ergonomic principles (i.e. use of an adjustable chair, monitor, external keyboard) to help prevent an ergonomic-related injury
Core Values	The six core values that form the foundation of the IESO's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeking and being open to other perspectives

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Terms	Definitions	What This Looks Like
	<p>efforts to create an inclusive culture:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expertise with Humility 2. Commitment and Accountability 3. Genuine Caring 4. Purposeful Engagement 5. Openness to Change <p>Collaboration and Teamwork</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating trust in others' capabilities • Taking accountability for our decisions and actions • Speaking up when we have concerns • Being constructive with feedback and learning from mistakes • Treating others, the way they wish to be treated • Seeking and being open to new ideas and perspectives • Encouraging constructive debate • Showing trust and support of others' success
Discrimination	<p>Discrimination means any form of unequal treatment based on an OHRC ground. It may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be intentional or unintentional; • Involve actions that are or appear discriminatory; • Involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but disadvantage certain groups of people <p>Under the OHRC, every person has the right to freedom from discrimination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leader says they do not want to hire younger women, who may be more likely to go on maternity leave in the future • The head of a company instructs the organization's receptionist not to take applications from job seekers from a certain racial or ethnic background

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Terms	Definitions	What This Looks Like
	and harassment based on protected grounds that include, but are not limited to race, age, or disability	
Disrespectful Behaviour	Comments or conduct (whether subtle or overt) that reflect a lack of regard for others, and that typically diminishes or devalues them, their feelings or their beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupting • Belittling someone's expertise or opinion • Exhibiting negative body language, like rolling your eyes at someone • Withholding information from someone who needs it • Gossiping or spreading rumours • Telling offensive jokes • Being dishonest • Refusing to participate in a discussion
Hazard	A potential source of harm to a worker/employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying and intimidation • Violence and aggression • Conflict or poor working relationships • Slippery work surfaces • Poor lighting • Exposure to bodily fluids • Infectious diseases • Poor workstation set up
Intimidation	To frighten or threaten someone, usually to persuade them to do something they do not wish to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats or physical violence • Yelling or screaming • Sabotaging or taking credit for a person's work • Ridiculing or insulting a person in front of coworkers or clients

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Terms	Definitions	What This Looks Like
Marginalization	Treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral. Marginalization results from discrimination and refers to the systematic exclusion, disregard, or relegation of certain individuals or groups of employees to the periphery or fringes of the workplace. This exclusion can be based on factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any other grounds protected under the OHRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expecting a female employee to perform “housekeeping” or kitchen duties (e.g., making coffee) simply because she is a woman • Consistently assigning work or roles below the education and experience levels to employees of a particular race • Failing to invite an employee to a meeting about how to leverage social media channels because they are in their 60s
Microaggressions	A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenting on a person’s appearance or cultural background in a way that suggests an association between a stereotypical appearance or behaviour and their heritage • Making assumptions about someone’s language proficiency or education based on their background or accent • Using language or phrases that suggest certain identities or characteristics are inferior • Employing culturally insensitive terms or actions that appropriate or disrespect

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		marginalized communities' traditions or cultures
Reprisal	An act of retaliation that results in punishing, or threatening to punish, an employee for asserting their workplace rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a leader is notified of an employee's complaint, they start to exclude the employee from meetings they previously attended • An employee who moves to part-time work to balance their caregiving responsibilities finds their leader will no longer approve requests for training opportunities
Respectful Behaviour	Any actions or behaviour that demonstrate due regard for the feelings, wishes and rights of others in the workplace; respectful behavior promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity in the workplace, and aligns with the IESO's core values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using respectful, supportive and encouraging language when interacting with others • Showing empathy and consideration for the feelings and needs of colleagues • Treating others with fairness and dignity • Providing peers with constructive (direct, non-personal) feedback rather than criticism • Expressing appreciation when an employee accomplishes a task correctly and in a timely manner, e.g., meets a difficult timeline • Acting and communicating with integrity, professionalism, openness and civility

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Supervisor	A person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes all members of management at the IESO (i.e., Vice-Presidents, Directors, Senior Managers, Managers, MP5 and MP6 employees with direct reports)
Worker	A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All employees at the IESO, temporary and regular, including co-op students/interns
Workplace	Any land, premises, location (physical or virtual) or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All IESO facilities Off-site meetings or conferences Home offices Virtual environments (e.g., Microsoft Teams meeting/call)
Workplace Harassment	<p>(a) Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace, including virtually through the use of information and communications technology, that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or</p> <p>(b) Workplace sexual harassment (see below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing a colleague from expressing themselves by yelling, threatening, and constantly interrupting them Making rude, degrading or offensive remarks Spreading malicious gossip or rumours Making fun of a person's beliefs, values, political and/or religious affiliations <p>Note: The reasonable exercise of management's right to act and provide direction is not workplace harassment (i.e., appraisals of performance or attendance)</p>

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Terms	Definitions	What This Looks Like
Workplace Sexual Harassment	<p>(a) Engaging in a course of vexatious (e.g., unwanted, annoying, malicious, offensive, hostile and/or inappropriate) comments or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or</p> <p>(b) Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A supervisor makes sexual advances toward a junior employee, and when their interest is not returned, begins to micro-manage the employee's performance, eventually accusing them of incompetence • A manager repeatedly making unwelcome comments about an employee's physical appearance, such as "Oh, don't you look pretty today." "You shouldn't wear that dress; it doesn't do much for you" • A disgruntled employee spreads rumours about their director, saying that they are having an affair with the VP and was promoted because they "slept their way to the top" • An employee shares or posts jokes bragging about their sexual prowess and "conquests"
Workplace Violence	<p>(a) The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,</p> <p>(b) An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unauthorized person gains access to an IESO space and physically attacks an employee • A customer is unhappy with the service they have received and subsequently sends an email threatening to assault the employee perceived to be responsible • An employee makes a verbal threat against a supervisor

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Terms	Definitions	What This Looks Like
	to the worker, (c) A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker	because they are denied a promotion • An employee is followed into the workplace by their abusive domestic partner and the security guard who intervenes is assaulted

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7.0 Approval

7.1 Policy Owner and Approver

7.1.1 Name: Sue Gagne

7.1.2 Organizational Position: Vice-President, Human Resources

7.1.3 Effective Date: October 7, 2024

Schedule A: Baseline

Revision History

Rev. #	Reason for Revision	Revision Author	Date
1.0	Initial release of new policy document.	October 28, 2015	1.0
2.0	Updated and approved by Legal Services to comply with Ontario Bill 132.	September 8, 2016	2.0
3.0	Annual review	December 5, 2018	3.0
4.0	Annual review and updated to reflect the new Master Policy and associated Master Template.	July 6, 2020	4.0
5.0	Annual review and to reflect the priority action from the IESO's Current State Assessment on equity, diversity and inclusion.	October 7, 2024	5.0

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References

Document Title	Document ID
IESO Code of Conduct	IESO_COC_
IESO's Core Values	--
Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)	--
Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)	--

Related Documents

Document Title	Document ID
Master Policy	IESO_PLCY_0001
Risk Assessment Procedure	PRO-477
Respectful Workplace Reporting & Resolution Procedure	PRO-716