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Canadian Water Resources Association Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures DRAFT

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Next review: January 2026

Developing an Anti-Harassment Policy

Adopting an anti-harassment policy can foster an environment of respect for human rights and helps people in the organization understand their rights and responsibilities. Policies can protect people and the organization from discrimination complaints.

*CWRA has created this policy in part by using an Anti-harassment Policy Template developed by the Canadian Human Rights Commission to help employers meet their human rights obligations.**

This policy is also intended to cover CWRA volunteers conducting business on behalf of CWRA, and participants in CWRA programs, including event attendees.

The policy is applicable to all CWRA Branches, Affiliates and Programs.

* <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/template-developing-anti-harassment-policy>

Policy Statement

The Canadian Human Rights Act protects employees from harassment based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or pardoned conviction.

CWRA is committed to fostering a harassment-free workplace where all employees and volunteers are treated with respect and dignity. This policy extends to all events and programs run by CWRA, and the volunteers and attendees participating in these events and programs. Harassment at CWRA is not tolerated. CWRA will take all complaints seriously and fully investigate any complaint.

Application

This policy against harassment and discrimination applies to all persons working or volunteering with CWRA (employees, contract staff, volunteers, members, vendors, contractors, etc.) and is intended to protect people from harassment and discrimination in connection with the performance of their job or volunteer role for the Association. This policy applies to all behaviour that is connected to CWRA work, including during meetings, online forums, training and business trips.

This policy also applies to all attendees at CWRA events, which may include conferences, trainings, networking, mentoring, webinars, and SYP events.

Definitions

Harassment is:

- offending or humiliating someone physically or verbally; threatening or intimidating someone;
- making unwelcome jokes or comments about someone's race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or pardoned conviction; or
- visual conduct such as inappropriate or offensive gestures, derogatory or sexually oriented posters, emails, voicemails or any other electronic content containing objectionable material, photography, cartoons, videos, or drawing.

Sexual harassment is:

- offensive or humiliating behaviour that is related to a person's sex; behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, unwelcome, hostile or offensive environment; or
- behaviour of a sexual nature that could reasonably be thought to put sexual conditions on a person's job, employment opportunities, or event or program participation.

What to do if you believe you are being harassed:

- Tell the person to stop. If this is not an option, report the behaviour as indicated below.
- If the behavior does not stop, report the behaviour using the incident reporting procedures described below.

Responsibilities and Expectations

CWRA is responsible for:

- providing all employees, contract staff, volunteers, and event and program attendees a harassment-free space to work, volunteer, and participate in CWRA.

The CWRA President is responsible for:

- ensuring that this policy is applied in a timely, consistent and confidential manner;
- leading the group of individuals addressing the complaint
- with the input of the group addressing the complaint, determining whether or not allegations of harassment are substantiated; and
- with the input of the group addressing the complaint, determining what corrective action is appropriate where a harassment complaint has been substantiated.

The CWRA Board is responsible for:

- the administration of this policy;
- regularly reviewing this policy as required; and
- making necessary adjustments to ensure that this policy meets the needs of the organization.

Employees, contract staff, volunteers, and event and program attendees are responsible for:

- treating others with respect;
- reporting harassment to President or any member of the Board;
- cooperating with a harassment investigation and respecting the confidentiality related to the investigation process.

Employees, contract staff, volunteers, and event and program attendees can expect:

- to be treated with respect;
- that reported harassment will be dealt with in a timely, confidential and effective manner;
- to have their rights to a fair process and to confidentiality respected during a harassment investigation; and
- to be protected against retaliation for reporting harassment or cooperating with a harassment investigation.

Procedures for Addressing a Harassment Complaint

Filing a Complaint

These procedures are designed to provide guidance should employees, contract staff, volunteers, or event or program participants encounter a situation where they believe they are being harassed. There are several options to report an incident.

A harassment complaint may be filed by contacting the President or any member of the Board. The complaint may be verbal or in writing. If the complaint is made verbally, the President or member of the Board will record the details provided by the complainant.

The complainant should be prepared to provide details such as what happened; when it happened; where it happened; how often and who else was present (if applicable). You do not have to have a written record of events in order to make a complaint, but a written record can help you remember details over time.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible but not later than within one year of the last incident of perceived harassment unless there are circumstances that prevented that from happening.

Once a complaint has been made, the Past President, President and Executive Director will coordinate the process of resolving the complaint. If a complaint would involve one of the reviewers of complaints as referenced otherwise in this policy, that person will be excluded from the process of review. If any of the named three people are the subject of a complaint, then the next person in line for responsibility will be part of the investigation process (President-Elect, Treasurer, Manager, etc). The President will tell the person accused of harassment in writing that a harassment complaint has been filed against them. The letter will also provide details of the allegations that have been made against him or her.

Every effort will be made to resolve harassment complaints swiftly. The CWRA President, or the ranking executive in charge of the investigation, will advise both parties of the reasons why, if this is not possible.

If either party to a harassment complaint believes that the complaint is not being handled in accordance with this policy, he or she should contact a different member of the Board.

Mediation

Wherever appropriate and possible, the parties to the harassment complaint will be offered mediation prior to proceeding with a harassment investigation. Mediation is voluntary and confidential. It is intended to assist the parties to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution to the harassment complaint.

The mediator will be a neutral person, agreed upon by both parties. The mediator will not be involved in investigating the complaint.

Investigation

If mediation is inappropriate or does not resolve the issue, a harassment investigation will be conducted. All investigations will be handled by an individual who has the necessary training and experience. In some cases, an external consultant may be engaged for this purpose. The investigator will submit a report to the President. Both parties to the complaint will be given a copy.

Substantiated Complaint

If a harassment complaint is substantiated, the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee will decide what action is appropriate. These may include an oral or written apology. Corrective action for a CWRA employee, contract staff, or volunteer found to have engaged in harassment may include: a reprimand; a suspension; a transfer; a demotion; and/or dismissal. In addition, a CWRA member found to have engaged in harassment may have their membership cancelled with no refund, and be barred from re-registering for CWRA membership.

Corrective action for an event attendee or program participant found to have engaged in harassment may include: removal or prevention from further participation in the program or event with no refund, and/or a ban from participation in future CWRA program and events. In addition, a CWRA member found to have engaged in harassment may have their membership cancelled with no refund, and be barred from re-registering for CWRA membership.

Both parties to the complaint will be advised, in writing, of the decision.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All parties to a harassment complaint are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all other parties involved and to limit the discussion of a harassment complaint to those that need to know.

Records of harassment complaints, investigations, and the outcome of the investigation will be kept confidential to those who need to know.

Review

CWRA will review this policy and procedures every five years, or as required, and will make necessary adjustments to ensure that it meets the needs of all persons to which this policy applies.

Enquiries

Enquiries about this policy and related procedures can be made to the CWRA Executive Director at executivedirector@cwra.org.

