

Type	Commissioner's Policy	CP-007
Title	Code of Conduct	
Effective date	September 9, 2019	
Replaces	New	
Next review date	September 8, 2022	

1 Purpose

This policy sets out how Fair Practices Office (FPO) employees will provide the highest practical standard of service to our clients, partners and the public with impartiality and integrity.

2 Rationale

Confidence in a public office depends on its fair and transparent delivery of services through an unbiased, ethical and independent workforce.

3 Scope

All FPO employees and contractors.

Note: The rights and obligations under this Code are in addition to any other rights and obligations under any other related code or enactment including the *Alberta Code of Conduct for the Public Service*, the *Department of Labour Supplementary Code of Conduct and Ethics*, the *Ethics Code of Conduct*, the *FPO's Supplementary Code of Conduct and Ethics*, and the *Workers' Compensation Board Code of Rights and Conduct*.

4 Code administration

The Managers of the four FPO branches will administer this Code for their branch. Each Manager will ensure the awareness and adherence to this Code by their employees.

The Executive Director will administer this Code with respect to the Managers and to contractors.

All FPO employees and contractors are required to sign this Code upon commencement of work with the FPO then again every three years after the review date to ensure their awareness and adherence to this Code.

The Fair Practices Commissioner will administer this Code with respect to the Executive Director and will periodically review this Code to ensure its effectiveness. The Ethics Commissioner is this Code Administrator for the FPO Commissioner.

5 Authority

At the discretion of the FPO Commissioner.

6 Our values

Honesty, Integrity and Truth, which means:

- Doing the right thing
- Speaking the truth respectfully
- Following principles and practicing what we preach
- Honouring our commitments and being dependable
- Accepting accountability for our actions
- Behaving ethically and are open, honest and fair

Equality and Fairness, which means:

- Considering the people our actions will affect, not only the results we will get
- Advocating for both behavioral and administrative fairness
- Modelling fairness in our work
- Ensuring that processes are clear and consistently followed

Customer Focus, which means:

- Ensuring that we are taking the time to listen and hear the concerns of workers, their dependents and employers
- Making sure that people are treated with respect and courtesy
- Being sensitive and understanding to the personal circumstances people bring when they come into the workers' compensation system (the system)
- Working every day to ensure the system treats workers and employers fairly
- Being transparent and ensuring clients understand what FPO is doing for them (and what FPO does not do)
- Training employees to ensure they are able to respond to clients respectfully and recognizing existing expertise of FPO employees

Respect, which means:

- Being inclusive and appreciating diversity, regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender/identity, religion, etc.
- Active listening
- Showing respect to one another, regardless of level, title or position

7 Our actions

Behavioural standards provide guidance to our employees to make right decisions, based on our values, in the delivery of our services and our actions in the community. Following these standards will help develop working relationships built on trust, confidence and respect.

General Expectations

1. Employees must act in accordance with the FPO's policies, procedures, standards and codes in the performance of their duties, and will encourage their colleagues to do so.
2. Employees must not participate in behaviours or activities that may damage the FPO's reputation.

3. Employees must report any real or apparent conflicts of interest to this Code Administrator as soon as possible.
4. Employees must report any criminal charges to this Code Administrator as soon as possible.
5. Employees must support and contribute to a safe and healthy working environment by adhering to all health and safety rules and requirements including the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
6. Employees must support and contribute to a workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment or violence and must adhere to the FPO's Respectful Workplace – Harassment Policy.
7. Employees must not use drugs or alcohol in a way that may affect their safety or performance, or the safety or the performance of others.
8. Employees must avoid placing themselves into situations of real or perceived conflict of interest between their private interests and those of the FPO.
9. Employees must not comment publicly or speak to the media about the FPO or its partners.

8 Privacy matters

Respecting Privacy and Confidentiality

1. Employees must respect the privacy of our clients and the people we serve, particularly in instances of sharing information across FPO Branches.
2. Employees must comply with applicable policies and guidelines for the collection, storage, use, transmission and disclosure of information, including adhering to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
3. After an employee has left the FPO they must not disclose any confidential information obtained during their employment period.

9 Conflicts of interest

External Activities

Employees must avoid participating in external activities that appear or are in conflict with the interests or work of the FPO which include the following examples:

- Involvement in business interests that could benefit from or influence the decisions of the FPO.
- Holding concurrent employment or appointments that may affect their work with the FPO; this Code Administrator must review and approve any concurrent jobs or appointments.
- Employees can participate in political activity including membership in a party, supporting a candidate running for elected office, or running for elected office, though they must not raise money for a political party. Any political activities must not be done while at work or using FPO resources.
- Any volunteer activity must not conflict or influence with the work of the FPO.

If there is a concern that an activity, interest, job or appointment creates a real or apparent conflict of interest, this Code Administrator will investigate and provide a written report to the employee. If the report concludes there is a real or apparent conflict, this Code's Administrator will set out steps the employee must take to manage the conflict. The conflict must be managed as instructed by this Code Administrator, and may include giving up the activity, interest, job or appointment.

Gifts

Employees must not accept gifts or other benefits other than the normal exchange of gifts between friends or business colleagues, or the normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions.

The monetary value of a gift should not exceed the following:

- \$100 and must not include cash, cheques, gift cards or gift certificates;
- \$400 in invitations to events related to the work of the FPO including payment or reimbursement or event fees and travel costs for attending; and,
- \$1000 in invitations to conferences related to the work of the FPO, including payment or reimbursement of conference fees and travel costs for attending.

The total amounts for a single calendar year must not exceed \$200 in gifts, \$800 in events and \$2000 in conferences.

10 Our Commissioner

The FPO Commissioner is designated as a senior official by Order in Council 085/2018. The Commissioner must follow all disclosure and return reporting requirements, post-employment and other restrictions, and the time lines set out for senior officials and designated senior officials under the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, RSA 200, c C-23 and regulations, effective immediately.

Restrictions on the Commissioner's Office and Powers

- Must fully disclose all real or apparent conflicts of interest to this Code Administrator
- Must not take part in a decision, use their office or powers to influence a decision, or communicate information not available to the general public gained through their office or powers, to further their private interests, their family's private interests, or the private interests of any other person
- Must not hold any other job or appointment unless approved in writing by this Code Administrator

Financial and Disclosure Requirements

- Must not hold publicly-traded securities unless (1) they are held in a financial arrangement (e.g. blind trust) approved by this Code Administrator, or (2) an approval or exemption has been provided in writing by this Code Administrator
- Must file a personal disclosure statement and returns for persons directly associated (e.g. spouse) as required by this Code Administrator
- Must file an updated disclosure or return within 30 days of any changes to the previous disclosure or returns
- Must file a return within 30 days if no longer designated as a designated senior official

Post-Employment Restrictions

For a period of 12 months after the last day the Fair Practices Commissioner was considered a designated senior official, they must not undertake the following:

- lobby any public office holder

- act on a commercial basis or make representations on any matter they were directly involved in relating to a government department or public agency
- request or accept a contract or benefit from any department or public agency with which they had a direct and significant official dealing
- accept employment or an appointment with an individual, organization or board of directors, with which they had a direct and significant official dealing, unless a waiver or reduction of the 12-month period has been approved in writing by this Code Administrator

11 Administrative processes

Our administrative processes help employees to manage ethical problems, including any conflicts of interest. These are the requirements:

Administration

This Code Administrator ensures that any real or apparent conflicts of interest are avoided or managed. This includes giving advice and managing all concerns about breaches of this Code related to the FPO.

Ongoing Disclosure or Relationships and Conflicts

Employees must provide a written statement to this Code Administrator if existing business, employment, and personal relationships could affect their work at the FPO. When there is a change that may affect their work in business, employment and personal relationships, including any of the External Activities noted above, the change must be reported in writing to this Code Administrator as soon as possible. If a conflict of interest cannot be avoided, employees must manage the conflict in cooperation with this Code Administrator.

Employees must inform this Code Administrator in writing about any real or apparent conflicts of interest.

Any concurrent job or appointment disclosed must be reviewed for real or apparent conflicts of interest and approved in writing by this Code Administrator.

Where any conflict is identified, the employee will be given a copy of this Code Administrator's findings and will be given an opportunity to manage the conflict.

Reporting a Potential Breach

Employees are encouraged to inform this Code Administrator in writing about any real or apparent breach of this Code. This includes reporting any potential breach by a co-worker, knowing there will be no reprisals if done in good faith.

Responding to a Potential Breach

If a real or apparent breach is reported, this Code Administrator will first inform the employee in writing. The identity of the employee reporting the breach will be kept confidential, unless required by law. This Code Administrator will then investigate, decide the matter, and produce a written report in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

The report will set out this Code Administrator’s decision and will provide recommendations. The report will be provided to the employee and any other persons involved. The employee can request all information related to the breach, and has the right to respond.

Consequences of a Breach

Employees who have breached the standards of behaviour in this Code may be disciplined, up and including termination.

Requesting a Review of a Decision

Employees can request the Ethics Commissioner to review a decision made by a Code Administrator about a breach of this Code. The request must be in writing and filed within 45 days of the release of report.

12 Related Content

- The GOA Code of Conduct is available at <https://myaps.alberta.ca/Code>
- *The Public Service Act* http://www.qp.alberta.ca/570.cfm?frm_isbn=9780779804900&search_by=link
- Oath of Office found in section 20 the *Public Service Act*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Conflicts of Interest Act*

13 Authorizing signature and date

Approved by	Fair Practices Commissioner
Signature	[original signed]
Date	September 9, 2019