



Policy #10
Employee Code of Conduct Policy
Approved by Council on: December 2, 2015

EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

A. PURPOSE

This policy is meant to serve as a guide to the employees and to outline the responsibilities of the employee to uphold the basic principles of integrity, honesty, impartiality and common sense.

This policy is meant to protect the public interest by promoting a high ethical standard for all employees of the Township of Southgate, and by providing a means of correcting unethical conduct.

This policy is meant to assist in providing a positive work environment in which all employees of the Township of Southgate can achieve maximum productivity and job satisfaction.

B. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all employees of the Township of Southgate.

This policy applies in any location in which employees of the Township of Southgate are engaged in work-related activities, which may include, but is not limited to:

- Restaurants, hotels or meeting facilities that are being used for municipal business, or for social events such as holiday or retirement parties; and
- Municipally owned or leased facilities, vehicles, or the parking lot.

All employees of the Township of Southgate are responsible for complying with this policy during working hours and at work-related functions that take place outside business hours.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

Municipal employees are encouraged to seek clarification from their supervisor if they are uncertain as to whether an existing or contemplated action may contravene the code of conduct.

All employees are responsible for reporting suspected violations of this Code of Conduct. All employees must cooperate fully with an investigation.

Complaints or formal inquiries concerning the unethical conduct of any municipal employee shall be made in writing to the CAO. Complaints regarding the CAO shall be made to the Mayor or a Council member, and in this case Council will make all decisions related to the issue, and shall fulfill the obligations of the investigating officer.

All complaints or inquiries shall be treated as confidential.

A copy or summary of any written or oral complaint received is to be sent immediately to the employee in question with a request to provide a written response to the complaint.

The CAO or Council as Investigating Officer shall:

1. Investigate all complaints or inquiries regarding the unethical conduct of a municipal employee.
2. Investigate on his/her own initiative, the conduct of a municipal employee where he/she determines an investigation is warranted.
3. Provide a summary of the findings of the investigation and any recommendations; and forward/present this summary to the employee in question and the complainant if applicable.
4. Where there is determined to be a breach of the Code of Conduct the CAO or Council may:
 - i. Instruct the employee in question to make changes as required to be compliant with the Code of Conduct.
 - ii. Take disciplinary action in accordance with the approved disciplinary policy.
5. The employee in question shall have the opportunity to appeal the findings to Council.

D. COMPLIANCE

Supervisors shall ensure that employees are aware of and in compliance with the terms of this code of ethics.

Failure to comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal. Any employee under investigation may be suspended with or without pay, or be re-assigned to other duties pending completion of the investigation, depending on the particulars of the case and the best interests of the Township of Southgate.

E. GENERAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

It is expected that all employees will:

- conduct themselves in a friendly, courteous and professional manner with all co-workers, contractors, suppliers, ratepayers and the general public
- maintain the highest ethical standards
- cooperate freely, take direction from their supervisor and provide assistance as required to ensure the smooth operation of the municipality
- be honest, trustworthy, reliable and dependable in fulfilling job duties.

Employees should not assume that other unethical activities not specifically covered by this Code of Conduct are permissible.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the CAO and Council.

F. SPECIFIC STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

1. Gifts and Benefits

- Municipal employees must remain impartial and objective. They must not accept gifts or hospitality that will place them in a position where they are under obligation (either real or perceived) to favour an individual or firm.
- Employees must consult with their supervisor to determine whether or not a specific gesture constitutes "moderate hospitality" which often occurs as a courtesy of a business relationship, or in marketing efforts.
- The frequency and scale of any hospitality accepted should not be greater than the Township of Southgate would allow an employee to claim as a routine business expense.
- Where any gift is accepted, the acceptance must constitute a benefit to the Township of Southgate, or be of nominal value and publicly acknowledged. Where a gift cannot realistically be refused or where its acceptance may be seen to be an example of normal business courtesy, the option exists for the employee to redirect the gift to Council to distribute for the benefit of the community.

2. Use of Municipal Property

- Municipal employees must not use the municipality's property, equipment, supplies or services for activities not associated with the discharge of official duties unless proper authorization has been granted. This includes the use of technology (such as computers, internet, blackberries and cell phones).

3. Media Relations

- Municipal employees who are authorized to be in contact with the media shall only report factual and objective information related to policies adopted by Council and shall refrain from putting forth speculative or subjective insights.
- Any public statements made as a private citizen by an employee should not identify the individual as an employee of the Township.

4. Confidential Information

- Municipal employees shall safeguard and protect the information of the municipality; information shall only be released in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

5. Staff/Council Relations

- Municipal employees must recognize that elected officials are responsible for the establishment of policy and that employees are responsible for implementation of the directives originating from Council.
- Employees shall deal with all members of Council in an objective and impartial manner at all times.

6. Political Activity

- Municipal employees must not engage in any political activity during working hours.
- Employees shall refrain from direct involvement in a local government political campaign in the municipality where they are employed.
- Employees may be involved in provincial and federal campaigns as long as this involvement does not affect the objectivity with which they must discharge their duties.
- Employees shall not use their authority or the influence of his/her position on behalf of a political party or candidate.

7. Other Business Dealings

- Municipal employees shall not engage in any outside work or business dealings that interfere with the performance of their job duties for the Township of Southgate or from which they might derive personal benefit or gain by virtue of their employment with the municipality.

8. Conflict of Interest

- Municipal employees must advise their supervisor if a potential conflict of interest exists due to an employee's personal or family interest in a property matter, a business dealing with the municipality, or similar circumstance.
- Municipal employees who are in a position of a conflict of interest must understand that they will be removed from any decision making processes relative to this interest.

9. Substance Abuse

- Municipal employees must abide by applicable laws and regulations governing the possession or use of alcohol and drugs. The illegal use, sale, purchase, transfer or possession of any restricted or controlled drug, narcotic or other substance while on Township premises or during working hours is prohibited and will result in discipline.
- Municipal employees are not permitted to consume alcohol, or be under the influence of drugs or other similar substances while attending to their job duties.

- Any municipal employee who is experiencing problems related to alcohol and drug use will be encouraged to seek the advice of a professional.

10. Fraud / Theft

- “Fraud” is defined as any act committed through deceit or falsehood which deprives the Township of its assets, property, or other resources; or which causes misrepresentation; or any attempts to conceal such misrepresentation by such means as:
 - a. Manipulation or alteration of documents or records
 - b. Suppression of information, transactions or documents
 - c. Recording of transactions without substance
 - d. Misapplication of accounting principles
- The Township of Southgate will not tolerate any acts of fraud or theft, and any such actions will be viewed as acts of criminal activity and will be dealt with accordingly.