



Harassment and Workplace Bullying Policy

The Abbotsford Downtown Business Association is committed to providing for its employees a work environment free from harassment originating from any source including directors, employees, members and the employees of members.

In order to maintain an atmosphere in which staff may live and work without fear of harassment, every possible effort will be made to ensure that all reported incidents are thoroughly investigated and dealt with expeditiously, with sensitivity and confidentiality. When a harassment investigation determines that harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary actions, as outlined below, will be applied.

1. Workplace conduct

Bullying and harassment is not acceptable or tolerated in this association. All employees will be treated in a fair and respectful manner.

2. Bullying and harassment

Includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards an employee that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that employee to be humiliated or intimidated.

Examples of conduct or comments that might constitute bullying and harassment include verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names, physical aggression, uninvited sexual advances, vandalizing belongings, and spreading malicious rumours. But excludes any reasonable action taken by a member of the Board of Directors acting on direction from the Board of Directors or the Executive Director, when it relates to the management and direction of the employees or the place of employment.

3. Employees must:

- Not engage in the bullying and harassment of other employees
- report if bullying and harassment is observed or experienced
- apply and comply with these policies and procedures on bullying and harassment

4. Application

This policy statement applies to all members of the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association, including Board of Directors and any voting member, whether they are property owners and/or business owners, and employees of those voting members. It applies to personal, social media, email, texting, phone calls and any other means of communication with or about employees of the Abbotsford Downtown Business Associations.

5. How to report

Employees at the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association can report incidents or complaints of workplace bullying and harassment verbally or in writing. The Executive Director reports to the Executive Committee. All other employees report directly to the Executive Director, who will then contact the Executive Committee.

6. When to report

Incidents or complaints should be reported as soon as possible after experiencing or witnessing an incident. This allows the incident to be investigated and addressed promptly.

1. How and when investigations will be conducted

Most investigations at the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association will be conducted internally by the Executive Committee. In complex, sensitive and recurring situations an outside party, such as the Abbotsford Police Department will be brought in to investigate.

Investigations will:

- be undertaken promptly and diligently, and be as thorough as necessary, given the circumstances
- be fair and impartial, providing both the complainant and respondent equal treatment in evaluating the allegations
- be sensitive to the interests of all parties involved, and maintain confidentiality
- be focused on finding facts and evidence, including interviews of the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses
- incorporate, where appropriate, any need or request from the complainant or respondent for assistance during the investigation process

2. Steps of enforcement

Investigating Board members and Executive Director must personally meet with respondent within 3 days of the complaint, to discuss the situation.

- a. **Upon the first violation**, should the complaint be deemed valid, the bully will be informed that he or she has violated WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Bullying and Harassment policy, and they must refrain from doing so again.
- b. **Upon a second violation**, if the harassment continues or another incident occurs, the bully will be informed that they have again violated WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Bullying and Harassment policy, and they are no longer permitted to have any direct contact with the victim of the harassment. This refers to contact of any type, at any time. Any ADBA business they need to discuss, must be done so through the Executive Director, if she/he was not the victim, or with the Executive Committee directly.
- c. **Upon a third violation**, if the harassment continues, another incident occurs, or the bully has had purposeful contact with the victim, the bully will be informed that they have again violated WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Bullying and Harassment policy, and that the authorities (Abbotsford Police Dept.) will be contacted and a file will be opened against them.

3. What will be included

Investigations will include interviews with the alleged target, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses. If the alleged target and the alleged harasser agree on what happened, then the Abbotsford Downtown Business Association will not investigate any further, and will determine what corrective action to take, if necessary.

The investigator will also review any evidence, such as emails, handwritten notes, photographs, or physical evidence like vandalized objects.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the association are responsible for ensuring workplace investigation procedures are followed.

Employees are expected to cooperate with investigators and provide any details of incidents they have experienced or witnessed.

The Executive Director and the investigating members of the Board of Directors will conduct investigations and provide a written report with conclusions to The Board of Directors.

If external investigators are used, they will conduct investigations and provide a written report with conclusions to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

5. Follow-up

The alleged bully and alleged target will be advised of the investigation findings by Executive Director or the Board of Directors if necessary.

Following an investigation, the Executive Director will review and revise workplace procedures to prevent any future bullying and harassment incidents in the workplace. Appropriate corrective actions will be taken within a reasonable time frame that must be suggested in the report by the investigators.

6. Record-keeping requirements

The Abbotsford Downtown Business Association expects that employees will keep written accounts of incidents to submit with any complaints. The Abbotsford Downtown Business Association will keep a written record of investigations, including the findings.

Approved by ADBA Board of Directors – September 9, 2015
