

# **The Alberta Liberal Party Safe and Respectful Workplace Policies and Procedures**

## **Commitment to A Safe Workplace**

Harassment of any kind has no place in our society or in our Party. The Alberta Liberal Party is committed to ensuring safe workplace. We will work diligently to guarantee this through education, communication and a strong reporting process.

Our guiding values in this commitment include:

### **Impartiality**

We are committed to dealing with complaints in a fair, impartial and thorough manner.

### **Accountability**

In dealing with workplace harassment we are committed to holding ourselves and all involved parties to a high standard.

### **Improvement**

We are committed to ongoing education of staff and leadership, a continuous refinement of our processes and the overall improvement of our workplace environment.

## **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment occurs when an employee or member of the Leadership team is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. Reasons for harassment include, but are not limited to, race, religious beliefs, colour, place of origin, gender, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.

Alberta Human Rights Law prohibits workplace harassment based on these grounds.

Examples of harassment that will not be tolerated in the Alberta Liberal Party include but are not limited to: verbal or physical abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunts related to anyone's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical or mental disabilities, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.

The Alberta Liberals will not tolerate the display of pornographic, racist or offensive signs or images; practical jokes that result in embarrassment; and unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit.

## Definition of Sexual Harassment

The [Alberta Human Rights Act](#) prohibits discrimination based on the grounds of gender or gender identity, including sexual harassment. Unwanted sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favours, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or position; or
2. submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual affects that individual's employment or position.

Sexual harassment can include such things as pinching, patting, rubbing or leering, "dirty" jokes, pictures or pornographic materials, comments, suggestions, innuendoes, requests or demands of a sexual nature. The behaviour need not be intentional in order to be considered sexual harassment.

All harassment is offensive and in many cases it intimidates others. It will not be tolerated within the Alberta Liberal Party.

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a repeated pattern of harassment aimed at a specific person or group over time.

## Definition of Violence

The Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 1, workplace defines violence as: "the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury".

Examples of workplace violence include::

- Threatening behaviour such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects
- Verbal or written threats (any expression of intent to cause harm)
- Physical attacks such as hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking

## Continuum of Behaviours

Respectful and Professional Behaviour	Disrespectful and Careless Behaviour	Unacceptable and Prohibited Behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Random acts of kindness</li><li>• Timely recognition of people's efforts</li><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Constructive feedback</li><li>• Listening/being attentive</li><li>• Checking In</li><li>• Sharing knowledge, information</li><li>• Seeking input from others</li><li>• Being accountable</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interrupting</li><li>• Not doing what you say you will do</li><li>• Careless humour</li><li>• Not permitting input</li><li>• Practical jokes that result in embarrassment</li><li>• Angry outburst</li><li>• Gossiping</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• False accusations</li><li>• Threats, including coercion</li><li>• Bullying</li><li>• Harassment</li><li>• Workplace violence/assault</li><li>• Inappropriate touching</li><li>• Sexual remarks</li><li>• Acts of violence</li><li>• Repeated insults</li><li>• Harsh insults</li></ul>

## Procedures - Informal Process

If you feel you are being harassed you can take any of the following steps that you feel comfortable with:

1. Tell the harasser that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask them to stop. You are NOT required to confront your harasser. The decision to do so is your own choice.
2. If you do not wish to speak to your harasser or have confronted them and found it ineffective you may make an informal complaint to the Alberta Liberal Workplace Safety Committee at [disclosure@albertaliberal.com](mailto:disclosure@albertaliberal.com) detailing the incident or incidents.
3. As part of the informal process the Committee will work with the complainant to address the situation. Techniques the Committee may use include but are not limited to:
  - a. Confront the harasser on behalf of the complainant.
  - b. Confront the harasser with the complainant.
  - c. Assist in mediating a solution that satisfies the complainant. For example, arranging for an apology.

## Procedure - Formal Process

If you are unsatisfied with the informal process or wish to bypass the informal process and move immediately to a formal resolution you are entitled to do so through this process:

1. Make a formal complaint to the Alberta Liberal Workplace Safety Committee at [disclosure@albertaliberal.com](mailto:disclosure@albertaliberal.com) detailing the incident or incidents.
2. The Committee will decide whether or not to investigate the complaint. If they decide not to investigate they will inform the complainant and respondent and provide an explanation as to why.
3. If an investigation is instigated the respondent and complainant will be notified.
4. The Committee will next decide whether or not the scope of the investigation requires an external investigator or can be investigated internally. The respondent and complainant will be informed of this decision.
5. If the committee decides to hire an external investigator the respondent and complainant will be informed when the investigator is hired.
6. The findings of the investigation will be provided to the respondent and complainant.
7. The Executive and Executive Director will decide on next steps based on the results of the investigation.

You also have the right to contact the Alberta Human Rights Commission to make a complaint of sexual harassment and you can report any incident of assault that has occurred to the police.

A formal complaint must be made within 30 days of an incident. Unreported incidents outside the 30 day time frame may still be taken into account at the discretion of the Committee and/or investigator as part of another investigation. The committee also reserves the right at their discretion to investigate complaints outside the 30 day time period at their discretion. If they chose to do so they must provide a written rationale to the respondent and complainant outlining why.

## False Allegations and Frivolous Complaints

Making a false allegation is a serious offense and is considered another form of disrespectful behaviour that will not be tolerated.

Where accusations are found to be false, disciplinary action may be taken against the person who made the accusation. Disciplinary action may include suspension or dismissal of an employee, loss of a tilted position, revocation of membership, and/or being banned from Alberta Liberal Party events and premises. The incident will be documented.

Frivolous complaints are also a form of disrespectful behaviour and may be subject to disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

All employees, executive, and board members are encouraged to explore the Informal Resolution Process before considering a formal complaint.

Employees coming forward in good faith should not be afraid of retaliation or discipline and should not be discouraged to come forward based on this section.

## **Non-Action and Anonymity**

Filing a complaint is not productive unless you are requesting action be taken. If you believe an issue is significant enough to bring to the attention of the Committee you need to be prepared for them act upon it.

Anonymity will not be granted when a complaint is filed as the respondent has the right to know and respond to the allegations made. That said, efforts will be made to protect confidentiality.

## **Responsibility of Bystanders**

Bystanders who witness harassment have a responsibility to take action. Bystanders who do not take action may contribute to creating a toxic work environment. If a bystander witnesses others acting disrespectfully, there is an expectation that this information will be brought forward for resolution.

## **Responsibility of Leadership**

It is the responsibility of staff, Executive members, Board members or any person in a supervisory role to take immediate and appropriate action to report or deal with incidents of harassment of any type, whether brought to their attention or personally observed. Under no circumstances should a complaint be dismissed or downplayed nor should the complainant be told to deal with it personally.

## **External Reporting**

In the event that any information uncovered during an investigation is pertinent to a legal proceeding or criminal investigation the Alberta Liberal Party will make the information available to the relevant bodies and/or person(s) upon the request of the victim or if required to do so by law.

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## **Education**

All Alberta Liberal Party Executive and Board members and staff will be provided with this document and required to agree to it.

## **Conclusion**

The Alberta Liberal Party seeks to provide a safe, healthy and rewarding environment for employees and volunteers. Harassment will not be tolerated.

Sources:

[https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins\\_sheets\\_booklets/sheets/hr\\_and\\_employment/Pages/sexual\\_harassment.aspx](https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/sheets/hr_and_employment/Pages/sexual_harassment.aspx)

<https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/about/Pages/contact.aspx>

[https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins\\_sheets\\_booklets/sheets/hr\\_and\\_employment/Pages/harassment\\_policy\\_sample.aspx](https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/sheets/hr_and_employment/Pages/harassment_policy_sample.aspx)

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/UN\\_system\\_policies/\(ILO\)Circular\\_on\\_Sexual\\_Harassment.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/UN_system_policies/(ILO)Circular_on_Sexual_Harassment.pdf)

[https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/cms\\_000554.aspx](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/cms_000554.aspx)

Respectful Workplace Policy for Legislative Assembly Office Employees (courtesy of the Alberta Liberal Opposition)