



TRANSIT POLICE

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

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Office of Primary Responsibility: Senior Manager People and Culture

POLICY

The Transit Police is committed to providing a work environment that is supportive of the dignity and self-respect of all Workers. Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment in the workplace, or arising from any business-related interaction, violates this commitment, is oppressive, and will not be condoned or permitted.

This policy applies to all Workers.

Each Worker has a responsibility to create and maintain a workplace that is free from Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment by treating others with dignity and respect. This includes all business-related interactions with third parties who deal with the Transit Police, such as contractors, suppliers, visitors to the workplace and customers. Managers and Supervisors have the added responsibility to respond, with assistance from the Workplace Advisor, when required, to any incidents contrary to the provisions of this policy, whether or not a complaint is made.

The ultimate goal of the Respectful Workplace Policy is to promote a workplace free from Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment; correct inappropriate behavior at the earliest stage; and maintain a positive, productive and respectful work environment.

All Workers must comply with this Policy, which applies to interpersonal and electronic communications. Any conduct that violates this Policy is unacceptable and may result in corrective action (i.e., education and training) and/or discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment, termination of practicum, volunteer appointment or contract for service.

Definitions

Bullying and Harassment – According to WorkSafeBC policies, Bullying and Harassment:

1. Includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but
2. Excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.

Examples of behaviour that might constitute Bullying and Harassment include, but are not limited to:

- verbal aggression or insults;
- threats or intimidation;
- physical assault;
- derogatory name-calling;
- harmful hazing or initiation practices;
- vandalizing a person's belongings or work equipment;
- spreading malicious rumours and gossip;
- targeting a person for social isolation; and
- cyber bullying.

[Refer to Transit Police Policies [AF170 – Digital Video Surveillance and Recording Systems in Police Buildings](#) and [TSML No. 016 – Employee Privacy Policy](#)]

Discrimination – This is differential behaviour, directed against another person, that involves comments or actions based on any characteristics, real or perceived, protected by the *B.C. Human Rights Code*, including a person's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or conviction of a criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to a person's employment. Discrimination includes Sexual Harassment, as defined below.

Examples of behaviour that might constitute Discrimination include, but are not limited to:

- racial or ethnic slurs including racially derogatory nicknames;
- unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos or taunting about a person's body, age, marital status, gender, ethnic/racial origin, religion, accent or disabilities;
- patronizing behaviour, language or terminology that reinforces stereotypes and undermines self-respect or adversely impacts working conditions or performance; and
- communication via electronic media (e.g. email, social media) of any type that includes any conduct as described above or that is prohibited by provincial law or Transit Police policy.

Sexual Harassment – A type of Discrimination involving one or more incidents of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and/or where submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a condition of employment or the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual and which negatively interferes with the individual's work.

Examples of behaviour that might constitute Sexual Harassment include, but are not limited to:

- sexist and/or homophobic jokes causing embarrassment or offence;
- leering;
- the display or circulation of offensive material of a sexual nature;
- sexually suggestive, obscene or degrading remarks or gestures;
- unwanted touching;
- unwelcome questions or remarks about a person's gender identity, sex life, appearance, clothing;
- sexual advances with actual or implied work-related consequences;

- a person in authority asking an employee for sexual favours in return for being hired or receiving promotions or other employment benefits; and
- sexual assault.

Intent does not determine whether behaviour amounts to Bullying and Harassment or Discrimination. A person cannot excuse behaviour by saying they did not intend it to contravene this policy.

Behaviour that does not constitute Bullying and Harassment or Discrimination under this policy includes:

- normal and acceptable social contact between employees;
- relations between employees based upon mutual consent; and
- appropriate supervision and performance management which includes performance evaluations and disciplinary measures.

Complainant – An Employee, Volunteer, Practicum Student or Contractor who has brought forward or filed a complaint under this policy alleging that Discrimination and/or Bullying and Harassment has occurred in the Workplace.

Contractor – A person engaged by the Transit Police to provide services to the Transit Police on a contractual basis.

Employee(s) – All Members and civilian professionals, including managers and Supervisors, (whether unionized or exempt) who are employed by TransLink Security Management Limited (“TSML”) to work at the Transit Police.

Employer – TSML.

Member – For the purpose of this policy, Designated Constables (all ranks), Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officers and Designated Law Enforcement Officers of the Transit Police.

Metro Vancouver Transit Police (“Transit Police”) – The operating name for the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service (Designated Policing Unit and Designated Law Enforcement Unit).

Respondent – An Employee (or group of Employees), Volunteer, Practicum Student or Contractor who is alleged to have discriminated against or harassed the Complainant.

Senior Manager, Human Resources – The position designated by the Chief Officer to effectively address and resolve all matters that come under this policy and provide options for support services and preventative measures.

Supervisor – Employees who oversee and provide direction to TSML Employees, including those Employees with the designation of manager.

TransLink Security Management Limited (“TSML”) – A subsidiary of TransLink that is the legal entity for the Transit Police and employs Transit Police sworn Members and civilian professionals.

Volunteer – A person who provides services to the Transit Police on a voluntary basis.

Witness – An Employee, Volunteer, Practicum Student or Contractor who believes they have observed Discrimination and/or Bullying and Harassment in the workplace, or may have information that may be relevant.

Worker – An Employee, Volunteer, Practicum Student, or Contractor.

Workplace – For the purpose of this policy, the workplace includes: any location where carrying out the duties of performing the job; any social gathering where there is the potential for impact on the workplace; and any location travelled to for a work related reason.

Workplace Advisor – The person(s) designated by the Senior Manager Human Resources, who are trained and experienced in dealing with all matters that come under this policy and provide options for support services.

Confidentiality

1. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure confidentiality throughout the Informal Resolution and Formal Investigation processes. Information will only be disclosed to the extent required for: (a) the purpose of investigation or disciplinary action; (b) by Transit Police policy or procedures; (c) by law (i.e., *BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Police Act, Workers Compensation Act*, or rules governing administrative proceedings and court orders).
2. The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner may be informed of a complaint under this policy when appropriate.
3. Complainants, Respondents and Witnesses must maintain confidentiality concerning Workplace Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment complaints or incidents, and breaches of confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

Rights, Responsibilities & Expectations

4. Every Worker:
 - (1) has a responsibility to create and maintain a workplace that is free from Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment by treating others with dignity and respect;
 - (2) has the right to be treated fairly and respectfully in the Workplace;
 - (3) is expected to address behavior that is inconsistent with this policy by taking appropriate action, including reporting any violation in accordance with this policy; and
 - (4) is expected to address and report any conduct inconsistent with this policy.
5. Supervisors are expected to foster a respectful workplace by:
 - (1) facilitating a work environment that promotes respectful workplace behavior;

- (2) taking preventative action to avert development, escalation, or recurrence of Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment in the workplace;
- (3) taking immediate action when respectful workplace behaviors are not demonstrated by addressing and documenting the issue;
- (4) seeking advice and assistance from the Senior Manager Human Resources where appropriate; and
- (5) reporting all incidents and actions taken to the Senior Manager Human Resources.

Violation of Policy

6. Any Worker who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action, up to and including dismissal from employment, termination of practicum, contract or volunteer appointment.

Retaliation

7. Retaliation is a serious disciplinary offence and will not be tolerated. No Worker should be subject to retaliation, or the threat of retaliation, as the result of making a formal or informal complaint in good faith. Retaliatory behavior may include, but is not limited to, unjustified or unwarranted:
 - (1) criticism of a person's job performance;
 - (2) refusal to extend to a person an opportunity available to others;
 - (3) refusal to work with a person; or
 - (4) reassignment of a person to different duties or different position.
8. Retaliatory behavior does not include good faith job performance assessments, normal work-related comments and instruction or discipline for just cause.
9. Where it is established that a Worker has engaged in retaliatory behavior, discipline up to and including dismissal, or termination of the practicum or contract or volunteer appointment, may be imposed.

Complaints Involving Members

10. The Senior Manager People and Culture will inform the Inspector for the Professional Standards Unit of complaints made against Members under this policy so that reporting to the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner ("OPCC") may occur as applicable. [NOTE: The OPCC has the authority to determine how such a complaint is to be investigated and disposed of, which may vary from this policy.]

[Refer to Transit Police policy chapter [AC130 – Internal Discipline Rules](#)]

Rights of Complainant and Respondent

11. A Complainant has the right to:

- (1) receive fair treatment;
- (2) have their complaint dealt with in a timely fashion;
- (3) obtain a review of their complaint without fear of embarrassment or reprisal;
- (4) be accompanied by a person of their choice for support during any proceedings relating to the complaint, providing no costs are incurred by the Transit Police;
- (5) be represented throughout the complaint process by a Union representative where applicable; and
- (6) a written summary of the findings of the investigation at the conclusion of the process (if the Complainant proceeds with the Formal Investigation Process).

12. A Respondent has the right to:

- (1) receive fair treatment;
- (2) be informed as soon as is practicable that a complaint has been made about them;
- (3) be provided with a summary of the allegations and be afforded an opportunity to respond to them;
- (4) be accompanied by a person of their choice for support during any proceedings relating to the investigation of the complaint, providing no costs are incurred by the Transit Police;
- (5) be represented throughout the investigation process by a Union representative where applicable; and
- (6) a written summary of the findings of the investigation at the conclusion of the process (if the Complainant proceeds with the Formal Investigation Process).

PROCEDURES

13. If a Complainant believes they are being discriminated against or bullied and harassed, a Complainant may:

- (1) if comfortable to do so, make known their disapproval to the alleged Respondent directly; or
- (2) ask for the assistance of another person, or Union if applicable to the Employee, to make their disapproval known to the alleged Respondent; or

- (3) report the occurrence to a Supervisor, the Workplace Advisor, or the confidential Respectful Workplace phone line (obtain number from Transit Police [Form AZ1430 – Respectful Workplace Complaint](#)) and submit, either in writing (using [TP Form AZ1430](#)) or through an interview, details of the incident including:
 - a. date and time of the incident;
 - b. any witnesses to the incident; and
 - c. any response made at the time of the incident.

Resolution of a Report of Workplace Discrimination, and/or Bullying and Harassment

14. Early resolution of respectful workplace issues is the most desirable outcome in the majority of circumstances. While it is suggested that Complainants first attempt to resolve any respectful workplace issues through the Informal Resolution Process, Complainants may proceed directly with the Formal Investigation Process. Factors to consider include the seriousness of the allegations and any mitigating circumstances.

Informal Resolution Process

15. Informal Conflict Resolution – An informal process where no record is retained of the workplace conflict complaint. The Complainant and Respondent attempt to resolve the situation by finding a mutually agreeable solution. The Informal Conflict Resolution process includes but is not limited to the following:
 - (1) Generic approach – A Supervisor who becomes aware of a situation, either by way of a complaint or by personal observation, may implement general steps to address behavior. These steps may include discussions at routine staff meetings or briefings wherein it is emphasized that certain behavior is unacceptable.
 - (2) Direct approach – Person to person interaction. The direct approach may be from Complainant to Respondent, bystander to Respondent, in person, by letter, alone or with a colleague and/or third-party assistance. The Workplace Advisor may assist with the selection of a facilitator if requested by both the Complainant and Respondent. A party from outside the Transit Police may be used.
16. If the Complainant is not comfortable with the Informal Resolution Process, they may proceed directly to the Formal Investigation Process.

Formal Investigation Process

17. Investigations carried out under this policy will be conducted in a timely manner.
18. Any Worker who believes that they are being discriminated against, bullied or harassed (or witnessed same), may file a formal complaint in writing against the alleged perpetrator with the office of the Senior Manager People and Culture. Where the alleged perpetrator is the Chief Officer or a Deputy Chief Officer, the formal complaint is to be filed directly with the DPU/DLEU Board Chair.

19. A Complainant may, at any time, withdraw their formal complaint (in writing), allowing the complaint to be informally resolved.
20. Notwithstanding anything in this policy, the Employer retains the right to initiate or continue any investigation of a Workplace Discrimination and/or Bullying and Harassment allegation where the Employer believes it is in the best interests of the Employer and/or the parties to further the investigation.
21. During any investigation, reasonable interim changes may be made by the Employer necessary to mitigate potential workplace conflict, protect affected Workers and facilitate the prompt completion of the investigation. This may include making temporary changes to schedules, work locations or duties of affected Workers or other reasonable actions in the circumstances, in accordance with the direction of the Chief Officer. Any such changes will be subject to ongoing review and will remain in effect only for as long as necessary until the investigation is completed. (A temporary change may also occur arising from, or governed by, the *Police Act*. Refer to Transit Police policy chapter [AC140 – Complaints](#).)
 - (1) The foregoing temporary changes are excluded from the application of s. 7 of this policy.
22. Investigations of Workplace Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment complaints differ from criminal investigations. While there are Workplace Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment incidents that may also involve criminal acts, it is important that, where a Complainant proceeds with the Formal Investigation Process, the Transit Police utilize an Investigator who is familiar with labour law, Workplace Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment matters and related statutes, including the *Police Act* and *Workers Compensation Act*.
23. The Transit Police will appoint a suitable Investigator, who may be from outside of the Transit Police, to conduct an investigation into the complaint. Appointment of the Investigator must be in compliance with provisions of Transit Police policy chapter [AC130 – Internal Discipline Rules](#).
24. All formal written complaints will:
 - (1) identify the name and position of the Complainant;
 - (2) identify the name and the position of the Respondent;
 - (3) list the prohibited ground(s) of discrimination, if any; and
 - (4) contain a brief description of the key incidents that constitute the substance of the complaint.
25. All investigation proceedings will be documented.
26. The Investigator will conduct an interview with the Complainant that will include:
 - (1) a review of the Complainant's evidence;

- (2) a review of relevant documents;
 - (3) the identification of witnesses; and
 - (4) the outcome sought by the Complainant.
27. The Investigator will conduct an interview with the Respondent that will include:
- (1) a review of the Respondent's evidence;
 - (2) a review of relevant documents; and
 - (3) identification of witnesses.
28. The Investigator will conduct an interview with any relevant witnesses.
29. If information is obtained from witnesses, the Complainant, or the Respondent, that is material and conflicting, the Investigator will provide the Complainant and the Respondent an opportunity to respond to the information.
30. The Investigator will prepare a report detailing:
- (1) the evidence of the Complainant, the Respondent and any witnesses;
 - (2) the Investigator's assessment of credibility if necessary;
 - (3) the Investigator's findings of fact; and
 - (4) the Investigator's conclusion as to whether the findings of fact constitute a violation of the Respectful Workplace Policy.
31. A copy of the report will be forwarded through the Senior Manager People and Culture to the Chief Officer or designate (or to the Police Board where applicable) who will review the Investigator's report and:
- (1) determine whether disciplinary and/or corrective action should be taken; and
 - (2) notify the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner where applicable.
32. Any corrective (i.e., education/training) or disciplinary action will be carried out in accordance with the Collective Agreement and/or Internal Discipline Rules, and will be recorded in writing.

Vexatious Complaint

33. Complaints of bullying, harassment, and discrimination are serious matters. If a complaint is made in bad faith or for vexatious motives, disciplinary action may be taken against the Complainant up to and including termination of employment, termination of practicum, volunteer appointment or contract for service

34. Examples of vexatious motives include but are not limited to, causing trouble, annoyance or embarrassment to another person, or for some personal benefit.

Mediation

35. With the consent of the Complainant, Respondent and the Senior Manager People and Culture, the Investigator may mediate the complaint. If the complaint is resolved the Investigator will prepare a settlement agreement in writing describing the terms of the resolution. All parties involved in the dispute will sign the resolution, a copy of which will be provided to the Complainant, the Respondent and the Senior Manager People and Culture. A copy may be placed on the personnel files of both the Complainant and the Respondent. The Senior Manager People and Culture will monitor the implementation of the resolution, if appropriate.

Employee Assistance Plan

36. Transit Police provides an Employee and Family Assistance Plan (“EAP”) for all Employees. The EAP offers services to Employees and their eligible dependents. Employees are encouraged to use the EAP whenever they feel the need for guidance or counselling in coping with any issue, including workplace bullying and harassment. The EAP is a confidential service to be used when Employees need help and Transit Police does not receive information regarding any individual contacts with the EAP provider.

Complaint under the *BC Human Rights Code*

37. Any Employee, Volunteer, Practicum Student or Contractor who believes they have been subjected to Discrimination or Bullying and Harassment based on prohibited grounds has the right to file a complaint under the *BC Human Rights Code*. Nothing in this policy precludes the individual from also pursuing such a complaint.

Police Act

38. Where a complaint may constitute misconduct under the *Police Act*, the complaint must be handled in accordance with Part 11 of the *Police Act*.
39. In the event of inconsistency between this policy and the *Police Act*, the *Police Act* will govern.

Records

40. A secure and separate filing system will be maintained by the Senior Manager People and Culture (or such other person or location as so designated by the Chief Officer or by policy) for complaints made pursuant to this Respectful Workplace Policy.

[Refer to Transit Police policy chapters [AC110 – Service Record of Discipline](#), [AC130 – Internal Discipline Rules](#) and [AC140 – Complaints](#)]

Key References:

Accessible British Columbia Act [RSBC 2021, Chapter 19]

BC Human Rights Code [RSBC 1996, Chapter 210]

BC Police Act [RSBC 1996, Chapter 367]

BC Provincial Policing Standards

BC Workers Compensation Act [RSBC 2019, Chapter 1]

British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal v. Schrenk, 2017 SCC 62

WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Policies D3-115-2, D3-116-1, D3-117-2

WorkSafeBC, *Towards a respectful workplace: A handbook on preventing and addressing workplace bullying and harassment*, 2013