

*Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District*

**POLICY MANUAL**

Section	
Policy Number	
Policy Title	Code of Conduct

**POLICY OBJECTIVE**

This policy statement supports the core policy objective that employees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District (District) exhibit the highest standards of conduct.

Employees will exhibit the highest standards of conduct. Their conduct must instill confidence and trust and not bring the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District into disrepute.

The requirement to comply with these standards of conduct is a condition of employment. Employees who fail to comply with these standards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**SCOPE**

For purposes of the policy, “employees” will be understood to include career and exempt employees, paid-on-call members, and volunteers acting on behalf of the District.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

**Key Principals**

**Integrity** Employees are keepers of the public trust and must uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior. Employees are expected to:

- make decisions that benefit the community;
- act lawfully and within the authorities of the Letters Patent; and
- be free from undue influence and not act, or appear to act, in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, family, friends or business interests.

**Accountability** Employees are obligated to answer for a responsibility that has been entrusted to them. They are responsible for the decisions that they make and this responsibility includes acts of commission and acts of omission. The decision-making processes must be transparent and subject to public scrutiny and proper records kept.

**Responsibility** Employees must act responsibly, within the law and within the authorities of the District's Letters Patent. This means disclosing actual or potential conflict of interest relating to their public duties and taking steps to resolve the conflict for the protection of the public interest; following the letter and spirit of policies and operational guidelines; and exercising all conferred power and authority strictly for the purpose for which they have been conferred.

**Leadership** Employees must demonstrate and promote the key principles of the Code of Conduct through their decision, actions and behavior. Their behavior must build and inspire the public's trust and confidence in the District.

**Respect** Employees must perform their jobs and functions efficiently and with decorum. Employees must treat each other and all members of the public with whom they come in contact with during the course of the employment with courtesy and respect.

**Openness** Employees have a duty to be as open as possible about their decisions and actions. In part this means, communicating appropriate information openly to the public about decision-making processes and issues being considered; encouraging appropriate public participation; and providing appropriate means for recourse and feedback.

### **General Conduct**

**Loyalty** Employees have a duty of loyalty to the District as their employer. They must act honestly and in good faith and place the interest of the employer ahead of their private interest.

**Confidentiality** Confidential information in any form that employees receive through their employment must not be disclosed, released, or transmitted to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive the information. Employees with care or control of personal or sensitive information, electronic media, or devices must handle and dispose of these appropriately.

The proper handling and protection of confidential information continues to apply after the employment relationship ends.

Confidential information that employees receive through their employment must not be used by an employee for the purpose of furthering any private interest, or as a means of making personal gains.

**Public Comments** Employees may comment on public issues but must not engage in any activity or speak publicly where this could be perceived as an official act or representation unless authorized to do so.

Employees must not use their employment to lend weight to the public expression of their personal opinions.

**Service to the Public** Employees must provide service to the public in a manner that is courteous, professional, equitable, efficient, and effective. Employees must be sensitive and responsive to changing needs, expectations and rights of the public in the proper performance of their duties.

**Workplace Behavior** Employees are to treat each other with respect and dignity and must not engage in discriminatory conduct prohibited by the *Human Rights Code*.

The conduct of employees in the workplace must meet acceptable social standards and must contribute to a positive work environment. Bullying or any other inappropriate conduct compromising the integrity of the District will not be tolerated.

All employees may expect and have the responsibility to contribute to a safe workplace. Violence in the workplace is unacceptable. Violence is any use of physical force on an individual that causes or could cause injury and includes an attempt or threatened use of force.

Employees must report any incident of violence. Any employee who becomes aware of a threat must report that threat if there is a reasonable cause to believe that the threat poses a risk of injury. Any incident or threat of violence in the workplace must be addressed immediately.

Employees must report a safety hazard or unsafe conditions or act in accordance with the provision of the *WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*.

**Conflict of Interest** Employees must always arrange and conduct their private affairs in a manner that will prevent conflicts of interest, or the perception of conflicts of interest from arising. A conflict of interest occurs when an employee's private affairs or

financial interests are in conflict, or could result in a perception of conflict, with the employee's duties in such a way that:

- the employee's ability to act in the public interest could be impaired;
- the employee's actions or conduct could undermine or compromise the public's confidence in the employee's ability to discharge work responsibilities; and or
- the trust the public places in the District.

***Allegations of Wrongdoing*** Employees have a duty to report any situation relevant to the District that they believe contravenes the law, misuses public funds or assets, or represents a danger to public health and safety or a significant danger to the environment. Employees can expect matters to be treated in confidence, unless disclosure of information is authorized or required by law. Employees will not be subject to discipline or reprisal for bringing forward to the Fire Chief, in good faith, allegations of wrongdoing in accordance with this policy statement. Where an allegation involves the Fire Chief, the employee must forward the allegation to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Where an employee believes that the matter requires a resolution and it has not been reasonably resolved by the Fire Chief or the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the employees may then refer the allegation to the Board of Trustees.

If the employee decides to pursue the matter further, then:

- allegations of criminal activity are to be referred to the police;
- allegations of misuse of public funds are to be referred to the District's Auditor;
- allegations of a danger to public health must be brought to the attention of health authorities; and
- allegations of a significant danger to the environment must be brought to the attention of the Ministry of Environment.

***Legal Proceedings*** Employees must not sign affidavits relating to facts that have come to their knowledge in the course of their duties for use in court proceedings unless authorized to do so by the Fire Chief. Normally an affidavit would be approved by the District's legal counsel. Employees are obliged to cooperate with lawyers defending the District's interest during legal proceedings.

A written opinion prepared on behalf of the District by counsel is privileged and is, therefore, not to be released without the prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

***Working Relationships*** Employees involved in a personal relationship outside work which compromises objectivity, or the perception of objectivity, should avoid being placed in a direct reporting relationship to one another.

In circumstances where this condition cannot be avoided, the Board of Trustees must be satisfied that sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure that the District's interests are not compromised.

***Human Resource Decision*** Employees are to disqualify themselves as participants in human resource decision when their objectivity would be compromised or any reason or a benefit or perceived benefit could accrue to them.

***Outside Remunerative and Volunteer Work*** Permanent career and excluded staff of the District may do volunteer work, hold outside employment or carry on a business provided it does not:

- interfere with the performance of their duties as an employee of the District;
- bring the District into disrepute;
- represent a conflict of interest or create the reasonable perception of a conflict of interest;
- involve the unauthorized use of work time or District premises, services, equipment or supplies; or
- gain an advantage that is derived from their employment with the District.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **FIRE CHIEF**

- Advise employees of the required standards of conduct and the consequences of non-compliance;
- promote a work environment that is free of discrimination; and
- deal with breaches of this policy statement in a timely manner, and take the appropriate action based upon the facts and circumstances.

### **EMPLOYEES**

- Objectively and loyally fulfill their assigned duties and responsibilities;
- disclose and resolve conflicts in interest or potential conflict of interest situations in which they find themselves;
- maintain appropriate workplace behavior;
- avoid engaging in discriminatory conduct or comment; and
- check with the Fire Chief or Chair of the Board of Trustees when they are uncertain about any aspect of this policy.

## **BOARD DISCRETION**

The provisions set out in this policy are subject to revision from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act [RSBC 1996] Chapter 165  
Respectful Workplace Policy

## **APPROVALS**

Approval date:		Approved by:	
1. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
2. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
3. Amendment date:		Approved by:	