



**Builders[®]
Code**

ACCEPTABLE WORKSITE POLICY

MODEL POLICY TEMPLATE



British
Columbia
Construction
Association

builderscode.ca

**Disclaimer:**

This document contains information only. It is not offered nor should it be treated as a legally binding or enforceable document. You should not rely on or make any changes to the policy content of this document without obtaining advice from a qualified legal professional who can advise you on your specific circumstances.

Accordingly, the Builders Code partners and service providers (BC Construction Association and Builders Code Advisors) disclaim any and all responsibility for damage, loss or expense of any nature whatsoever that you or any person or entity may incur as a result of relying upon this document. By utilizing this document, you shall be deemed to have agreed that you have no claim.

The Builders Code for an Acceptable Worksite

At _____, we are fully committed to creating an acceptable worksite where all employees have the same opportunity to do their best work and be recognized as our most valuable assets. **In alignment with Builders Code, we define an acceptable worksite as being safe, productive, and free from bullying, harassment, hazing, and discrimination.**

We expect all employees to comply with the *Builders Code for an Acceptable Worksite* policy and contribute to a positive workplace culture.

This means that every employee has a right and an obligation to be safe and productive at work. We know that the hazards to safety are not only physical, and safety protection is not limited to personal protective equipment (PPE) and other physical safety measures. Unwelcome, offensive, excluding, discriminatory and/or harassing language and behaviour also create stress and distraction that put health, safety and productivity at risk.

We are committed to having an acceptable workplace strengthened through a diverse and inclusive workforce where all workers feel safe, valued and motivated to meet the highest standards in effective teamwork and quality customer service.

“It’s not only the right thing to do, it’s good for business. By removing the aggressive, “bro-vibe” stigma in our industry, every one of us—including our customers—benefits.”

“Our customers are often families just like our own. When you show them and each other professionalism and respect, they’ll welcome you in, refer you on, and ask for you back. When you don’t, it hurts us all.”

How We Commit to an Acceptable Worksite

With the overall goals of safety, productivity, quality, innovation — as well as seeing that our employees feel welcome, supported and valued — we commit to the following practices:

RECRUITMENT & HIRING

- We eliminate any actual or potentially discriminatory barriers that may prevent someone from applying. For example, we use non-gender specific language such as tradesperson or journeyman rather than tradesman or journeyman.
- To add more diversity of experience, talent and skills, we seek to attract candidates from a variety of sources such as job fairs, trades associations, communities, skilled trades programs, universities, schools, etc.
- We ensure employment opportunities are fair and equitable, and that no candidate is denied opportunities for reasons unrelated to ability and performance. We don’t screen out candidates based on their sex, gender, ethnic origin, or any other prohibited grounds of discrimination.

- We hire with retention as a top priority. We focus not only on a candidate's ability to perform and learn the job but also on their character, work ethic, potential for growth, and alignment with our values and goals. We onboard new employees to feel welcome, productive and safe from the outset, and be familiar with our commitment to support safety and success.
- We compensate employees at fair market value, based on their skills, experience, and relevant competencies and qualifications.

RETENTION

- We hold employees and management accountable for maintaining an acceptable workplace.
- We ensure that all employees receive the necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision to maintain a safe and healthy work environment in performing their duties.
- We structure our performance and compensation framework on objective factors such as experience, responsibility and performance, ensuring fair treatment of all employees.
- We train our supervisors to provide fair, objective and supportive feedback and performance reviews.
- In our performance reviews, we evaluate behaviours that contribute to an Acceptable Worksite.
- We do our best to accommodate family and personal responsibilities where operationally possible (e.g. leave and flexible work hours).
- We seek to identify and address barriers to professional development and our employees' ability to reach their potential.
- We train, support, and mentor employees, providing role models where possible.

WORKPLACE CULTURE

- We address any known or reported expression of bias, stigma, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and hazing.
- We work to resolve any issues resulting from unacceptable conduct and hold management accountable for effectively responding to concerns brought to their attention.
- Because we understand and value that our employees are all different and view things differently, we measure the standards of an acceptable worksite by the impact of behaviour, not the intent.
- At _____ we provide Builders Code workplace culture training to employees at all levels whenever possible.
- We educate employees on bias awareness and provide a safe environment in which to bring concerns forward.

- We clearly communicate expectations about behaviour and encourage employees to lead the way by example.
- We expect accountability for appropriate handling of conflict, concerns, and issues.
- We require that subcontractors and others on our worksite comply with the Builders Code Acceptable Worksite standard code of conduct.

EDUCATION, AWARENESS & COMMUNITY

- We commit to helping to raise awareness about the importance of an acceptable workplace in the construction industry.
- Where possible, we work with colleges, trade associations, and other organizations to educate them about our trade(s) and company, and to help new entrants to the industry get a strong start.
- We support the communities we work in by actively encouraging women and other equity-deserving groups to pursue careers in the industry, and by fostering an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

“We all need to take a step back and look at how we should be treating one another, and appreciating how another’s experiences can be so different from our own. This is so much more than a company mandate but a philosophy for how we live which we all benefit from.”

“It’s important to put ourselves in the shoes of our co-workers; e.g. if you’re concerned that one of your co-workers takes more time off or has flexible hours to take care of family responsibilities, consider how you’d feel if those options were denied to you, or to your spouse who may request flexibility from their workplace.”

“It is 100% up to all of us to make or break this. Do you want your co-workers to have your back? Do you have theirs?”

Practices/Behaviours that Do Not Comply with *Builders Code Acceptable Worksite*

Practices/behaviours that do not comply with *Builders Code Acceptable Worksite* include unsafe conduct, hazing, harassment, bullying, discrimination and/or any other practice/behaviour that causes risk to employee safety, health, well-being, and productivity. Whether a single comment/act or a continuous series of incidents, when left unaddressed, such practices/behaviours not only impact individuals but may lead to detrimental effects on our organization, including:

- Reduced efficiency and productivity;
- Poor employee morale;
- Increased stress and tension among employees;
- Increased absenteeism;
- Higher turnover;
- Higher levels of customer dissatisfaction;
- Increased incidences of accidents/poor safety outcomes.

Unacceptable Practices and Behaviours

Practices and behaviours that we consider unacceptable include:

HAZING

Hazing is defined as any action or situation created with the intention of producing emotional or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Although circumstances differ, the common factors tend to include a power differential between senior and junior employees or new and long-term employees, as well as an intentional "rite of passage" or tradition. Examples include but aren't limited to:

- Forced activities for apprentices or new employees to prove their worth;
- Requirement to carry out/endure tasks that aren't a part of the job;
- Abuse of personal or work-related property.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is defined as any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact that is objectionable and unwelcome and should reasonably be known as objectionable and unwelcome. It serves no legitimate work purpose and detrimentally affects the work environment, often leading to adverse job-related consequences for the person being harassed. There are numerous forms of harassment, including but not limited to bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, and harassment based on any of the prohibited grounds of discrimination (as outlined under “Discrimination” below).

Sexual Harassment is defined and legislated under the *Human Rights Code of BC* as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature and may include (but is not limited to) the following examples:

- Making unwelcome sexual or physical contact;
- Propositions or threats in exchange for workplace rewards or favours;
- Derogatory or degrading remarks of a sexual nature or regarding gender or sexual orientation;
- Referring to others using sexualized language, such as “babe or stud”; whistling or catcalling;
- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, sexually suggestive or obscene comments or gestures, leering;
- Displaying sexually suggestive pictures or objects in the workplace.

BULLYING

Bullying and Harassment as defined and legislated under the *Worker's Compensation Act's OHS Policies* 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. It usually occurs as repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour and is a form of exercising power through aggression that may include physical, verbal, or emotional abuse. Worksite bullying and harassment may be directed at one person, or the instigator may continually seek out new people to target. It can be both open and hidden and includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal aggression or insults;
- Criticizing a person constantly or persistently;
- Undermining or deliberately obstructing a person's work;
- Derogatory comments or names to or about a person or their work;
- Refusing to speak to, being condescending or patronizing, belittling opinions;
- Discounting or denying accomplishments or taking credit for the work done by someone else;
- Intimidating or humiliating a person through the use of body language (e.g. eye rolling), sarcasm, ridicule and/or making someone the target of practical jokes;
- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip, or false information;
- Making jokes that are understandably offensive, whether verbally or via email, text, etc.;
- Intruding on a person's privacy by asking inappropriate and/or excessive questions about personal matters or teasing about personal issues;
- Interfering with and/or vandalizing a person's personal belongings or work equipment;
- Repeatedly excluding someone or continuously not sharing pertinent information;
- Repeatedly assigning certain tasks to a specific person based on demographic stereotyping.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is the practice of treating a person or group differently from other people or groups of people based on perceived or actual differences/distinctions, when those differences/distinctions are irrelevant or based on bias or stereotyping. As legislated and further defined in the *Human Rights Code of BC*, all employees, customers, partners, and suppliers have a right to a work environment that is free from any discrimination or harassment based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, political belief, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, unrelated criminal conviction, or any other ground that is in violation of the law.

At _____, we extend this to include any other irrelevant or biased difference or distinction. For example, treating someone differently or stating that they don't have a valid opinion because they didn't "come up through the trades". Other examples include treating someone disrespectfully and/or differently based on such things as demeanour (e.g. they're quieter than others), lifestyle preferences (e.g. what they eat for lunch, whether they smoke or not), work ethic (e.g. they come in early, work through lunch or are more productive than others), or status (e.g. a first year apprentice).

In all the inappropriate and unacceptable practices/behaviours outlined above, the standard is whether a reasonable person should have known that their behaviour would cause another person to be humiliated, intimidated, excluded or otherwise treated in an inappropriate, discriminatory or differential manner.

Acceptable Practices and Behaviours

Although the following practices may feel unpleasant, if undertaken professionally with a focus on safety, quality and/or productivity, they are considered an appropriate part of an acceptable Worksite:

- Expressing differences of opinion.
- Receiving reasonable feedback, guidance, or advice from management or leadership on work-related behaviour and/or performance.
- Exercising reasonable management, authority and action relevant to one's role and responsibilities.
- Making a legitimate complaint about someone's conduct through outlined procedures.

Employee Rights and Responsibilities

All employees, without exception, have a right to a worksite that is free from hazing, harassment, bullying, discrimination, and/or any other conduct that's offensive, unwelcome, or illegal. In the same way you would not carry out or cause to be carried out any work if there is reasonable cause to believe that doing so would be physically unsafe, you also have the right to refuse work if it's unsafe in other ways outlined within this code of conduct.

Accordingly, all employees are expected to adhere to a Builders Code Acceptable Worksite. We expect everyone to engage with and uphold this code, consistently demonstrating professional and appropriate behaviour. These practices are an integral part of our workplace culture. Behaviours that don't align with this expectation are not acceptable and will be addressed accordingly. Employees found to be engaging in such behaviour towards co-workers, customers, or anyone with whom they interact at work and/or in the course of work may be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

If you feel subjected to or are aware of an incident that violates the Builders Code Acceptable Worksite policy, it is important that you bring them to our attention as outlined in the procedures provided in Appendix A of this document. This code extends to all company and employment-related functions, on or off our premises.

Procedures for Addressing Unacceptable Behaviour (Formal & Informal)

Unacceptable Behaviour Reporting Procedures and Complaint Form. Refer to **Appendix A** at the end of this document.

We view all allegations of hazing, harassment, bullying and/or discrimination as very serious. If you feel that you've been the target of one of these behaviours – or if you've witnessed it - we encourage you to do the following:

- If the behaviour is an isolated event and perceived as being unintentional - and you feel safe/comfortable doing so – immediately and respectfully let the person know of your disapproval and/or discomfort with their comments, actions or behaviour, and ask them to stop or not do so again (e.g. “I don’t think that’s funny; “That comment makes me uncomfortable”; “Please stop speaking to me that way”; “Please take your hand off my arm.”)
- If you don’t feel safe or comfortable addressing the individual directly, or if the outcome of speaking directly with them doesn’t achieve the desired result (e.g. ending the inappropriate behaviour), contact one of the following: your immediate supervisor, another supervisor with whom you feel comfortable, the superintendent, the foreperson, the general manager, the union representative or Human Resources. Options to address your concerns will be discussed, and appropriate action will be taken as necessary.
- For situations that have not or cannot be addressed through the direct one-on-one approach, write a description of the specific incidents and any steps (if applicable) you’ve taken to address it.
- If you’ve witnessed a form of inappropriate behaviour, it’s important that you recognize your own responsibility to the Builders Code Acceptable Worksite and our workplace culture. Staying silent can indicate that you’re fine with what’s happening. As above, if safe and comfortable, check in with the individual being targeted (e.g. “Are they bothering you?” “Can I help?”), indicate your disapproval or step in to stop it. If not comfortable directly responding to the incident, or if the incident is caused by the conduct of the supervisor, manager, or other person in charge, report to Human Resources, the superintendent, the general manager, the union representative, or a supervisor with whom you feel safe.

“Sometimes when an employee feels threatened that a co-worker will do the job better than them, their fear unintentionally leads to harassment or sabotage of that co-worker’s work. The Builder’s Code is intended to focus on the strengths of each employee, to ensure we celebrate accomplishments, but also provide support and training to bring everyone up.”

“Working in an Acceptable Worksite isn’t about not having fun, or constantly worrying that you’re going to say the wrong thing. It’s about appreciating that we’re all different, making it okay for someone to call you on it if you do say the wrong thing—and vice versa.”

If you see a situation that raises concern for you, ask yourself:

- What would I want someone to do for me in this situation?
- What would I tell my child to do?
- How would I feel if my spouse or partner was being treated this way?

Keep in mind that sometimes a person is unaware that their behaviour is offensive until it has been pointed out – and that perceptions will vary. Whether you choose to address issues on your own or need assistance, **we will support you.**

To ensure your concerns or reports are kept as confidential as possible (refer to the following section on “Confidentiality”), discuss details or incidents with your immediate supervisor, another supervisor with whom you feel comfortable, the superintendent, the foreperson, the general manager, the union representative or Human Resources. It’s also important that you report the incident as soon as possible after experiencing or witnessing it, so that it can be addressed promptly and investigated if necessary.

Any hazing, harassment, bullying and/or discrimination complaint made by or with respect to a customer/client, contractor/sub-contractors, or supplier must be immediately and confidentially addressed with your supervisor, the foreperson, the superintendent, the general manager, the union representative or Human Resources.

(Company) Responsibilities

How We Address and Resolve Inappropriate and Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable Behaviour Investigation Procedures. Refer to **Appendix B** at the end of this document.

While we encourage respectful communication and conflict resolution, cases of unacceptable behaviour such as hazing, harassment, bullying, and discrimination should be reported. Depending on circumstances (e.g. the nature/seriousness/safety of the issue and the impact of the behaviour), the matter will be discussed and reviewed objectively and professionally by an assigned manager/leader with both parties and addressed accordingly.

If an acceptable outcome is not achieved in addressing unacceptable behaviour, an investigation may be conducted internally or externally by a legal professional, human resources specialist, or OHS Representative. In all cases, investigations will:

- Be undertaken promptly and will be as thorough as the incident dictates.
- Be fair and impartial providing all parties due process in evaluating concerns and allegations.
- Be focused on finding facts and evidence through interviews with the person who brings the issue forward, the person(s) alleged to have conducted disrespectful behaviour, and any witnesses.
- Provide, where appropriate, assistance to involved parties during the investigation process.

If an investigation is initiated, all involved employees are expected to cooperate with the investigator upon request, and to provide details of incidents they have experienced or witnessed. At the conclusion of the investigation, both the complainant and the respondent will be advised of the findings/outcome. If necessary, appropriate corrective action will be taken. All documentation and findings regarding the incident and investigation will be kept confidential and secured in compliance with the BC Privacy and Information Act.

Confidentiality - We know it can be difficult to come forward with a concern or complaint of disrespectful behaviour. While we protect the privacy of everyone involved, it can be difficult to address or resolve a situation if the complainant remains anonymous or if details of the situation are not provided. The person/people accused should be given a fair opportunity to respond and it may be necessary to involve witnesses in the process. We commit to ensuring confidentiality is maintained and information shared as necessary for the investigation, limiting access only to those directly involved.

Intentionally False Accusations & Retaliation - Allegations that a complaint has been made in bad faith, or that retaliation has occurred against a person who has brought forth a concern/complaint, or participated in an investigation, may be investigated using the same procedure as for other investigations. Anyone found to have retaliated or made deliberately false accusations will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.



Our Commitment to You

The owner/operators of
commit to not engage in inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. All employees, including supervisors, managers, and leaders at every level are held accountable to a code of conduct aligning with the Builders Code Acceptable Worksite. Failure to adhere will be addressed through the same process outlined in this section.

Annual review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, or as needed, and may be amended as required. All employees will be provided with updates accordingly.

Equitable Compensation Philosophy & Structure

Our compensation philosophy and structure is based on the following principles:

- We are committed to structuring our total compensation to be not only fair, reasonable, consistently applied and externally competitive in our industry market, but also internally balanced and equitable.
- Employees are compensated fairly for their contribution, effort, and skillset – with equal pay for equal work/performance.
- We ensure dedication to going the extra mile is appropriately recognized.

We determine starting wages and increases based on the following:

- Fair market value for each role, based on compensation research, which we conduct regularly.
- Ensuring fair and standard wages in line with skill level, tickets (e.g. journeyperson or apprentice).
- Following the wage standards set out by the and Collective Agreement (if applicable).
- Cost-of-living adjustments (COLA).
- Promotions and/or permanently taking on more responsibility within a given role, in line with our organizational structure.
- Individual performance and continuously striving for professional development.
- Our revenue and alignment with our business targets and goals.

Although wage increases may be implemented based on the factors listed above, this shouldn't be considered a guarantee. We expect our employees to do a great job and to be willing to grow in their duties and responsibilities. Additionally, we expect compliance with and contribution to the Builders Code Acceptable Worksite and take both into consideration when determining increases. With these expectations, we also commit to fair and consistent compensation processes for everyone.



Acknowledgement & Agreement

This policy statement applies to all employees, including permanent, temporary, casual, contract, and student workers as well as company management and leaders. It also applies to interpersonal and electronic communications, such as email and social media.

I acknowledge that as an employee of _____, I am responsible for my knowledge of the information and practices contained within the Builders Code Acceptable Worksite policy. If I have questions about the contents of this policy/program, I will ask my supervisor, manager, the superintendent, the foreperson, the general manager, or Human Resources for clarification. As an employee of _____, I understand that the contents of this policy/program as amended from time to time, form part of the terms and conditions of my employment and agree to respect and follow them.

Employee Name (Print)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX A (Template):

Builders Code Reporting Procedures and Complaint Form for Unacceptable Behaviour

The following procedures allow workers to report incidents/complaints of unacceptable behaviour (such as, but not limited to, hazing, harassment, bullying, and discrimination) to their employer.

Additional resources and an explanation of legal duties can be found at worksafebc.com/bullying.

1. How to report

Workers at _____ can report incidents or complaints of unacceptable behaviour verbally or in writing. When submitting a written complaint, please use the **Builders Code Complaint Form for Unacceptable Behaviour** (see below). When reporting verbally, the reporting contact, along with the complainant, will fill out the complaint form.

2. When to report

Incidents or complaints should be reported as soon as possible after being experienced or witnessed. This allows the matter to be investigated and addressed promptly.

3. Reporting contact

Report any incidents or complaints to (Company contact _____).

Alternate reporting contact

Should the reporting contact named in Step 3 not be available, or if they are the person engaging in unacceptable behaviour, report the incident or complaint to (secondary company contact _____), or a supervisor with whom you feel comfortable, the superintendent, the foreperson, the general manager, the union representative or Human Resources.

4. What to include in a report

Provide as much information as possible in the report, such as the names of people involved, witnesses, where the event(s) occurred, when they occurred, and any other factors that may have contributed. Describe the behaviour and/or words that led to the complaint. Focus on actions and/or words rather than on intention, speculation, or opinion. Attach any supporting documents such as emails, handwritten notes, screen captures or photographs. Physical evidence, such as vandalized personal belongings, can also be submitted.

5. Annual review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, or as needed, and may be amended as required. All employees will be provided with updates accordingly.

APPENDIX A (Template):

Builders Code Complaint Form for Unacceptable Behaviour

Employers can provide workers with this form to report their complaint in writing or in person, and submit to the employer, immediate supervisor, superintendent, foreperson, general manager, union representative, or Human Resources. Employers might also use other reporting procedures. Additional resources are available at worksafebc.com/bullying.

Name and Contact Information of Complainant

Name of Individual(s) being reported for alleged unacceptable behaviour

Personal statement

Please describe in as much detail as possible the incident of unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, hazing, harassment, and/or discrimination, including:

- The names of the parties involved.
- Any witnesses to the incident(s).
- The location, date, and time of the incident(s).
- Details about the incident(s) (behaviour and/or words used).
- Any additional details that would help with an investigation.

Attach any supporting documents, such as emails, handwritten notes, screen captures or photographs. Physical evidence, such as vandalized personal belongings, can also be submitted.

Signature

Date

Appendix B (Template):

Builders Code Investigation Procedures for Complaints of Unacceptable Behaviour

The following procedures serve as a sample for dealing with incidents and complaints of unacceptable behaviour. Investigation procedures can vary from one workplace to another. Employers are not required to use this template if they have reasonable procedures in place which meet legal requirements. Additional resources and an explanation of legal duties can be found at worksafebc.com/bullying.

1. How and when investigations will be conducted

Most investigations at _____ will be conducted internally. In complex or sensitive situations, an external investigator might be required.

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 with equal treatment in evaluating the allegations.
- Maintain confidentiality and be sensitive to the interests of all parties involved.
- Focus on facts and evidence, including interviews with the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses.
- Consider and, where appropriate, accommodate any requests for assistance from the complainant or respondent during the investigation process.

2. What will be included

Investigations will include interviews with the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses. If the alleged target and the alleged offender agree on what happened, then _____ 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, screen captures, photographs, or physical evidence.

3. Roles and responsibilities

_____ is responsible for ensuring workplace investigation procedures are followed.

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

Workers are expected to refrain from communicating about the incident outside of the investigation.

_____ will conduct investigations and provide a written report with conclusions to _____.

If external investigators are required, they will conduct investigations and provide a written report with conclusions to _____.

4. Follow-up

The complainant and the respondent will be advised of the result of the investigation by _____.

Following an investigation, _____ will review and make any necessary revisions to workplace procedures to prevent future incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Appropriate corrective actions will be taken within a reasonable time frame.

In some circumstances, workers may be referred to the Employee Assistance Program or be encouraged to seek professional/medical advice.

5. Record-keeping requirements

_____ expects that workers will keep written accounts of incidents to submit with any complaints.

_____ will confidentially and securely keep a written record of investigations, including findings for as long as deemed required.

6. Annual review

These procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis, and as needed. All workers will be provided with a copy when hired, and copies will be available at _____.

7. Intentionally False Accusations and Retaliation

Allegations that a complaint has been made in bad faith, or that retaliation has occurred against a person who has brought forward a concern/complaint or participated in an investigation, may be investigated using the same procedure as for other investigations. Anyone found to have retaliated or made deliberately false accusations will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.