

15 Responsible Conduct

Responsible Conduct

Responsible conduct by local elected officials is essential to providing good governance, and is characterized by elected officials conducting themselves according to principles such as integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration.

Good Governance

Good governance includes:

- Providing for the stewardship of a community's public assets
- Providing services, laws and other matters for community benefit
- Acting in a way that is accountable, transparent, ethical, respectful of the rules of law, collaborative, effective and efficient

Good governance by municipal councils and regional district boards is based on a premise of productive conflict - an open exchange of conflicting or differing ideas in which parties feel equally heard, respected and unafraid to voice dissenting opinions as they work toward a mutually comfortable solution.

Resources on Responsible Conduct

The Working Group on Responsible Conduct (WGRC) is a joint initiative of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and the Local Government Management Association (LGMA). The WGRC's objective is to strengthen BC's responsible conduct framework by providing resources that support local governments.

Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct

<https://alpha.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/A4738EEBD66248838405642F26CE0B49>

A resource to guide the conduct of both individual elected officials and the collective council or board. The key principles included in this resource are integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration.

Forging the Path to Responsible Conduct

<https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2021-08/Forging%20the%20Path%20to%20Responsible%20Conduct.pdf>

A guide that presents practical ways for local governments to prevent conduct issues and deal with them if they do arise and includes a chapter on the general characteristics of conduct enforcement processes, and what to consider in their development.

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a written document that sets shared expectations for conduct or behaviour. Municipal councils and regional district boards are required to consider adopting or updating a code of conduct within six months following a general local election. [*Community Charter (CC)* s. 113.1]

Model Code of Conduct: Getting Started on a Code of Conduct for Your Council/Board

https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2022-10/Policy_Model_COC_Aug2022_UPDATED.pdf

A template to help councils or boards get started on developing their own code of conduct. Also useful for councils or boards who wish to review or refresh an existing code of conduct.

Companion Guide: Getting Started on a Code of Conduct for Your Council/Board

https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2022-10/Policy_Companion_Guide_Aug2022_UPDATED.pdf

A resource for facilitating a council or board's conversations as they go through the process of developing their own code of conduct.

Legislation

The *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act* set out the purposes of municipalities and regional districts, the roles and responsibilities of elected officials and specific obligations of the local government itself. Other legislation such as the *Workers Compensation Act* and the BC Human Rights Code require local governments to meet their obligations as employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and to address and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

Updated November 2022