
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Effective Date: January 31, 2025

Approved By: MVRD Board

Policy No. GV-041

PURPOSE

The *Code of Conduct for Elected Officials* establishes guidelines for the conduct of Board and Committee members and assists in providing for the good governance of the Metro Vancouver Regional District.

INTRODUCTION

As elected representatives (“members”), we recognize that responsible conduct is essential to providing good governance for the Metro Vancouver Regional District. We further recognize that responsible conduct is based on the foundational principles of integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration.

In order to fulfill our obligations and discharge our duties, we are required to conduct ourselves to the highest ethical standards by being an active participant in ensuring that these foundational principles, and the standards of conduct set out below, are followed in all of our dealings with every person, including those with other members, staff, and the public.

HOW TO APPLY AND INTERPRET THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

This *Code of Conduct* applies to the members of the Metro Vancouver Regional District, including its boards, committees, and advisory bodies. It is each member’s individual responsibility to uphold both the letter and the spirit of this Code of Conduct in their dealings with other members, staff, and the public.

Elected officials must conduct themselves in accordance with the law. This *Code of Conduct* is intended to be developed, interpreted, and applied by members in a manner that is consistent with all applicable Federal and Provincial Laws, as well as the bylaws and policies of the Regional District, the common law, and any other legal obligations which apply to members individually or as a collective board.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

The four foundation principles of responsible conduct are integrity, respect, accountability, and leadership and collaboration.

1. **Integrity** – means being honest and demonstrating strong ethical principles. Conduct under this principle upholds the public interest, and is truthful and honourable.

BOARD POLICY

2. **Respect** – means having due regard for others’ perspectives, wishes, and rights; it also means displaying deference to the offices of local government, and the role of local government in community decision making. Conduct under this principle is demonstrated when a member fosters an environment of trust by demonstrating due regard for the perspectives, wishes, and rights of others and an understanding of the role of the local government.
3. **Accountability** – means an obligation and willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions. Conduct under this principle is demonstrated when board members, individually and collectively, accept responsibility for their actions and decisions.
4. **Leadership and Collaboration** – means an ability to lead, listen to, and positively influence others; it also means coming together to create or meet a common goal through collective efforts. Conduct under this principle is demonstrated when a board member encourages individuals to work together in pursuit of collective objectives by leading, listening to, and positively influencing others.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The following section provides general standards of conduct that reflect the foundational principles identified above.

Integrity

Integrity is demonstrated by the following conduct:

- Members will be truthful, honest, and open in all dealings, including those with other members, staff, and the public.
- Members will ensure that their actions are consistent with the shared principles and values collectively agreed to by the Board.
- Members will follow through on their commitments, correct errors in a timely and transparent manner, and engage in positive communication with the community.
- Members will direct their minds to the merits of the decisions before them, ensuring that they act on the basis of relevant information and principles and in consideration of the consequences of those decisions.
- Members will behave in a manner that promotes public confidence in all of their dealings.

Respect

Respect is demonstrated through the following conduct:

- Members will treat every person with dignity, understanding, and respect.
- Members will show consideration for every person’s values, beliefs, experiences, and contributions to discussions.
- Members will demonstrate awareness of their own conduct, and consider how their words or actions may be, or may be perceived as, offensive or demeaning.

BOARD POLICY

- Members will not engage in behaviour that is indecent, insulting, or abusive. This behaviour includes verbal slurs such as racist remarks, unwanted physical contact, or other aggressive actions that are harmful or threatening.

Accountability

Accountability is demonstrated through the following conduct:

- Members will be responsible for the decisions that they make and be accountable for their own actions and the actions of the collective council or board.
- Members will listen to and consider the opinions and needs of the community in all decision-making, and allow for appropriate opportunities for discourse and feedback.
- Members will carry out their duties in an open and transparent manner so that the public can understand the process and rationale used to reach decisions and the reasons for taking certain actions.

Leadership and Collaboration

Leadership and collaboration is demonstrated through the following conduct:

- Members will behave in a manner that builds public trust and confidence in the local government, including considering the different interests of the people who make up the community.
- Members will consider the issues before them and make decisions as a collective body. As such, members will actively participate in debate about the merits of a decision, but once a decision has been made, all members will recognize the democratic majority, ideally acknowledging its rationale, when articulating their opinions on a decision.
- Members will recognize that debate is an essential part of the democratic process and encourage constructive discourse while empowering other members and staff to provide their perspectives on relevant issues.
- As leaders of their communities, members will calmly face challenges, and provide considered direction on issues they face as part of their roles and responsibilities while empowering their colleagues and staff to do the same.
- Members will recognize, respect and value the distinct roles and responsibilities others play in providing good governance and commit to fostering a positive working relationship with and among other members, staff, and the public.
- Members will recognize the importance of the role of the Chair of meetings, and treat that person with respect at all times.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

The *Code of Conduct for Elected Officials* expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for members. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to ensure that these ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of the governance of the Regional District.

BOARD POLICY

The *Code of Conduct for Elected Officials* is intended to be self-enforcing. Members should view the *Code* as a set of guidelines that express collectively the standards of conduct expected of them. The *Code* is most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with the *Code* and embrace its provisions.