



POLICY NAME:	Employee Code of Conduct
Effective Date:	July 1, 2025
Policies Rescinded:	None
Document Owner:	Chief Administrative Officer
Required Review Date:	July 1, 2027
References:	None

PURPOSE

To ensure orderly operation, provide the best possible work environment, and encourage the provision of high-quality service to County residents

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to assist Woodlands County employees in maintaining standards of behaviour related to their employment. These standards of behaviour must meet Woodland County's specifications, while respecting the rights of individual employees.

Woodlands County expects all employees to conduct themselves in a manner that protects the interests and safety of all employees, County residents, and reputation of Woodlands County. All employees are expected to further the objectives of the County and to abide by the policies, rules, and regulations established and approved by the County. All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and fulfill their duties with courtesy, honesty, respect, integrity, diligence, and competency. This includes the requirement of employees to apply themselves fully to the duties of their position during work hours and to respect confidentiality. Employees must refrain from outside activities which bring Woodlands County directly into disrepute or compromise the reputation of the County.

DEFINITIONS

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO): The person, appointed by Council, as the administrative head of the Municipality

County: Means The municipality named Woodlands County

Conflict of Interest: When the interests of an employee compete or appear to compete with the interests of the County.

Employee: Any person employed by the County on a permanent, non-permanent, full time or part-time basis; including all management and staff engaged through an employment contract.



Immediate Family: A spouse (includes common-law), son, daughter, parent, sibling, grandparent or grandchild of the employee or their spouse; or a person under the legal guardianship of the employee or their spouse.

Information: Data or content recorded or stored in any way, including facts, events, ideas, processes, or concepts, that are specific and organized for a purpose, and to increase understanding within a certain context and timeframe. Includes the summation of all documents, records and data under the control of the County.

Secondary employment: includes paid or volunteer work an employee undertakes for another employer or work they may undertake as a self-employed person, in addition to their employment with Woodlands County.

Workplace: A 'work site' as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act: a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engaged in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in an occupation.

RESPONSIBILITY

Employees

- a) Ensure they are aware of and act in accordance with this Code of Conduct.
- b) Act in a respectful manner in the performance of their duties and interactions with co-workers, managers, clients and the public.
- c) Participate in any reasonable measure(s) the County takes to address conduct issues
- d) Report any conduct matter of which they become aware
- e) Be aware that their off-duty conduct may impact their employment relationship.
- f) Participate, in good faith, in any training provided by the County related to this policy.
- g) Participate, in good faith, in any investigation processes related to alleged breaches of this policy.

Supervisor/Manager

- a) Advise employees of their expectations for conduct and performance.
- b) Model conduct that is consistent with this policy.
- c) Support a culture of ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability.
- d) Manage employees effectively by providing ongoing feedback on conduct-related matters.
- e) Maintain appropriate and timely documentation on employee performance-related matters.
- f) Take prompt and appropriate action when made aware of concerns related to employee conduct.
- g) Ensure employees have access to appropriate training and support resources related to the Code of Conduct.
- h) Report any violations of the Code of Conduct to their Director, CAO, or to Human Resources.

Human Resources

- a) Ensure appropriate training is provided on matters related to the Code of Conduct.
- b) Monitor conduct-related trends to inform policy, practice, and training requirements.
- c) Provide advice and assistance on the interpretation and application of this policy.
- d) Receive any complaints or reports regarding alleged violations of this policy.
- e) Approve any deviations from the investigation procedures associated with this policy.
- f) Lead the investigation of any alleged breaches of this policy.
- g) Maintain and support confidentiality during any complaint, investigation, or disciplinary process.



GUIDELINES

1. Respect for Others

- 1.1. No employee shall behave in a manner which brings discredit to Woodlands County whether while conducting County business or otherwise.
- 1.2. County employees shall, at all times, demonstrate respect for others. "Others" may mean fellow employees, members of the public, vendors, or Councillors.
- 1.3. Treating all people with respect, dignity, and fairness is a fundamental expectation for all County employees and contributes to a safe and healthy work environment.
- 1.4. County employees will be open, tactful, and respectful in dealings with others, including those who hold different opinions, and will display good interpersonal skills
- 1.5. County employees shall comply with the County's Respectful Workplaces Policy

2. Conflict of Interest

- 2.1. A conflict of interest is defined as a conflict between an employee's personal or business interests and the employee's responsibility as an employee of Woodlands County. A conflict of interest may exist whether or not a monetary or other type of benefit or advantage has been received by the employee.
 - 2.1.1. County employees are required to disclose any conflict of interest to the CAO.
 - 2.1.2. If, in the view of Woodlands County, a potential conflict of interest may occur, Woodlands County reserves the right to remove the employee from dealing with specific matters related to the potential conflict.

3. Acceptance of Gifts

- 3.1. No County employee shall solicit or accept a reward, gift, or benefit of any kind, personally or through a family member or friend, which is connected directly or indirectly with the performance or duties of their position.
- 3.2. Employees are not precluded from accepting:
 - 3.2.1. Rewards, gifts, or benefits not connected with the performance of their employment position.
 - 3.2.2. Political contributions that are accepted in accordance with applicable law.
 - 3.2.3. Reasonable quantities of food and beverages at banquets, receptions, ceremonies, meetings, conferences, or similar events, generally consumable in one sitting.
 - 3.2.4. Services provided without compensation by persons volunteering their time.
 - 3.2.5. Food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment provided by other levels of governments or by another local government, board, or commission.
 - 3.2.6. A reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.
 - 3.2.7. Token gifts, such as souvenirs, mementos, and commemorative gifts, that are given in recognition of service or for attending an event.
 - 3.2.8. Gifts received as an incident of protocol or social obligation, which normally and reasonably accompany the responsibility of office.



3.3. Employees shall not accept invitations from contractors, or potential contractors, to the municipality to attend special events (concerts, sporting events, golf games, etc.) that may be viewed as creating an unreasonable level of access or indebtedness.

4. *Outside Interests and Secondary Employment*

4.1. County employees may be employed or operate a business outside of normal working hours, providing that the outside employment or business is not in direct conflict with Woodlands County and does not interfere with the duties of the employee.

4.2. Employees may not engage in any business or activity (whether for financial gain or otherwise) that creates an actual, possible or perceived conflict of interest, including a situation where the employee's judgment would be affected due to a personal interest.

4.3. Employees shall utilize County vehicles, equipment, and buildings and supplies for County business only, and not for any unreasonable private or personal use or in the interest of a separate employer or business venture.

4.3.1. Section 4.3 of this policy does not preclude reasonable use of assigned or approved County assets (e.g. vehicles, mobile devices, laptops) in accordance with County policies.

4.4. Outside employment or business interests must not overlap with the employee's duties to Woodlands County.

4.5. Employees with a monetary interest in any business that may deal with Woodlands County must register this interest with the CAO.

4.6. If the County wishes to utilize the business in which the employee(s) has monetary interest, CAO approval is required, prior to proceeding with the purchase.

4.7. Employees may not propose, negotiate nor award a contract on behalf of Woodlands County where the employee or his or her Immediate Family Member stands to benefit from the awarding of such contract.

4.8. Employees may not engage in fundraising or solicitation in the workplace without the prior approval of the CAO.

5. *Confidentiality*

5.1. Employees, in the course of their work, may have access to information regarding Woodlands County's operations, Council members, employees, customers, contractors and other information which may be considered confidential

5.2. An employee may not benefit, personally or financially, from confidential information of which they become aware as a result of their duties of employment.

5.3. County employees shall hold in strict confidence all information concerning matters deemed confidential. Employees shall neither directly nor indirectly release, make public, or in any way divulge (or cause to be divulged) any information which is deemed to be confidential, unless expressly authorized by Council, the CAO, or required by law to do so.

5.4. Confidential information includes (but is not necessarily limited to):

5.4.1. Any aspect of closed-session Council deliberations.

5.4.2. Information identified as confidential within the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



5.4.3. Information subject to solicitor-client privilege.

5.5. The requirement of confidentiality applies during the course of employment and survives the termination, resignation, or retirement of any employee.

6. Political Activity

6.1. An employee's political activity shall not be restricted unless the following applies:

6.1.1. The employee's performance of the official duties of their position are affected by political activity, resulting in a reduction of public confidence in the employee.

6.1.2. The political activity reduces the time available to the employee to devote to his or her municipal duties.

6.1.3. Conflicts of interest arise between the County and another elected body serviced by the employee (i.e. neighboring municipality).

6.1.4. The employee is running for the Council of Woodlands County.

6.2. If, in the view of Woodlands County, a potential conflict of interest may occur due to the political activities of an employee, Woodlands County reserves the right to remove the employee from dealing with specific matters where this conflict may occur.

6.3. County employees may not engage in political fundraising during work hours, within County facilities, or using County assets (including email).

6.4. A County employee may neither actively endorse, nor publicly criticize, a current County Councillor, or a candidate for Woodlands County Council.

6.5. A County employee may neither actively endorse, nor publicly criticize, any elected official or candidate for any government office (Municipal, Provincial, or Federal), while representing themselves as an employee of Woodlands County.

7. Public Statements

7.1. Employees are prohibited from making public statements on behalf of Woodlands County, or from holding themselves out as being an agent or representative of Woodlands County, unless authorized to do so as part of his or her normal job-related duties, or as authorized by the CAO in advance.

7.2. Employees are obligated to put into practice and publicly support all decisions of County Council, Management, and Administration. Public Statements made by employees must not criticize or interfere with Council and/or Council decisions.

7.3. County employees may not use personal social media to:

7.3.1. Conduct County business.

7.3.2. Disclose confidential information.

7.3.3. Represent themselves as a spokesperson for the County.

7.3.4. Criticize County Council, Councillors, staff, residents, or other stakeholders.

7.3.5. Violate the County's Respect Workplaces policies regarding bullying, harassing, or discriminatory conduct.

7.3.6. Act in a manner that brings discredit to the County.



8. Compliance with Law

- 8.1. During the course of employment duties, all County employees must comply with all municipal, provincial and federal laws and bylaws.
- 8.2. If charged with an indictable or hybrid criminal offence, an employee must immediately advise the CAO.
- 8.3. Where possession of a valid drivers license is identified as a condition of employment, an employee must immediately report to their manager or supervisor any change to their driving record which may impact their ability to legally operate a motor vehicle.
- 8.4. The County has the right to report to law enforcement unlawful conduct committed while in the course of employment or occurring on County property.

9. Breach of the Code of Conduct

- 9.1. Violation of any aspect of the employee Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with the County’s Performance Management and Progressive Discipline Policy.

Original Signed

CAO Signature

Version Control

This section tracks all revisions to the policy. Administrative changes made under CAO authority must not alter the original intent of the policy and are logged accordingly. Council-approved revisions are noted with corresponding resolution numbers.

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Approved by</i>	<i>Type of Change</i>	<i>Summary of Change</i>	<i>Reference</i>
1.0	July 1, 2025	CAO	Original Policy	New	

END OF DOCUMENT