

Metro Cinema Society

Policy – A Respectful Workplace

Presented and approved at the March 2017 meeting of the board of directors.

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1. Creating positive working relationships

Statement of Purpose

Metro Cinema is committed to a positive workplace environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity. Metro Cinema aims to accomplish this goal by creating awareness about working relationships and providing skills training on healthy conflict resolution.

Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere in which equal opportunities are promoted and personal and professional excellence is fostered. Metro Cinema is committed to proactively creating a workplace where individual differences are welcomed and valued.

The purpose of the policy is to foster positive working relationships and manage conflict in the workplace. Workplace conflict has the potential to escalate into discriminatory behaviours and harassment and affect workplace and individual well-being.

Discrimination and harassment are unlawful and will not be tolerated. Metro Cinema pledges its support to all volunteers and staff members experiencing workplace conflict or workplace harassment and will treat the matter in a confidential manner.

2. Responsibility and Authority

Everyone in our workplace is responsible for creating and maintaining healthy working relationships. The ultimate responsibility and authority for applying this policy rests with the Executive Director.

3. Application

This policy applies to all board members, committee members, staff, contractors and volunteers of Metro Cinema.

Metro Cinema recognizes that its staff and volunteers may be subjected to inappropriate behaviours by clients or professional associates. Under these circumstances Metro Cinema acknowledges its responsibility to do all in its power to support and assist the person or persons affected.

Metro Cinema encourages reporting of all incidents of discrimination and harassment, regardless of who the offender may be.

4. Creating a Respectful Workplace

a. Metro Cinema

Metro Cinema is demonstrating its commitment to create a positive workplace by:

- Making a strong publicized commitment to the maintenance of a positive work environment
- Providing workplace skills training in conflict resolution
- Providing ongoing education, skills training, and monitoring of the policy
- Having a policy that aims to prevent workplace conflict and effectively resolve conflicts that do arise
- Having a policy which describes unacceptable behaviour and defines workplace harassment
- Providing sufficient resources and training to those responsible for implementing the policy
- Implementing personnel policies that acknowledge and value the diverse personal and professional lives of our members such as: parental leave, alternate work schedules, compassionate leave,

b. All Staff and Volunteers Members

All volunteers and staff of Metro Cinema are expected to contribute to a positive workplace environment by:

- Understanding the spirit and intent of the policy.
- Striving towards trust, respect, and understanding between colleagues.
- Attending workplace skills training in conflict resolution and implementing those skills
- Attempting to deal with workplace issues quickly and as 'close to the source' as possible.
- Thinking about relationships with co-workers and the workplace environment. If you find areas that could be improved take actions to improve them.
- Maintaining confidentiality if a colleague asks for advice or divulges information to you regarding a workplace conflict.
- Refusing to participate in workplace harassment and challenging it when you experience or witness it.
- Checking your own actions: When we offend or hurt a co-worker it is generally accidental. Become aware of the impact of your conduct by listening to what your co-workers say and learning to read discomfort in someone's body language. Ask yourself, "Is there anything in my behaviour that could offend or humiliate someone?" or "Would I speak this way about this person if they were here?"
- If you offend a co-worker, apologize, think about why it happened, and do not repeat the behaviour.

c. Senior Managers and Board of Directors

Metro Cinema's directors and senior manager are expected to implement and uphold this policy by:

- Modeling healthy professional relationships between colleagues, including conflict resolution.
- Attending workplace skills training in conflict resolution and implementing those skills
- Providing guidance to volunteers and staff members who ask for assistance with the policy
- Maintaining strict confidentiality when a volunteer or staff member asks for assistance with the policy
- Challenging inappropriate comments and actions
- Supporting all parties involved in a complaint without judgment and ensuring there is no retaliation against anyone involved in a complaint.

5. Vision For Our Workplace

We, the members of Metro Cinema, are dedicated to creating a positive work environment. We are committed to and accountable for:

- Living up to our commitments
- Sharing information on developments at the earliest opportunity.
- Developing effective collaborative problem solving processes at all levels.
- Consulting with the people most affected before making decisions or taking actions on significant matters.
- Avoid gossip and rumors
- Understand cultural diversity.
- Be aware of motivations and feelings, and express them in a professional manner.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Treat others with respect, regardless of their position within the organization.
- Observe personal boundaries of space, quiet and interruption.

Metro Cinema is a place where:

- People are productive
- People like coming to work and enjoy the work environment
- Clients report high marks for client service
- Problems and issues are discussed openly between employees and managers
- People are not afraid to express their opinions
- We are tough on issues, soft on people
- If someone makes a mistake they are coached to help them understand and improve
- People are not afraid of disagreements. They feel more productive when issues are resolved and processes improved
- Diversity is valued

6. Metro Cinema Commitment

Metro Cinema acknowledges that workplace conflicts cannot always be prevented.

Metro Cinema encourages members to resolve issues or conflicts as soon as possible in a fair and respectful manner without having to resort to the formal resolution process. Training in conflict resolution will be provided to members to equip them with the skills to resolve conflicts confidently and professionally. Metro Cinema will also provide several options that volunteers and staff can access to quickly, confidentially and with support, resolve general workplace conflicts or workplace harassment.

Metro Cinema will not tolerate workplace harassment and will take timely action whenever it has knowledge of behaviour that may constitute harassment under this policy.

7. Definitions

a. General workplace conflicts

General workplace conflict refers to conflict of a broad nature that affects a person's ability to work. It is not conflict that falls into the categories of workplace harassment. Conflict in the workplace occurs for a variety of reasons, which can include:

- Differences in working styles, communication styles etc.,
- Differences regarding personal space, work spaces, etc.,
- Gossiping and rumors

A persistent conflict can often lead to an unhealthy and unproductive work environment for the individuals involved, and often those around them. Often these conflicts can be avoided by early and open communication between the parties involved. In cases where informal efforts to resolve a conflict do not succeed parties may use Metro Cinema's conflict resolution processes.

b. Workplace harassment

The following discussion defines the types of conduct that are considered inappropriate in the workplace. If a volunteer or staff member encounters or observes inappropriate conduct they may initiate one of the processes in the conflict resolution flowchart.

i. Workplace Harassment Definitions

Workplace harassment generally consists of comments or actions that a reasonable person would find objectionable or unwelcome and which serve no work-related purpose. It may occur during a single incident or over a series of incidents.

Some actions may not be considered harassment unless repeated. For example, a joke may not be considered harassment if it does not have a major impact on the recipient or person who overhears the joke. Additionally workplace harassment does not include actions taken in good faith while exercising managerial/supervisory roles and responsibilities (such as an appropriately conducted performance review).

In this policy the following types of conduct or comments, whether written, verbal, or visual (including electronic communication) are considered workplace harassment and are unacceptable:

- a. Discrimination
- b. Sexual Harassment
- c. Personal Harassment
- d. Retaliation

(a) Discrimination

Discrimination is any unwelcome practice, comment, or behaviour, whether intentional or not, based on any one or more of the following protected grounds in the Alberta Human Rights Act: age, ancestry, place of origin, colour, family status, marital status, mental disability, physical disability, source of income, race, religious belief, gender, or sexual orientation.

- when such conduct might reasonably be expected to cause insecurity, discomfort, offence or humiliation to another person or group;

- when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for any employment decision including, but not limited to, matters or promotion, raise in salary, job security or benefits affecting the employee and evaluation; or
- when such conduct has the purpose or the effect of interfering with a person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment

Examples of Discrimination:

- derogatory or demeaning comments, jokes, slurs, posters, cartoons etc.
- innuendo, taunting or ostracizing an employee on the basis of the protected grounds
- an employment decision based on a protected ground that adversely affects an employee

Exception: Under the law an action is not considered discriminatory if it is reasonable and justifiable under the circumstances as a bona fide occupational requirement. For example, a person with unmanaged epilepsy may pose a serious risk to themselves and others if the job is operating machinery.

(b) Sexual Harassment

For the purposes of this policy "sexual harassment" is defined as one or a series of incidents involving unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature:

- when such conduct might reasonably be expected to cause embarrassment, insecurity, discomfort, offence or humiliation to another person or group;
- when submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of employment;
- when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for any employment decision (including, but not limited to, matters of promotion, raise in salary, job security or benefits affecting the employee); or
- when such conduct has the purpose or the effect of interfering with a person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment most commonly occurs in the form of behaviour by men towards women; however, sexual harassment can also occur between men, between women, or as behaviour by women towards men.

Examples of Sexual Harassment:

- sexist jokes causing embarrassment or offence, told or carried out after the joker has been advised that they are embarrassing or offensive, or that are by their nature clearly embarrassing or offensive;
- leering, staring, gesturing of a sexual nature
- the display of pictures, cartoons, sayings of a sexual nature that present the subject stereotypically or in a degrading manner;
- sexually degrading words used to describe a person;
- drawing attention to a person's gender and having the effect of undermining the person's role in a professional and business environment;
- derogatory or degrading remarks directed towards members of one gender or one sexual orientation;
- sexually suggestive or obscene comments or gestures;

- unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions, including repeated unwelcome invitations to socialize;
- unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life;
- persistent unwanted contact or attention after the end of a consensual relationship;
- requests for sexual favours;
- unwanted touching;
- verbal abuse or threats; and
- sexual assault.

(c) Personal Harassment

Personal harassment in the workplace is a breach of the implied term of the employment relationship that an employer will provide its employees with an environment that is civil, decent and respectful.

Personal harassment is conduct:

- that a reasonable person would consider unwelcome
- results in the recipient feeling intimidated, humiliated or embarrassed
- negatively affects work performance, and
- creates a hostile work environment

Examples of Personal Harassment

- actions that are intimidating, threatening or coercive
- swearing, yelling, screaming
- patronizing and insulting remarks, ex: regarding an employee's intelligence
- berating an individual publicly
- deliberate conduct to humiliate, demeanor degrade someone
- bullying behavior such as name calling, spreading of malicious rumors, causing social isolation
- continuous threats of unwarranted discipline or loss of job
- intimidating gestures such as slamming doors, throwing objects
- excessive and unreasonable monitoring of employment responsibilities
- Cutting the employee out of a communication loop or withholding information they require to do their job.

(d) Retaliation

Retaliation is any action taken against an individual in retaliation for:

- having invoked this policy whether on behalf of oneself or another individual;
- having participated or cooperated in any investigation under this policy; or
- for having been associated with a person who has invoked this policy or participated in these procedures.

2. Resolving Workplace Conflicts and Harassment

- This part of the policy provides different options for volunteers and staff members to resolve general workplace conflicts or workplace harassment. Staff members and volunteers are encouraged to resolve conflicts in a professional manner using the skills developed in conflict resolution training along with support when needed in the forms of coaching, counseling and facilitation.

- These mechanisms when used early, informally and confidentially can often resolve the issues and prevent the situation from escalating. In situations where these informal methods have been unsuccessful, or a party feels that informal methods are inappropriate, the formal resolution process may be used.

1. Preliminary Considerations

a. Confidentiality

- Metro Cinema understands the difficulty of coming forward with a workplace conflict or workplace harassment issue and recognizes interest of all parties in protecting their privacy and reputations.
- To protect the interests of the parties confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. Information relating to the conflict will only be disclosed to the extent necessary to carry out resolution procedures, or to meet Metro's obligation to provide a harassment free workplace.
- Parties involved in the conflict resolution processes will not discuss the complaint with volunteers or staff members who are not directly involved in the process. Improper breaches of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

b. Advisors

- The Board of Directors will appoint at least two members of the society to serve as advisors under this policy. In carrying out their duties under the policy, advisors will be directly responsible to the Board of Directors.
- Metro Cinema will arrange for the advisors to receive appropriate initial and continuing training as well as other institutional support and assistance for carrying out their responsibilities under this policy.

2. Procedures for Conflict Resolution

a. What to do if you are experiencing a general workplace conflict

Metro Cinema encourages volunteers and staff members to resolve general workplace conflicts by using informal processes.

- Volunteers are encouraged to call upon the assistance of staff on duty or the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Staff may approach a superior, the Executive Director or one of the board's designated Advisors, according to their judgment.
- Committee and Board members are encouraged to speak with the committee's chair, or to a member of the Executive of the Board of Directors.
- If you feel that you are being harassed it is best to act right away. Remember that harassment is wrong and you should not feel guilty. Keep a record of the incident(s), dates, places, witnesses, how you responded, the impact on you and other relevant facts and circumstances.
- You are encouraged to let the other person know that their actions offend you and attempt to resolve the problem by using the skills you have developed in conflict resolution training, receiving support when needed. If you cannot resolve the problem or do not want to speak directly with the person consider the other options under the conflict resolution flowchart that follows.

b. What to do if you are accused of workplace harassment

If the Complainant approaches you directly, listen to their concerns. Remember that harassment may have occurred even if you did not intend it to. Be sensitive to the fact that we all have different backgrounds and life experiences. Try to resolve the problem using the skills you learned in conflict resolution training.

- Volunteers are encouraged to call upon the assistance of staff on duty or the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Staff may approach a superior, the Executive Director or one of the board's designated Advisors, according to their judgment.
- Committee and Board members are encouraged to speak with the committee's chair, or to a member of the Executive of the Board of Directors.

If the Complainant initiates a formal investigation procedure you will be notified of the complaint in writing, be interviewed by an external investigator, and be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations against you. You also have the right to seek legal counsel, at your expense, to respond to the allegations against you in a formal investigation.

3. Conflict Resolution Flowchart

The following flowchart shows the processes available to members who encounter workplace conflict issues. Early, informal, and confidential resolution of disputes is encouraged using the skills developed in conflict resolution training, using support when needed (Options A, B, C). It is recognized in some circumstances that there is a necessity for a formal review. A complainant has the right to withdraw from any further action in connection with the complaint at any stage (even though the organization may continue to deal with the complaint).

OPTIONS Informal Processes

A. Direct Management

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B. Coaching/Counseling and Assisted Intervention

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C. Mediation

↓ Making use of a certified and mutually agreed upon Mediator.

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Follow-up