Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Respectful Workplace Policy

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Policy Number	AE-2401-02
Policy Category	Employment
Approved By	Board of Trustees
Approval Date	June 15, 2026
Supersedes	AE-2401-01

PURPOSE

The Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District ("District") is committed to providing and maintaining a respectful workplace where all workers are treated with dignity and respect. This policy prevents and addresses workplace bullying and harassment, discrimination, and sexual harassment, and establishes a fair, timely, and impartial complaint resolution process.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all District workers, including unionized career members, paid-on-call members, excluded staff, casual employees, volunteers, supervisors, managers and Trustees. This policy applies to conduct occurring at District workplaces and facilities, incident scenes, training, meetings, conferences, District events, work-related travel, work-related social situations, and through written and electronic communications. Off-duty conduct may fall under this policy where it impacts workplace relationships.

DEFINITIONS

"Bullying and Harassment" includes inappropriate conduct or comment by a person toward a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated. A single serious incident may qualify if it has a lasting harmful effect. Bullying and harassment excludes reasonable management actions carried out in a respectful manner.

"Discrimination" means discrimination as defined by the BC Human Rights Code.

"Sexual Harassment" means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that affects the work environment or leads to adverse job-related consequences.4. Policy Statement

POLICY STATEMENT

The District will not tolerate bullying and harassment, discrimination, or sexual harassment. Where a complaint is substantiated, corrective action will be taken up to and including termination of employment or removal from volunteer service

Rights and Responsibilities

All workers must treat others respectfully, refrain from prohibited conduct, report incidents, and cooperate in investigations. Supervisors and managers must model respectful conduct, act promptly, prevent retaliation, and document concerns. The District will implement prevention measures, provide training, ensure complaints are addressed fairly, and conduct investigations impartially.

Reporting Options (Multiple Paths)

Workers may report concerns to their supervisor, Fire Chief, Corporate Administrator, or Board Chair (only where complaint involves the Fire Chief/Corporate Administrator or where other reporting options are compromised). If the supervisor is the respondent, report through another option. Anonymous reports will be reviewed but may limit investigation.

Resolution Process

Early / Informal Resolution: where appropriate and safe, concerns may be addressed through coaching, facilitated discussion, or voluntary mediation. Informal resolution is not required where conduct is severe, there is a power imbalance, or the worker requests formal handling. Formal Complaint: should include date(s), time(s), location(s), description, witnesses, and supporting documents. Complaints should be made as soon as possible, ideally within 14 days of the incident.

Investigation

Investigations will occur when a formal complaint is made or when the District becomes aware of serious concerns. Investigations may be conducted by trained internal personnel or external investigators where required. The District will acknowledge complaints within 10 business days and complete investigations within 60 calendar days where feasible. Parties will be advised of outcomes, subject to privacy limitations.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All parties must maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Records will be handled in accordance with FOIPPA and disclosed only as necessary to address the complaint, conduct a fair investigation, or comply with legal obligations.

Protection from Retaliation

Retaliation or reprisal against anyone who in good faith raises a concern, files a complaint, or participates in an investigation is prohibited and may result in discipline. Bad faith complaints may also result in discipline.

Support Measures

The District may implement interim measures such as modified reporting relationships, schedule adjustments, temporary reassignment, or no-contact directives. These measures are not disciplinary unless stated otherwise.

Training and Communication

The District will provide respectful workplace training during onboarding and refresher training at least every 2 years. Supervisors will receive enhanced training. Workers will sign an acknowledgement confirming they have read and understood this policy.

AUTHORITY

This policy aligns with WorkSafe BC OHS requirements, BC Human Rights Code, and FOIPPA.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

All workers must comply. The District will investigate complaints and take appropriate action. Retaliation is prohibited.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records will be managed in accordance with FOIPPA and kept confidential on a need-to-know basis.

REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

WorksafeBC Employer Duties Workplace Bullying & Harassment

BC Human Rights Code

BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

District Recruitment, Harassment Prevention, and Code of Conduct Policies

Appendix A - Respectful Workplace Complaint Process & Form Template

REVIEW AND REVISION

This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be amended by the Board of Trustees.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Change Description	Approved By
AE-2401-01	Jan. 18, 2016	Initial approval	Board of Trustees

Appendix A

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Respectful Workplace Complaint Process & Form Template

1. Complaint Process (Bullying & Harassment / Discrimination / Sexual Harassment)

This document supports Policy AE-2401-02 Respectful Workplace Policy.

1.1 Immediate Safety

- If there is immediate danger, call 911.
- If urgent operational safety concerns exist, notify the Officer in Charge / Fire Chief immediately.

1.2 Reporting Options

A worker may report a concern to any of the following: Immediate Supervisor, Fire Chief, Corporate Administrator, Board Chair (only where complaint involves the Fire Chief/Corporate Administrator or where other reporting options are compromised)

1.3 Informal Resolution (Where Appropriate)

Where safe and appropriate, the District may attempt informal resolution such as:

- Coaching / facilitated discussion
- Voluntary mediation
- Clarification of expectations / behaviour standards

Informal resolution is not required where the conduct is severe, involves a power imbalance, or the worker requests a formal complaint process.

1.4 Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing using the attached template, where possible. Complaints should be made as soon as practicable.

1.5 Acknowledgement

The District will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within 5 business days (where feasible).

1.6 Interim Measures

Where required, interim measures may be implemented (not disciplinary unless stated) including:

- schedule changes
- modified reporting relationships
- temporary reassignment
- no-contact directions

1.7 Investigation

An investigation may be conducted by a trained internal investigator or an external investigator (recommended where there is conflict of interest, seniority, seriousness, or sensitivity).

The investigator will:

- interview the Complainant, Respondent, and witnesses
- collect relevant documents and records
- assess evidence

1.8 Timelines

The District will make reasonable efforts to complete investigations within 60 calendar days. If delays occur, parties will be advised.

1.9 Findings & Outcomes

At the conclusion of the investigation:
- the parties will be advised whether the complaint was substantiated
- corrective actions will be implemented as appropriate
- privacy limitations may restrict disclosure of specific discipline

1.10 Records & Confidentiality

All documentation will be handled in accordance with FOIPPA and maintained in confidential storage. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

1.11 Protection from Retaliation

Retaliation or reprisal is prohibited. Any retaliation may result in discipline up to and including termination or removal from volunteer service.

2. Template: Respectful Workplace Complaint Form

Date Submitted: _____

Complainant Name: _____

Position / Role: _____

Work Location / Station: _____

Preferred Contact (phone/email): _____

Respondent Name(s): _____

Respondent Position / Role: _____

Type of Concern (check all that apply):
☐ Bullying & Harassment ☐ Discrimination ☐ Sexual Harassment ☐ Other

_____

Incident Date(s) and Time(s): _____

Incident Location(s): _____

Description of Incident(s): Provide a clear description of what occurred. Include exact words used if possible.

_____

Witnesses (names and contact info):

_____

Supporting Documents Attached: ☐ Emails ☐ Texts ☐ Photos ☐ Other

Steps Already Taken (if any): _____

Desired Resolution / Outcome: _____

Safety Concerns / Interim Measures Requested: _____

Signature (Complainant): _____

Date: _____

3. Template: Investigation Summary (Internal Use)

File Number: _____

Investigator: _____

Date Assigned: _____

Complainant: _____

Respondent: _____

Allegations Summary: _____

Policy / Code References: AE-2401-02, WorkSafe BC OHS & BC Human Rights Code (as applicable)

_____

Interim Measures Implemented: _____

Interviews Conducted: Complainant / Respondent / Witnesses (list names and dates)

_____

Documents Reviewed: _____

Conclusion: ☐ Substantiated ☐ Not Substantiated ☐ Inconclusive

_____

Corrective Actions / Recommendations: _____

Date Closed: _____

Investigator Signature: _____

Date: _____