

POLICY

Date: January 26, 2021 (amended June 14, 2024)

Re: Code of Conduct

The Ontario Water Works Association condemns the systemic racism and other forms of inequity that continue to exist in our society. As a Section of the American Water Works Association, the OWWA is committed to public health, safety, and welfare. These core principles extend beyond just drinking water and to the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve. We stand in solidarity with all those in our membership and around the world who experience racism and other forms of racialization and discrimination. We recognize that we need to do more and do better as an organization to identify, challenge, and change systems of inequity that perpetuate racism and bias as we advance our mission.

DEFINITIONS

Participants - OWWA members, volunteers, and staff, as well as attendees at OWWA events and activities.

Diversity - the similarities and differences of attributes, experiences and qualities that individuals possess in the form of, but not limited to, race, colour, ancestry, indigenous status, religious affiliations, and physical or mental ability. It also includes family status, pregnancy and breastfeeding, and sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, education level, job title/position, citizenship, socio-economic status, political beliefs/ideologies, and age.

Equity - the just, fair, respectful, and conscious decision that all participants deserve to be treated so that their unique individual needs and circumstances are considered when opportunities, supports and services are available; and to which all participants have the equal access to the same extent where current barriers arising from bias or systematic structures may exist.

Inclusion - all members of the OWWA community having both the reality and feeling of being an active part of and reflected in all levels in the organization.

Discrimination - an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly or wrongly for reasons such as their race, age or ability.

Purpose

OWWA is committed to diversity and inclusion by providing a safe environment without discrimination where everyone is free to express their ideas and equitably participate in any OWWA activity. The objective of the Code of Conduct is to guide members' interactions to be consistent with our shared values and in line with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

OWWA's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion extends to the multi-faceted roles each of us play as stewards of our water systems. We extend our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that we reflect the different regions in the province, the sizes and types of communities we represent and the specialized skill set, education and certifications, and areas of expertise reflected by each of us in the water industry.

Inclusive Behaviour Guidelines

OWWA recognizes that everything we do in connection with our involvement in OWWA will be, and should be, measured against the highest possible standards of ethical conduct. Our commitment to the highest standards helps us attract great people as members and active participants in OWWA programs, and, in-turn, the water industry. For this reason, members commit to fostering the following:

1. Encourage equity: We treat all with courtesy and respect, regardless of their diverse background and provide equal access to opportunities, supports and services.
2. Foster an inclusive environment: We create an inclusive space and encourage inclusive opportunities for everyone to connect and contribute.
3. Be respectful: We conduct ourselves with fairness, courtesy, and with good faith toward others. We do not misrepresent ourselves or others.
4. Communicate openly: We foster an environment where communication, is openly respectful of all participants, ensuring that critiques are focused on the ideas.
5. Respect individuals' identities: We use stated names and preferred pronouns.
6. Respect space and boundaries: We do not touch people, their mobility devices, or other assistive equipment without their consent. We respect members' personal space. We respect the privacy of individuals.
7. Be supportive and caring: We foster an environment where accomplishments are shared and celebrated; we are supportive of our peers.
8. Embrace the value of diversity & inclusion: We foster a safe and equitable environment that is free of discrimination, where participants want to join, feel like they belong, and their perspectives and contributions are valued.

Accountability and Reporting

This Code of Conduct is to be followed at all times by all participants. Discrimination as defined above and by the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act will not be tolerated.

Any individual who feels that they have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour and/or has witnessed unacceptable behaviour is encouraged to contact the OWWA Executive Director, Michele Grenier, at mgrenier@owwa.ca or 416-231-1555, or any Board of Directors member. All complaints will be treated seriously, in a confidential manner and in accordance with the OWWA Bylaws and Privacy Policy.