

# HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF LAKE LENORE NO. 399

Policy Number: 2024-002

Council Resolution Number:

Effective Date:

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 (the "Municipality") is committed to the prevention of harassment in the workplace and promote a harassment-free workplace. Every employee is entitled to employment free of harassment. The maintenance of such an environment is a responsibility shared by each council member, employee, and the Municipality.

Harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace or any work-related setting, including work-related conferences, travel and municipality-sponsored social events. The Municipality will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no individual is subjected to workplace harassment. The Municipality will investigate any incidents of harassment and take corrective action to address them.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all council members, employees, independent contractors, agents, and representatives of the Municipality when conducting business or performing duties on behalf of the Municipality.

While attending a Municipality workplace, members of the public, visitors and individuals conducting business with the Municipality, including but not limited to contractors, consultants, vendors or delivery persons, are expected to refrain from any form of harassment.

If the alleged harasser is a Council member, please refer to the Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 Code of Ethics Bylaw and Council Procedures Bylaw along with the duties and the definitions contained in this policy for the procedure for dealing with these matters.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

A. **Harassment** – refers to:

1. Discriminatory Harassment - Any inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture by an individual that is made on the basis of race, creed, religion, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin or any other ground prohibited by provincial human rights legislation, and constitutes a threat to the health and safety of a worker.
2. Sexual Harassment - A prohibited ground of discriminatory harassment which may include conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that is offensive, unsolicited or unwelcome. Sexual Harassment is, or may include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - A direct or implied threat of reprisal for refusing to comply with a sexually oriented request;
  - Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, propositions or taunting about an employee's body, attire, sex or sexual orientation;

- Displaying pornographic or sexually explicit pictures or materials;
  - Unwelcome physical contact;
  - Unwelcome invitations or requests, direct or indirect, to engage in behaviour of a sexual nature; or
  - Refusing to work with or have contact with individuals because of their sex, gender or sexual orientation.
3. Personal Harassment - An inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture by an individual that adversely affects a worker's psychological or physical well-being, and which the perpetrator knows or ought to reasonably know would cause the individual to be humiliated or intimidated. Personal harassment is sometimes referred to as "bullying".

Personal harassment may involve repeated conduct or single, serious incident that causes a lasting harmful effect on the employee. Examples of personal harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written abuse or threats;
- Insulting, derogatory or degrading comments, jokes or gestures;
- Personal ridicule or malicious gossip;
- Interference with another's work or work sabotage; or
- Refusing to work, acknowledge, or to cooperate with others.

Harassment does not include any reasonable actions taken by the Municipality, a manager or a supervisor relating to the performance, management and direction of an individual's work or the workplace. This includes, but is not limited to, day-to-day management or supervisory decisions, job assessment and evaluation, performance discussions, expectation for work productivity and quality, and disciplinary action.

Harassment can exist even where there is no intention to harass or offend another. Every individual must take care to ensure his or her conduct is not offensive to another.

- B. **Other Prohibited Behaviour** – The Municipality recognizes that certain conduct, while being inappropriate and/or disruptive, may fall short of the definition of "harassment" within the meaning of this policy and/or applicable legislation. The Municipality, in its discretion, may nonetheless determine that disruptive or inappropriate conduct falling short of harassment still warrants some form of corrective and/or disciplinary action. Measures can fall under the Council Procedures Bylaw to reference Progressive Discipline, or could apply to Rate Payers by using a warning and or fine under the General Nuisance Bylaw.

#### 4. WORKER RIGHTS

Every worker has the right to a harassment free work environment.

#### 5. MUNICIPALITY AND WORKER RESPONSIBILITY

The Municipality, council members, Administrator, and supervisors will take all complaints of harassment seriously. The Municipality is committed to implementing a harassment free environment and will make every reasonable practicable effort to ensure that no individual is subjected to harassment, whether it is from a Council member, supervisor, co-worker or non-employee such as a member of the public.

No individual shall participate in or encourage the harassment of another individual. All individuals must cooperate with harassment complaint investigations and keep all information confidential in accordance with this policy.

## 6. REPORTING & INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

### A. Informal Process

An individual who believes that he or she has been the subject of conduct that is in violation of this policy is encouraged, where possible:

- a) to clearly and firmly make it known to the offending individual that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop;
- b) to attempt to resolve the issue by direct discussion with the offending individual; and
- c) may report the matter to the Administrator. If the Administrator is the accused harasser, then the matter may be reported to the Reeve or Deputy Reeve.

Depending on the nature and severity of the alleged conduct, and subject to the consent of the individual reporting the harassment, the Municipality may first try to resolve the issue informally.

### B. Formal Process

Where the informal process is unsuccessful, or the individual does not feel comfortable addressing the issue directly, the individual should document the details of the alleged harassment (including name(s), date, time, place, particular details of alleged harassment and any witness(es)) and submit a written report to the Administrator. If the Administrator is the accused harasser, then the written report may be submitted to the Reeve or Deputy Reeve. The individual receiving the written report or designate will notify the alleged harasser of the written report and provide the alleged harasser with information concerning the circumstances of the written report.

If there is a sufficient basis in the written report or if the Municipality otherwise deems it necessary to do so, the Administrator or designate will carry out a formal investigation into the conduct contained in the written report in a prompt, fair and impartial manner. The investigation process may include interviews with the individual reporting the alleged harassment, the alleged harasser and, as and to the extent determined by the investigator, others with information relevant to the matters in question. All written reports, response statements, witness statements, interview notes and other documentation gathered as part of an investigation will be securely stored in a confidential investigation file.

The Municipality will decide on any action to be taken as a result of the findings of an investigation. The individual who reported the alleged harassment and the alleged harasser will be informed as to the outcome of the investigation.

Where harassment is substantiated, the Municipality will take appropriate corrective action. Where harassment is not substantiated, no action will be taken against an individual who made the allegation of harassment in good faith. Where, however, a complaint is fraudulent, malicious or otherwise made in bad faith, the individual who made the allegation of harassment may be subject to disciplinary or other action, up to and including termination of employment

### C. Council Member Process

If the alleged harasser is a Council member, please refer to the Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 Code of Ethics Bylaw and Council Procedures Bylaw for the procedure to be followed and available sanctions.

## 7. TEMPORARY OR INTERIM MEASURES

In the event of an allegation of harassment, the Municipality has full discretion to take whatever temporary interim measures that it deems appropriate to ensure the workplace remains a safe and productive environment and/or helps to facilitate an investigation into said harassment including, but not limited to, removing an individual from the workplace or limiting their contact with an individual, or requiring them to communicate with an individual by mail or in writing exclusively.

## 8. VARIATION FROM THE GENERAL PROCEDURE

The steps set out above and the manner in which an investigation is carried out is intended to be flexible in order to permit the Municipality to respond to the specific circumstances at issue in each case. The Municipality reserves the right to engage in a different procedure as it deems appropriate in any given circumstance. In the event that an individual does not proceed with a formal report of harassment or decides to later withdraw a written report, the Municipality may still initiate a formal investigation of the conduct reported if the Municipality determines it is necessary to ensure the health and safety of individuals at the workplace or to comply with applicable laws.

## 9. RETALIATION AND FRAUDULENT / MALICIOUS REPORTS

The Municipality does not condone acts of retaliation against an individual who has reported harassment, either informally or formally, or participated in any manner in the investigation or resolution of a report of discrimination or harassment. However, a report of harassment that is fraudulent or malicious (as distinct from unfounded) may itself be regarded as major misconduct subject to corrective action and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## 10. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Municipality will not disclose the name of the individual who reported the harassment, the alleged harasser or the circumstances related to the report of alleged harassment to any individual except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigation of the alleged harassment report or taking corrective action, or where such disclosure is required by law.

All individuals involved with the investigation of an incident shall treat all information related to the matter as strictly confidential. Unwarranted or inappropriate breaches of confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## 11. OTHER LEGAL RIGHTS

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent or discourage an individual from exercising:

- A. his or her statutory rights as set out in Part III of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, including, but not limited to, the right to request the assistance of an occupational health officer to resolve a complaint of harassment;
- B. his or her statutory rights as set out in *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* as it relates to discriminatory practices, including, but not limited to, the worker's right to file a complaint with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; and
- C. any other legal rights pursuant to any other law.

## 12. AVAILABILITY OF THE POLICY

The Municipality will make a copy of this policy readily available for workers' reference and post in a conspicuous place in the workplace.

### **13. REVISIONS**

The Municipality shall ensure that this policy is reviewed and, where necessary, revised at least annually. A review will also be done whenever there is a change of circumstances that may affect the health or safety of workers.

### **14. ATTACHMENTS**

The Municipality shall use the two attached forms, Form 1 for employees and Form 2 for Council, for completion with all employees and council and retain.

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF LAKE LENORE NO. 399 HARASSMENT PREVENTION

FORM 1 -POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND DECLARATION - EMPLOYEE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, an employee of Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 Harassment Prevention Policy (the "Policy") and have read and understood it and acknowledge that I will abide by the Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth by this Policy, I may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Printed Name

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF LAKE LENORE NO. 399 HARASSMENT PREVENTION

FORM 2- POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND DECLARATION – COUNCIL MEMBER

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Council member of Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Rural Municipality of Lake Lenore No. 399 Harassment Prevention Policy (the "Policy") and have read and understood it and acknowledge that I will abide by the Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth by this Policy, I may face disciplinary action or sanctions.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Council Member Printed Name

