

Elected and Appointed Official Code of Ethical Conduct

The City of Madison and its elected and appointed officials (alders, mayor, and City board, commission, or committee members) share a commitment to ethical conduct and service to the city and its residents. In alignment with the City of Madison vision to be inclusive, innovative, and thriving, and its mission to provide the highest quality of service for our residents and visitors, City elected and appointed officials shall maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, trustfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties, avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants, comply with all applicable laws, and never use their position to bully, harass, or abuse others. This Code is designed to communicate the expectation that City elected and appointed officials shall treat City staff and each other with respect and courtesy at all times. This policy is intended to promote an inclusive and positive work environment and working relationships, and prevent unlawful discrimination.

This policy applies to all elected and appointed City officials and applies to any conduct or interaction that occurs at the workplace and at any location or on any platform that can be reasonably regarded as an extension of the workplace, including but not limited to the use of a telephone, voicemail, text messages, video meeting, and/or any social media or online platforms. City staff members, including department and division heads, are governed by [APM 3-5](#) and [APM 2-33](#).

City elected and appointed officials, in the performance of their duties, shall create and maintain a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive work environment and shall not engage in abusive, violent, bullying, harassing, discriminatory or other threatening or intimidating behavior or language. Harassment of or discrimination against any person on the basis of any [City protected class](#)* status or statuses is expressly prohibited.

- **Bullying** is repeated, unwanted, aggressive physical or verbal behavior which hurts another individual, physically, mentally, or emotionally.
- **Harassment** is repeated or egregious unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive actions, words, jokes or comments based on any protected class status or statuses.
- **Discrimination** is unfair treatment of an individual or members of a group based on their protected class status.

Bullying, harassment, and discrimination are demeaning to others and undermine the integrity of relationships. In the event that these shared objectives are not met, effort shall be taken to notify the individuals of the substance of the issue so that they can resolve it. Self-correction or informal resolution between parties in a timely manner is strongly encouraged, with formal sanctions only as a rare and last option if informal communication and resolution is unsuccessful. Formal sanctions include formal censure by the Common Council or committee of one of its members, removal of a committee member from the body, or, in limited cases pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 17.001](#), removal of a Common Council member from office. Per state statute, alders and appointees to BCCs

can only be removed by a vote of the Council for cause, meaning “inefficiency, neglect of duty, official misconduct or malfeasance in office.”

Elected or appointed City officials, upon entering office or being appointed as a BCC member, shall be provided a copy of this policy and shall acknowledge receipt. Failure to acknowledge receipt does not exempt an individual from the requirements of this policy.

The City shall offer trainings and other supports to promote an inclusive and welcoming environment and provide elected and appointed officials with resources to assist them in resolving any issues that may arise.

Please refer to [MGO 3.35 Code of Ethics](#) for regulations on additional aspects of conduct, such as conflicts of interest, use of public office, political activity, and receiving gifts and favors.

*City protected classes: age, arrest record, citizenship status, color, conviction record, credit history, disability, domestic partners, familial status, gender identity, genetic identity, HIV status, homelessness, less than honorable discharge from military, marital status, military/veteran status, national origin/ancestry, non-religious, physical appearance, political beliefs, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, student status, unemployment, use or non-use of lawful products off the employer's premises during non-work hours

Appendix A

If a person has experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by an alder or member of a City board, commission or committee while such official is on City business, whether on or off City premises, including at City-sponsored events or other events which the alder or appointed individual attends in their official capacity, the Council encourages the following steps:

- If the person feels comfortable and safe, the person can address the matter informally with the alder or appointed individual.
- The person can report the matter to another alder; the alder will connect the person with the Common Council Chief of Staff.
- The person can contact the Council Chief of Staff; the Chief of Staff will connect the person with the appropriate personnel to report their claim.

Prohibited Conduct:

Examples of actions that could constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Preferential treatment in return for submitting to or engaging in sexual conduct
- Making derogatory or demeaning comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity (including but not limited to consistently misgendering an individual)
- Name-calling or using slurs with a gender/sexual connotation
- Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing or body parts
- Rating a person's sexuality
- Asking for sex or sexual conduct
- Asking a person for dates in a coercive manner, or repeatedly asking for a date after having been turned down
- Staring in a sexually suggestive manner
- Unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against a person, making inappropriate sexual gestures
- Unwelcome sharing of sexual or lewd anecdotes or jokes
- Unwelcome sending of sexually suggestive communications in any format
- Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate images or videos in any format not necessary for work purposes
- Attempted or actual sexual assault

Reporting:

A person who feels that they have been harassed by an alder or an appointed individual while acting in their official capacity may report the matter to the organizer of the event or relevant meeting authority or the Council Office Chief of Staff. The organizer of the event or the meeting authority will be expected to take appropriate action by its applicable policies, regulations, and rules and shall notify the Council Office Chief of Staff.

Examples of appropriate action may include, but are not limited to:

- Requesting the perpetrator to stop the offending behavior immediately
- Conveying the complaint to the Council Office Chief of Staff

The Council Office Chief of Staff will connect the individual reporting the conduct with the Department of Civil Rights, Human Resources, and the City Attorney. After talking to the complainant and, if different, the person who was the alleged subject of the sexual harassment, the Department of Civil Rights, the Human Resources Department, and the City Attorney will decide if an investigation or referral to any other agency is needed. Any action taken as a result of an investigation shall be under the applicable Federal, State or City law or applicable City procedure.

Debriefing:

If the Department of Civil Rights, Human Resources, and the City Attorney complete an investigation upon completion of their investigation they shall debrief the complainant, the respondent, the Council President and the Council Office Chief of Staff on the findings of the investigation.

Release of Summary of Findings or Related Documents:

After consideration of safety-related concerns and confidentiality needs related to the investigation, the Common Council President may issue a public summary of findings.

The City will ensure compliance with Wisconsin's Public Records Laws in release of any required documents, redacting such information as required by law

Retaliation:

Threats, intimidation, or any other form of retaliation against a person who has made a complaint or provided information supporting a complaint are prohibited. An alder or appointed individual or any other entity responsible for Council events will take any reasonable and appropriate action to prevent and respond to retaliation per its applicable policy, regulations, and rules.