

# Code of Conduct

Ngā Tikanga whanonga



# About this document

*This document applies to all staff and contractors engaged by Environment Canterbury.*

Environment Canterbury services the Canterbury community by facilitating sustainable development in the Canterbury region.

To enable us to do this well, we need to live our values every day and meet the high standards of conduct set out in this code. The four key principles of this conduct are:

## **Fair**

- treat everyone fairly and with respect
- recognise our commitment to Ngāi Tahu
- be professional and responsive
- work to make our services accessible and effective
- act with customer focus

## **Impartial**

- be politically neutral
- show that we 'can do' unaffected by personal beliefs
- provide robust and unbiased advice
- support Council decisions



## **Responsible**

- act lawfully and objectively
- make health and safety the first consideration in everything we do
- use our resources carefully for intended purposes

## **Trustworthy**

- be honest and act with integrity
- never misuse your position for personal gain
- avoid perceptions of obligation or influence
- avoid any activities that may harm our reputation

# Foreword *He kōrero whakataki*

**Congratulations, you are joining a great team of people at Environment Canterbury and our continued good reputation depends on you.**

This Code of Conduct has been developed to guide you through the standards of behaviour that are expected of our staff and contractors. It sets out our expectations based on four key principles; that you are fair, impartial, responsible and trustworthy.

Our people are expected to uphold exemplary standards of conduct while undertaking their professional roles. Because we must have the trust of the public, our people must also have a high standard of behaviour in their personal lives. The strength of our organisation lies with our people and we rely on maintaining the respect of our Councillors, stakeholders and customers to be successful.

To ensure we work to our full potential and achieve our work priorities our actions must comply with our legal obligations, reflect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and honour our special relationship with Ngāi Tahu. We must undertake our work safely and at all times be above reproach - our interactions with each other, the Council and the public must be undertaken in a manner that can withstand the highest scrutiny.

I trust that you will play a key role in helping us do this.



**Bill Bayfield**

Chief Executive



# Governance *Te mana whakahaere*



## Relationships with Councillors

The ongoing effective performance of our organisation requires a high level of cooperation and mutual respect between staff and Council members. Fundamental to this is a common understanding of the role and function of the Council and its staff and what each party can expect when interacting with each other. To ensure that level of cooperation and trust is maintained, staff must:

- make themselves aware of the role and obligations of the Council and ensure they do not do anything which compromises, or could be seen as compromising, the Councillors' roles or obligations
- treat all Councillors with courtesy and respect
- not enter into any discussions with Councillors or do anything for any Councillor, which compromises, or could be seen as compromising, the impartiality of your role
- avoid publicly criticising any Councillor in any way, but especially in ways that reflect on the competence and integrity of the Council
- raise any concerns about a Councillor with your manager or the Chief Executive.

Councillors operate under their own Code of Conduct. If you are concerned that they may not be acting in line with those obligations please raise this with your manager or the Chief Executive.

## Document status

While mandatory language such as ‘must’, ‘shall’ and ‘will’ has been restricted throughout this Code, it is important for all staff and contractors to understand there is an expectation they will adhere to these standards. Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with through Environment Canterbury’s formal disciplinary procedures.

The code is one of several documents that guide behaviour in this organisation; other documents to be read in conjunction with this include Our Values and Behaviours, the Strategic Direction, Employment Agreements, and Staff Policies. For further information on these documents please refer to the staff Kete, discuss with your manager, or contact a member of the Human Resources team.

Our values are referenced throughout this document. They are:

**People First | Manaakitanga**  
*people, customers and staff come first*

**Collaboration | Whanaungatanga**  
*together works best*

**Can Do | Māiatanga**  
*be brave and make it happen*

**Integrity | Pononga**  
*trust in us and our information*

**Stewardship | Kaitiakitanga**  
*good decisions today for tomorrow*

# Fair Te Tika

## Standards

### Treat everyone fairly and with respect

- put people first; avoid behaviour which might cause distress to colleagues, contribute to disruption in the workplace, be seen as harassing, bullying or intimidating, or that discriminates against any person because of their sex, marital status, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, age, political opinion, employment status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, religious or ethical beliefs.

### Recognise our commitment to Ngāi Tahu

- respect and actively support our special relationship with Ngāi Tahu.

### Be professional and responsive

- be competent in the performance of assigned duties and behave in a way that maintains the mutual trust and confidence of the employment relationship.

### Work to make our services accessible and effective

- collaborate with our customers to ensure fair access to our services.

### Act with customer focus

- provide a consistent level of quality service and information; be transparent.
- share information up front and follow through on what we say we'll do.
- show empathy and engage with customers in a timely, supportive manner.

# Impartial *Te matatika*

## Standards

### Be politically neutral

- avoid conflicts of interest, and maintain actual, and perceived, impartiality.

### Show that we 'can do', unaffected by personal beliefs

- avoid acting on personal opinions or allowing workplace actions or relationships to influence your approach when undertaking official duties.

### Provide robust and unbiased advice

- reflect stakeholder views as presented and without bias.
- provide information that our customers can trust.

## Guidelines – be politically neutral

- A ‘conflict of interest’ is any financial or other interest or undertaking that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of a staff member’s duties, or Environment Canterbury’s relationship with customers and members of the public. No staff member should have, or appear to have, a conflict between their official responsibilities and their personal interests.
- Staff are free to undertake the following activities provided there is no conflict of interest with their role or the other organisation:
  - stand for, or be appointed to, any office or position on a voluntary body.
  - accept secondary employment or become involved in external business interests.
- Staff must alert their manager to their intentions prior to undertaking any activity that may involve a possible or perceived conflict of interest. Where a conflict of interest is identified, the situation will be escalated to the Chief Executive. Consideration will be given to the merits of the situation and may result in the staff member being required to alter their duties, work location, take a leave of absence, or resign.
- Staff should take care when engaging in any activity related to the election campaign of a current or potential electoral candidate to ensure there is no conflict or appearance of a conflict of interest. Such activity may include: attendance at private campaign strategy meetings; organising public meetings; taking part in campaign activity (such as canvassing, or writing speeches); writing letters.
- Staff are free to attend public meetings at which candidates are presenting themselves for election.

## Guidelines – providing robust and unbiased advice

- Advice given must be honest, impartial, comprehensive and objective. Staff may not offer advice or an opinion on matters that are beyond their technical or professional competence, or provide services beyond their defined duties.
- Except where it is explicitly part of their duties, staff may not:
  - complete statutory applications on behalf of an applicant.
  - amend Environment Canterbury records to the benefit of a stakeholder.
  - provide advice which could later be used against Environment Canterbury should a legal dispute or enforcement situation occur.
  - provide any legal interpretation.
- Staff must not attempt to undermine or improperly influence Environment Canterbury policy, withhold relevant information, or seek to obstruct or delay a decision. Once a decision has been made, it is the duty of staff to implement that decision within the law, regardless of personal opinion.
- Where a staff member is presenting a paper or publication that references Environment Canterbury policy, process or examples they must seek prior approval from their manager. Where a staff member is making the presentation or writing the publication as a private citizen, this must be explicitly stated.

## **Guidelines – maintaining separation in private communications**

- In general, staff have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as other members of the public. However, they also have a duty not to compromise Environment Canterbury or the Council by public criticism of, or comment on, Council policy.
- Staff may communicate privately with any key stakeholder group about matters outside their official duties – taking care to avoid any perceptions that they are presenting an opinion on behalf of Environment Canterbury.
- Staff have the same rights of access to Councillors as other members of the public and may communicate privately with any Councillor about matters outside their official duties. Where a matter is raised directly with a Councillor, the organisation may be directed to provide a suitable response via the Chief Executive. Staff are entitled to the same information or level of detail in a response as would be given to any member of the public under the Official Information Act 1982 or the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

# Responsible *Te takohanga*

## Standards

### Act lawfully and objectively

- obey the law and obtain proper authorisation for all liabilities incurred, obey all lawful and reasonable employer instructions and work as directed. Report wrongdoing by staff, Councillors and the public.

### Make health, safety and wellbeing the first consideration in everything we do

- ensure we not only follow legislative requirements to keep ourselves, our colleagues and our customers safe, but put the wellbeing of our colleagues and communities first.

### Use our resources carefully for intended purposes

- show reasonable care with property, resources, and funds, using them only for the purpose provided for and within the item's capabilities.
- ensure the privacy and intellectual property rights of customers are protected.
- make good decisions that will benefit our customers in the future.

## Guidelines – reporting wrong-doing

Staff must report suspected wrong-doing to their manager. Wrong-doing may include:

- unlawful, corrupt, or irregular use of public funds or resources.
- conduct that poses a serious risk to public health or safety, the environment or maintenance of the law (including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences and the right to a fair trial).
- conduct constituting an offence.
- conduct by public officials which is grossly improper.

Staff are also responsible for reporting unauthorised activities. This may include chemical spills onto land or into water, or water abstraction occurring during a restriction period. Staff should only take action to respond to these situations if specifically trained, where they have access to appropriate personal protective equipment, and if there is no significant risk to themselves or others.

## Guidelines – use of resources and information

- Plant or equipment is not to be used for private purposes without written permission.
- No Environment Canterbury resources (including computers, email, stationery, photocopiers, cars and venues) should be used for private campaigning purposes.
- Staff should not reveal or make private use of personal, confidential, sensitive or other information not readily available to the public unless required by law to disclose the information, either during or after their employment has ceased.
- Take care with privacy settings when accessing or sharing information electronically and protect against unauthorised access.

## **Guidelines – disclosure of official information**

- All our information is official information and all official information is discoverable.
- Staff should not disclose official information unless authorised.
- Staff authorised to disclose information should exercise proper care and discretion. In cases of doubt, staff should seek guidance from their Director. If the release of politically sensitive material is required, staff should ensure that the Chief Executive is notified well in advance of any information release.
- All information should be stored in secure, retrievable locations provided by the organisation.

# Trustworthy *Te whakawhirinaki*

## Standards

### **Be honest and act with integrity**

- maintain honesty at work and in personal situations where the consequences may have an impact on Environment Canterbury.

### **Never misuse our position for personal gain**

- avoid using official positions or relationships for personal benefit or on behalf of family, friends, business associates or other organisations.

### **Avoid creating perceptions of obligation or influence**

- do not solicit or accept gifts, rewards or benefits which might compromise, or be seen to compromise, personal integrity and the integrity of Environment Canterbury and local government in general.

### **Avoid any activities, work or non-work, that may harm our reputation**

- ensure professional and personal conduct or activity maintains the trust of the public.



*As a general principle, staff members' personal behaviour is of no concern to the organisation. However, Environment Canterbury has a legitimate interest where the private activities of staff may discredit Environment Canterbury in its relationships with members of the public, interfere with the performance of their official duties or adversely reflect on the integrity or standing of Environment Canterbury. Occurrences of misconduct will be dealt with through Environment Canterbury's formal disciplinary procedures.*

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