

Political Expression & Respectful Workplace Policy



Free speech protections don't give employees the right to say and do anything they want in the workplace. Stated differently, employees' individual rights and freedoms are subject to their employer's equally legitimate right to establish and enforce rules governing conduct in the workplace, including political expression and debate. The key is ensuring that the rules are clearly written and reasonably necessary to protect safety, prevent harassment and discrimination, maintain the company's reputation, and achieve other legitimate objectives. Here's a policy template designed to ensure that employees who talk politics at work do it in a professional and courteous way that doesn't run afoul of your company's respectful workplace policy.

Political Expression & Respect In The Workplace

1. Policy Statement

ABC Company respects the fundamental freedoms and rights of employees, including the right to hold and express political opinions. It also recognizes that discussing politics in the workplace may be distracting, emotional, divisive, and otherwise inconsistent with the Company's primary commitment to ensure a productive, professional, and inclusive work environment free from political conflict, disruption, harassment, and discrimination.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out clear rules and expectations for the expression of political opinions inside and outside the workplace.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all employees, management, and contractors during working

hours, on ABC Company property (including parking lots, hallways, and other common areas), and when using Company resources (e.g., email, social media, equipment). It also extends to off-duty conduct that may negatively impact the workplace or the Company's reputation, including but not limited to the use of social media.

4. Guidelines for Political Discussion & Expression

Employees are free to express political opinions, provided that in so doing, they communicate respectfully with coworkers, colleagues, clients, customers, partners, and business associates at all times. That duty includes handling disagreements professionally and constructively, without engaging in personal attack.

5. Prohibited Conduct

The right to engage in political discussion and expression does not include the following types of public statements, comments, posts, communications, or behaviours (referred to collectively as "communications"):

- **Hate Speech:** Communications that wilfully promote hatred or contempt against an identifiable group, such as advocating for genocide or violence against a particular group.
- **Discrimination:** Communications that denigrates or harasses an individual or group based on age, race, religion, gender, sex including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, familial status, national origin, criminal record or any other protected characteristic under [province] human rights laws.
- **Impersonation:** Communications creating the appearance that an employee is speaking or making representations on behalf of ABC Company, unless expressly authorized to do so.
- **Reputational Harm:** Communications that may harm ABC Company's reputation or business.
- **Breach of Confidentiality:** The unauthorized sharing or disclosure of non-public, confidential, or proprietary information of or about ABC Company and its business.
- **Disruption of Operations:** Communications that cause conflict, reduce morale, or interfere with work performance.
- **Unauthorized Use of Company Resources:** Communications made with Company email, chat systems, or social media accounts for partisan political purposes, soliciting contributions, or displaying political materials, such as stickers or signs.

6. Social Media & Off-Duty Conduct

While employees have the right to engage in political expression, discussion, and activity when they are away from work, they are also responsible for complying with the requirements, standards and protocols set forth in the ABC Company Off-Duty Conduct Policy and ABC Company Social Media Policy.

Employees who mention ABC Company on social media or refer to it without using its name but in such a manner as to enable the reader to reasonably identify that the reference is to ABC Company must include a clear and visible disclaimer that their views are personal and do not represent those of the Company.

7. Responsibilities Of Managers & Supervisors

In implementing this Policy, managers and supervisors are required to:

- Lead by example by modeling respectful behaviour.
- Encourage open political dialogue within civil boundaries.
- Address violations of this Policy promptly and fairly, including, where necessary, via the imposition of discipline.
- Ensure the consistent application of this Policy across all departments.

8. Consequence Of Violations

Employees who violate this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with ABC Company HR policies and the terms of applicable collective agreements.