

**Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce  
Code of Conduct Policy  
FINAL DRAFT V.5  
October 28, 2025**

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## 1. Purpose: Membership is a privilege

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote a respectful, ethical, and inclusive environment for all individuals who engage with the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce (GKWCC). Membership and participation in Chamber programs, events, and governance activities is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to adherence to this Code.

## 2. Scope

This Code applies to all:

- Members and their representatives
- Board Directors and Committee Members
- Volunteers and Event Participants
- Staff and Contractors
- Guests or visitors at Chamber-sponsored events

## 3. Application

The Code applies to:

- Conduct within the chamber context (e.g. events, communications, committees)
- Conduct that may damage the chamber's reputation or the integrity of the membership as a whole
- Conduct involving harassment, abuse, discrimination, dishonesty, etc.

This Code does not govern private business-to-business or business-to-consumer transactions or subjective dissatisfaction unless linked to unethical, unlawful or egregiously unprofessional conduct in a chamber context. While members are expected to act with integrity and good faith in all dealings, the Chamber does not mediate commercial or consumer disputes unless the behavior involved may harm the Chamber's reputation.

## 4. Expectations of Conduct

All individuals covered by this policy are expected to:

### **A. Act with Integrity**

- Be honest, fair, and ethical in all dealings.
- Provide products/services truthfully and in accordance with applicable laws.
- Avoid misrepresentation or manipulation of facts, credentials, or intentions.

- Verify the factual accuracy of AI-generated content and take responsibility for its use. AI must not be used to misrepresent qualifications, affiliations, positions, or financial matters.

## **B. Treat Others with Respect**

- The Chamber is an encouraging forum for debate. Disagreements are to be expected, however:
  - Speak and act professionally and courteously at all times.
  - Respect diversity of background, opinion, and experience.
  - Avoid violence, discrimination, harassment, bullying, or intimidation.
  - Exhibit professionalism, respect and discretion, especially in public forums and on social media
  - Avoid using AI to create, amplify, or distribute content that is discriminatory, defamatory, or violates intellectual property or privacy rights.

## **C. Support the Chamber Mission**

- Represent the Chamber positively and in alignment with its vision and values.
- Respect the reputation, intellectual property, and branding of the Chamber.
- Participate in good faith and contribute to the collective success of the business community.

## **D. Protect Confidentiality**

- Safeguard confidential information shared through Chamber roles, discussions, or platforms.
- Do not misuse privileged information for personal or commercial gain.
- Do not input confidential, private, or proprietary Chamber data into public AI tools or platforms without prior authorization.

## **E. Avoid Conflicts of Interest**

- Disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest in dealings with the Chamber.
- Avoid improper use of position or resources. Members, volunteers and participants are encouraged to benefit from the opportunities the Chamber offers including learning, networking, referrals, and visibility. However, individuals must not exploit their Chamber role, access, or influence for inappropriate personal or financial gain. This includes:
  - Unfairly steering Chamber contracts, awards, gifts or funding toward themselves or related parties
  - Leveraging volunteer or leadership roles to pressure others for business or favors

- Misusing Chamber resources (e.g., contact lists, brand, staff time) for private (non-Chamber) purposes
- Recuse oneself from decisions where a conflict exists.

## **F. Engage Responsibly Online**

- Maintain respectful and factual discourse in digital and social media spaces.
- Do not post defamatory, discriminatory, or misleading statements about the Chamber or its members.
- Avoid creating, sharing, or amplifying AI-generated content, deepfakes, misinformation, or manipulated media that could damage reputations, spread falsehoods, or undermine trust.
- Follow applicable Chamber digital community guidelines. Digital harassment, cyberbullying, or coordinated online attacks directed at members, staff, volunteers or the Chamber itself will be treated as serious violations of this Code.

# 5. Reporting and Complaint Process

## **A. Reporting a Concern or Complaint**

Concerns about violations of this Code may be reported to the:

- Supervisors and Managers (for employees)
- CEO
- Chair of the Board
- Secretary of the Board

Concerns should be submitted in writing, where possible, and will be kept confidential to the extent feasible.

## **B. Investigation and Review**

The Chamber recognizes that issues may occasionally be raised that vary in severity, intent, or required response. As such:

- A concern refers to a question, observation, or discomfort about conduct that may not clearly violate the Code but still merits attention.
- A complaint is a written report that describes specific conduct which, if true, would constitute a breach of this Code. It should include sufficient detail to assess the nature, scope, and relevance of the alleged behavior.

Any person receiving a concern or complaint is encouraged to respond in a professional, respectful, and discreet manner. When possible and appropriate, concerns may be

addressed through informal conversation, clarification, or collaborative resolution before triggering a formal review.

If informal or collaborative resolution is unsuccessful, all complaints will be reviewed by the Executive Committee, or an appointed subcommittee, appointed by the Appropriate Authority in the Chain of Authority.

- The Chain of Authority refers to the following:
  - The CEO, OR (if not appropriate because named in the complaint)
  - The Chair of the Board, OR
  - The Secretary of the Board (especially if the CEO or Chair are named in the complaint), OR
  - A Vice-chair (if in the rare circumstance that all three are named in the complaint)

The review process will aim to:

- Be timely, fair, and impartial
- Offer an opportunity for all parties to respond
- Preserve confidentiality and dignity for all involved

### **C. External Support for Investigation**

To ensure fairness, professionalism, and impartiality, the Appropriate Authority may engage a qualified third party to conduct or assist in the investigation of a reported breach of this Code. This may include external legal counsel, conflict resolution specialists, or other experts as deemed appropriate by the Chamber.

### **D. Consequences for Misconduct**

Based on the severity and context, consequences for violations of this Code may include some or a combination of these remedies:

- Verbal or written warning
- Requirement for corrective action
- Suspension of event participation, committee service or supplier service
- Revocation of awards and honours
- Revocation of membership, as per Chamber bylaws

The final decision will rest with the Board of Directors and will be communicated in writing to the parties involved.

## 6. Appeals

An individual may appeal a disciplinary decision in writing to the Board Chair within 10 business days of receiving the outcome. The Board may uphold, amend, or reverse the decision, and its decision will be final.

## 7. Acknowledgement

By joining the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, renewing membership, participating in Chamber events, serving on committees or the board, or otherwise engaging with the organization, individuals agree to uphold the principles and expectations set out in this Code of Conduct.

This Code is available on the Chamber's website and may be referenced in member applications, renewals, event registrations, and volunteer onboarding. By participating in Chamber activities, individuals acknowledge that they have been made aware of the Code and agree to conduct themselves accordingly.

Board directors, committee members, staff, and volunteers may be required to provide additional written acknowledgment upon onboarding or annually, as appropriate to their role.

## 8. Review Cycle

This Code will be reviewed every three (3) years, or more frequently as required by the Board, to ensure it reflects evolving norms, values, and member expectations.

*Approved by the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Board of Directors on [October xx, 2025]*

*Next Review Date: [October xx, 2028]*