



St. John Ambulance

Harassment and Discrimination Policy

'Respect in the Organization'

This publication tells you what to do if you feel that you have been discriminated against or harassed in our organization.

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Harassment and Discrimination Policy

St. John Ambulance recognizes the diverse and multicultural composition of its organization, and appreciates the dignity, worth and contribution of each member. It is committed to providing a safe organizational environment free from discrimination and harassment. No offending conduct will be tolerated.

What is discrimination/harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical or verbal comment or conduct that offends or humiliates an individual. It can interfere with a person's ability to do a job or obtain a service. Harassment is a type of discrimination, and can take many forms including threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, unwelcome or sexually suggestive remarks or gestures, requests for sexual favours, unnecessary physical contact, or physical assault.

The unwelcomed comment or conduct does not have to be directed towards a specific person for that person to take offence.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination/harassment means someone is treating you unfairly because of your:

- race
- sexual orientation
- place of origin
- gender/sex
- ethnic origin
- citizenship
- colour
- family status
- ancestry
- handicap/disability
- marital status
- age
- creed
- same-sex partnership status

In some cases, discrimination/harassment also means someone is treating you unfairly because you have been pardoned for a criminal offence.



It is a matter of St. John Ambulance Policy!

St. John Ambulance will not tolerate or condone harassment or discrimination, whether it is between members, or a member of the organization and a member of the public.

Every member can expect any complaint involving alleged harassment or discrimination to be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, thoroughly, fairly and in confidence.

Every member has the right to:

- file a complaint without fear of embarrassment or reprisal;
- be represented and accompanied by a person of his or her choosing during the interviews related to his or her complaint;
- ensure that his or her written complaint, or written comments related to the fact that they have lodged a complaint, be excluded from his or her personnel files; and
- be kept informed throughout the process, and advised of the final outcome.

Any member who has had a complaint of harassment or discrimination made against him or her has the right to:

- be informed immediately that a complaint has been filed;
- be informed of the complaint process;
- be presented with a written statement of allegations,
- be given an opportunity to respond to a written statement of allegations in writing;
- be represented and accompanied by a person of his or her choosing during the interviews related to the complaint;
- receive fair treatment in an environment free of harassment and discrimination; and
- be kept informed throughout the process, and advised of the final outcome.



What can you do if you feel you've been discriminated against or harassed?

Write down what happened.

Try to answer the following questions:

"What happened?"

"When did it happen?"

"Where did it happen?"

"What was said and who said it?"

"Who saw what happened?"

"What did you do at that time?"

St. John Ambulance encourages members to resolve complaints under its Harassment and Discrimination Policy between themselves, if possible, or where necessary with the assistance of another member or a supervisor.

In many situations, simply informing the person that his or her comment or conduct is unwelcome will resolve the issue. Telling the person to 'stop' may be difficult to do, but frequently it is the most effective means of eliminating the problem.

St. John Ambulance recognizes, however, that not all members will feel comfortable speaking directly to an alleged offender, nor is it appropriate for a member to do so in some circumstances (e.g. if the member has spoken to the person who has offended them and the unwelcome comment or conduct persists or if the alleged offender is the member's supervisor or a senior member of the organization).

Accordingly, an alleged violation may be dealt with by invoking the written complaint process without any attempt at an informal resolution. At any time, a member may submit a written complaint to his or her direct supervisor or to the Chief Executive Officer (the 'CEO') of the St. John Ambulance Council for Ontario.



Informal Complaint Resolution Between Members:

- Tell the person (alleged offender) to stop
- Attempt to resolve matter directly
- Seek assistance/support of your supervisor or another member

The Written (Formal) Complaint Process:

- Provide a written detailed complaint to your supervisor or to the CEO. Your supervisor can also initiate a written complaint on your behalf.
- Your supervisor provides a copy of the complaint to the CEO (if the written complaint was received by your supervisor or if your supervisor initiated a written complaint on your behalf).
- The CEO may attempt to resolve matter through discussion or may initiate a formal investigation
- The CEO will notify the person you are complaining about (the 'respondent') in writing
- An investigation will be conducted and findings assessed to determine whether the complaint is substantiated.



What does the investigation include?

Any investigation initiated under this Policy will be conducted impartially, thoroughly, sensitively, discreetly, confidentially and in a timely manner.

During the investigation of a written complaint, the investigator or investigation team will:

- consult with the CEO;
- interview both the complainant (the person filing the complaint) and the respondent as soon as possible;
- review pertinent documentation, interview witnesses, document the situation accurately and completely, make findings with respect to the complaint, and make written recommendations to the CEO;
- maintain a complete documentary file; and
- caution members who are questioned that they must not discuss the case with anyone else

What happens when the investigation is finished?

Where the complaint is substantiated, the CEO shall:

- determine appropriate corrective action
- advise the complainant and respondent of the findings/resolution
- monitor implementation of corrective action
- retain a confidential record in the offices of the CEO
- ensure that there are no reprisals against the parties involved (except for the imposed corrective action)

Where the complaint is not substantiated, the CEO shall:

- take no further action against the respondent
- advise the complainant and respondent of the findings/resolution
- retain a confidential record in the offices of the CEO
- ensure that there are no reprisals against the parties involved



What if you disagree with the decisions made?

Members who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint may apply by way of letter to the St. John Ambulance Council for Ontario Board of Directors and request a review of the decision, stating explicitly the grounds for the request.

If a review is requested, the letter of request will be provided to the opposite party (respondent or complainant) and a written response will be requested.

The Council Board of Directors will convene to discuss the matter and may:

- affirm the decision and disciplinary measures
- affirm the decision but alter the disciplinary measures
- or institute a new investigation into the complaint.

What about confidentiality?

All parties involved in the resolution or investigation of a complaint, including the complainant, the respondent, and witnesses, are expected to facilitate the process, co-operate, and maintain confidentiality.

All documentation involved in the complaint process, including the final report, will be maintained in confidence in the offices of the CEO. In all instances, such documentation will be kept separate from members' personnel files. If there is disciplinary action, the reason for discipline as well as the nature of the discipline will be recorded in a member's personnel file.

What are the other ways to deal with harassment or discrimination concerns?

St. John Ambulance's Policy does not limit the entitlement of any person to make a complaint to a provincial human rights commission or take any other step, which the person is entitled to take at law.



Where can you get more information related to St. John Ambulance's Harassment and Discrimination Policy?

**Contact: Chief Executive Officer
St. John Ambulance
Council for Ontario
46 Wellesley Street East
Toronto, ON M4Y 1G5
Tel: 1-800-268-7581**

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