



FORTFRANCES

BOUNDLESS

DISCONNECTING FROM WORK

HUMAN RESOURCES 3.8

POLICY

Created: 2022-05-24

Revised:

Authorized: By-Law 37-22

Superseded:

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The health and wellbeing of our employees is of the utmost importance to us, and we, The Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances, encourage and support our employees in prioritizing their own wellbeing.
- 1.2 Disconnecting from work is important for an individual's wellbeing, and helps employees achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. Disconnecting from work means to not engage in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls, or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.
- 1.3 To encourage and support our employees in balancing their working and personal lives, we have implemented this Disconnecting from Work Policy (the "Policy") to encourage employees to disconnect from work where possible.
- 1.4 This Policy should be read alongside the Town's associated policies including Management/Non-Union Benefits, Staff Attendance at Council Meetings, Leave of Absence without Pay, Individual Accommodation Plan, any relevant and applicable legislation, and any other policy that is, or may become, applicable and/or relevant.

2. APPLICATION

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all employees, as defined by the Ontario *Employment Standards Act, 2000* ("ESA"). For clarity, "employee" under this Policy means only those employees of the Town which are considered employees under the ESA.

3. EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS

- 3.1 The Town will make efforts to ensure that all employees, regardless of their place of work, are:
 - a) informed of what their normal working hours are reasonably expected to be and are informed of the circumstances in which they may be expected to engage in work-related communications outside of their normal working hours;
 - b) able to take applicable meal, rest periods and hours free from work as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement language; and
 - c) able to take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement language.

4. EMPLOYEE OBLIGATIONS

- 4.1 The Town expects all employees to comply with the following in the course of their work. Employees must:
- a) cooperate fully with any applicable mechanism utilized by the Town to record working time or update their working status (e.g. out-of-office messages), including when working remotely, flexibly, or when mobile;
 - b) be mindful of colleagues', customers/clients', vendors', and other third parties' working hours;
 - c) ensure that they take ownership of their work and meet the Town's operational needs;
 - d) comply with the Town's Management/Non-Union Benefits policy and/or applicable collective agreement language regarding overtime, including any requirements to obtain prior approval before performing overtime work; and
 - e) notify their supervisor or manager, in writing, of any right or entitlement they were unable to exercise and the reasons why.

5. ABILITY TO DISCONNECT FROM WORK

- 5.1 An employee's ability to disconnect from work depends on the Town's operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee's position, subject to an employee's employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.
- 5.2 Nothing in this Policy precludes the Town or other employees of the Town from contacting colleagues outside of what may be considered normal working hours or standard business hours, subject to any rights or entitlements the receiving colleague or employee may have under their employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.
- 5.3 This Policy does not afford employees a "right to disconnect" beyond what is within their individual employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA, which may include rights or entitlements speaking to: normal hours of work and hours free from work, overtime pay, meal and/or rest periods, public holidays and public holiday pay and vacation.
- 5.4 Nothing in this Policy is intended to amend or supersede any grievance procedure or other aspect of any applicable collective agreement.

6. REPORTING CONCERNS

- 6.1 All employees are expected and required to report any concerns or issues they may have which they feel is impacting their ability to disconnect-from-work.
- 6.2 Employees are encouraged to report such concerns or issues to their immediate supervisor. If that is not appropriate or the matter cannot be resolved by doing so, employees should direct their concerns or issues to Human Resources.
- 6.3 Employees will not be subject to reprisal for reporting such concerns as outlined above.

7. POSTING, NOTICE, AND RETENTION

- 7.1 The Town shall provide a copy of this Policy to each employee of the Town within 30 calendar days of implementation. Should any changes be made to the Policy after its implementation, the Town shall provide each employee of the Town a copy of the revised Policy within 30 days of the changes being made.
- 7.2 The Town shall provide a copy of this Policy to all new employees upon onboarding and within 30 calendar days of the employee commencing employment with the Town.
- 7.3 The Town shall retain a copy of this and any revised version of this Policy for three years after it ceases to be in effect.