

Town of Milton

Employee Professional Code of Conduct

Purpose: *This Code of Conduct is a statement about what we value as an organization. When we announce and affirm what is important to us, we create a solid foundation upon which we can conduct our work.*

While the Code of Conduct is a guide that captures the goals of most formal rules, it is not a replacement for State Statutes, the Charter, the Administrative Code, Town policies, or contracts. It remains our duty to ensure that we adhere to all laws, rules, and regulations.

The public can expect us to be highly responsive, accountable, cost-effective stewards of public funds, honest, professional, fair, confidential when necessary, and transparent at all other times. When we act in line with these values, we are faithful guardians of the public trust.

High standards of professional and personal conduct are essential to good municipal service and are expected of every employee. To maintain the public's trust and be of greatest benefit to the Town, employees should strive constantly to live up to the following professional and ethical guidelines.

- **Responsiveness:** All employees shall strive at all times to provide the highest level of “customer service” possible to all members of the public and Town staff regardless of status, even when the answer to a question is no. Timely acknowledgement and follow up regarding requests from the public and fellow employees of any kind is expected of every employee.
- **Accountability:** In ethics and governance, accountability is accounting for our activities, accepting responsibility, and disclosing results in a transparent and unembellished manner. Therefore, all employees are expected to be forthright about circumstances, take ownership of mistakes, accidents and oversights, and make the necessary corrections as quickly as possible. Departments and workgroups shall also strive to set goals, track their activity, measure their results, and share information about their performance. This information will help the Town make informed strategic decisions.
 - **Workplace Safety:** All employees shall conduct themselves in a way that poses the least risk of injury to themselves and others. Employees should also insist upon the same behavior from others. All unsafe equipment or hazardous conditions must be reported immediately to the responsible supervisor. Employees must report any accident that results in personal injury, regardless of severity, to the Human Resources Coordinator within 24 hours of the accident. Employees must report any accident that results in property damage, regardless of severity, to a Department Head.

- **Financial Stewardship:** All decisions regarding purchases for the Town should be made using the highest fiscal integrity. This means looking for the best value for use of public funds and balancing the lowest price with the best possible solution.
 - **Cost Effectiveness:** Cost effectiveness compares the relative costs and outcomes (effects) of two or more courses of action. This type of analysis should be performed by every employee who is making a recommendation for the use of public funds. Employees should follow the Administrative Code rules and use best judgment to arrive at the most cost effective solution.

- **Integrity:** Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. All employees are expected to be honest so that the Town can rely on information that it is given. Employees will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery and must avoid any conduct that might compromise their integrity. Employees may not knowingly accept special advantage from their official status.

- **Professionalism:** Employees will be responsible for their professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence. This includes developing an awareness of laws, rules, regulations, and policies.
 - **Work Ethic:** All employees are expected to arrive in enough time to be able to work at the very beginning of their shift. Work shall be performed in an efficient, timely, and effective manner. Employees will work until the end of their shift unless an earlier departure has been approved by a supervisor.

 - **Competence:** Competence is having the required skill or knowledge to perform one's expected duties. If an employee is lacking in some area necessary to do a good job, employees should seek training or pursue studies to increase their competence. Management should monitor staff and assure that they have what they need to continue increasing their competence.

 - **Work Relationships:** All employees should make every effort to maintain productive and professional relationships with colleagues and community partners, do their fair share of work, and attempt to address conflict before it gets out of hand. Everyone should work together to promote a culture of helping, trusting, and sharing information to achieve the best results.

 - **Collaboration:** Employees are expected to work with other employees, departments, and outside groups on projects in a cooperative and respectful manner even if doing so is outside the scope of one's job description.

- **General Conduct/Personal Behavior:** In order to maintain the public trust, employee conduct on and off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community.
- **Fairness:** Every employee is expected to help facilitate the equitable delivery of public services regardless of who the resident is. Employees are also expected to respect the needs, cultural backgrounds, and values of others. Employees must refuse to accept any gifts or favors in return for special treatment.
 - **Favoritism:** Favoritism is treating some people better than others. Every employee is expected to deliver public services and provide the best service to all members of the public and co-workers regardless of an individual's or group's political affiliations, status, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or other defining characteristic.
 - **Conflicts of Interest:** No employee shall have any personal interest or financial interest in Town decisions in which the employee is participating on behalf of the Town. Whenever the performance of a Town employee's official duties require that individual to take action in which that individual has a personal or financial interest, he/she must disclose the nature and extent of such interest and be disqualified from participating in any manner in the Town's consideration of that matter. If an employee isn't sure they have a conflict of interest, they should check with their supervisor. (See the Milton Town Charter, § 129-701. Conflict of interest. Milton has a Charter Compliance Committee that hears allegations of conflicts of interest.)
- **Confidentiality:** No employee shall disclose any confidential information relating to the officers, employees, transactions, property, or affairs of the Town without prior authorization from the Town Manager. All confidential information gained about a member of the public in the course of an employee's duties must not be improperly divulged. When unsure about what should be confidential, employees should check with their supervisor or the Town Manager's Office. Refer to Vermont's Public Records Law (1 V.S.A. § 316. Access to public records and documents and 1 V.S.A. § 317. Definitions; public agency; public records and documents) for exceptions.
- **Transparency:** Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing. Together, all employees must ensure the public trust through transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Public engagement enhances the Town's effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions. As much as possible and practical, information that is not of a confidential nature shall be available without impediment and public engagement should be sought and incorporated when making decisions.