

# **COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The highest standards of conduct among CBT employees are essential to foster a positive and healthy work environment and to maintain and enhance the public's trust and confidence in CBT.

This Code of Conduct (the "Code") records the standards of conduct and professional ethics required of all who serve CBT as officers and employees.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the Code is to establish the standards of conduct of all CBT employees. The requirement to comply with the Code is a condition of employment.

Every employee has a duty to observe the law, to follow CBT policy, to protect the interests of CBT stakeholders, and to ensure that CBT is, and is known to be, an honourable enterprise. Above all else, all employees of CBT must conduct themselves and make decisions in light of their duty to act solely in the interests of CBT. It is accepted that in most cases, personal values and honesty will guide decisions and actions. The Code cannot anticipate all dilemmas or provide for all contingencies, nor can it enforce a spirit of service towards our stakeholders. The Code cannot substitute for legal compliance, organizational commitment or personal integrity. This Code, therefore, is but one element in CBT's system of governance. It is designed to guide employee actions.

## **APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

The Code applies to CBT's officers and employees, to interns and co-op students temporarily working with CBT, and to contractors from whom CBT requires adherence as a condition of their engagement, all of whom are referred to in the Code as "employees".

Employees' obligation of compliance with the Code under Section 3 (Confidentiality) and Section 15 (Employee Inventions) continues after termination of employment.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Definitions of terms used in this policy are set out in Appendix 1.

## **POLICY**

### **1. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

- a. Compliance with the Code is a condition of employment; failure to comply with the Code may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- b. All employees are obligated to be in full understanding and application of the Code in their day-to-day activities. In support of this requirement, all employees shall attend training sessions as required.

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- c. In situations where an employee is unsure of a specific application, the employee is responsible for obtaining clarification from his or her manager, the HR Coordinator or the Director, Finance & Operations.
- d. Upon engagement by CBT, an employee must provide a signed declaration indicating understanding and acceptance of the Code.
- e. Every employee must confirm his or her past compliance and reconfirm his or her continued commitment to the Code on an annual basis.

### **2. GENERAL DUTIES**

- a. Employees must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of CBT, and must not bring CBT into disrepute.
- b. Employees must comply with the letter and spirit of all applicable laws. Employees must also comply with this Code, other CBT policies and the *Columbia Basin Management Plan*.
- c. Employees owe a duty of care to CBT and must exercise the degree of skill and diligence reasonably expected from an ordinary person of his or her knowledge or experience.
- d. Employees must act with integrity, dignity and in a professional, courteous and ethical manner.
- e. Employees must not engage in any conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation or commit any act that reflects adversely on their integrity, trustworthiness or professional competence.

### **3. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- a. Employees must not disclose Confidential Information except as necessary for the performance of their duties and/or where disclosure is required by law. Employees must continue to maintain information in confidence after their employment with CBT has ended.
- b. Employees must not use Confidential Information in order to further their own Private Interests or those of a Related Party.
- c. If in doubt about what is considered Confidential Information, an employee should seek guidance from his or her manager.

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### **4. WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR AND HARASSMENT**

- a. Employees must treat each other with respect and dignity and must not engage in Discrimination or Harassment.
- b. The conduct and language of CBT employees in the workplace must meet acceptable social standards and must contribute to a positive work environment.
- c. All CBT employees have the right to expect, and the responsibility to create, a workplace where all employees are safe. Violence in the workplace is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- d. Employees must report any incident of violence, Discrimination, or Harassment directed towards themselves or their co-workers. Any employee hearing a threat, including a threat to a co-worker, must report that threat if he or she has reasonable cause to believe that the threat is serious. Reports may be made to any person in a management position or the HR Coordinator. CBT will not permit any employee to suffer any Harassment, disadvantage, reprisal, disciplinary measure, demotion, termination, or other adverse affect to their employment for making such a report in good faith.

### **5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- a. In performing their duties, employee must not put themselves in a position in which their Private Interests and their duties to CBT are in a Conflict of Interest, and must do their utmost to avoid such a situation.
- b. A Conflict of Interest exists when an employee is performing a duty to CBT and in doing so has the opportunity to further his or her Private Interest.
- c. A potential Conflict of Interest exists when a reasonably well informed person could perceive that an employee's ability to perform a duty may be affected by his or her Private Interest.
- d. Employees must disclose all circumstances that could constitute an actual or potential Conflict of Interest as soon as possible. Employees will make their disclosure to their manager and the HR Coordinator.
- e. In the case where a Conflict of Interest has been disclosed, the employee's manager and the HR Coordinator will make recommendations to the CEO, as to how the situation should be handled.
- f. The following is intended to provide more guidance on Conflicts of Interest but does not include all possible Conflict of Interest situations that may arise:
  - Employees must not exercise any decision-making power resulting from their CBT duties which could bring about financial benefit to their Private Interests.
  - Employees must not enter into personal contracts or transactions where to do so could be in conflict with the best interests of CBT.

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- Employees must not divert a business opportunity to themselves or to a Related Party, or engage in such a transaction if CBT is considering pursuing the opportunity, or has considered pursuing the opportunity.

### **6. ALLEGATIONS OF WRONG DOING**

- a. Employees have a duty to report any situation involving CBT staff actions that they believe contravenes the law or this Code of Conduct, misuses public funds or assets, constitutes a questionable accounting practice, accounting controls or auditing matter, represents a danger to public health and safety, or a significant danger to the environment.
- b. Such a report may be made to the CEO or the Director, Finance & Operations or to the HR Coordinator or in accordance with the Whistle Blower Policy. The person receiving such a report must make a complete and timely review of the employee's concerns.
- c. CBT will not permit any employee to suffer any Harassment, disadvantage, reprisal, disciplinary measure, demotion, termination, or other adverse affect to their employment for making such a report in good faith.
- d. Allegations of impropriety or unlawful activity may result in severe personal repercussions for the subject of the Complaint. False or malicious allegations made by an individual will be considered a serious offence and may result in termination of employment.

### **7. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS**

- a. Employees are obliged to cooperate with lawyers defending CBT's interest during legal proceedings including where required, testifying or swearing one or more affidavits relating to their knowledge of the facts in dispute.
- b. A written opinion prepared on behalf of the CBT by any legal counsel is to be treated as subject to solicitor/client privilege and is, therefore, confidential. Such an opinion is not to be released to persons outside the CBT, without the consent of the CEO.

### **8. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- a. Employees are free to comment on public issues but must exercise caution to ensure that, by doing so, they do not jeopardize the perception of impartiality in the performance of their duties.
- b. Employees must not use their position at CBT to lend weight to the public expression of their personal opinions.

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### **9. POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

- a. If engaging in political activities, employees must be able to retain impartiality in relation to their CBT duties and responsibilities. Employees must not engage in political activities during working hours or use CBT facilities, equipment or resources in support of these activities.
- b. Any employee who wishes to run as a full-time candidate in a provincial or federal election must take a leave without pay during the election process. If elected, the employee must resign from their position at CBT.
- c. The CEO may designate certain positions to which conditions set out in paragraph 9(b) will apply for individuals seeking election to local government office.

### **10. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

- a. Employees who are Direct Relatives may not be employed in situations where:
  - a reporting relationship exists where one employee has influence, input or decision-making power over the other employee's performance evaluation, salary, special permissions, conditions of work and similar matters; or
  - the working relationship affords an opportunity for collusion between the two employees that would have a detrimental effect on the CBT's interest.
- b. The above restriction on working relationships may be waived provided that the CEO is informed and is satisfied that sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure that CBT's interests are not compromised.

### **11. PERSONNEL DECISIONS**

- a. Employees are to disqualify themselves as participants in personnel decisions when their objectivity would be compromised for any reason or where a direct or indirect benefit or perceived benefit could accrue to them. For example, employees are not to participate in staffing actions involving Direct Relatives.

### **12. OUTSIDE REMUNERATIVE AND VOLUNTEER WORK**

- a. Employees may engage in remunerative employment with another employer, carry on a business, receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position or engage in volunteer activities provided it does not:
  - interfere with the performance of their duties as a CBT employee;
  - bring the CBT into disrepute;
  - represent a Conflict of Interest or create the reasonable perception of a Conflict of Interest;
  - appear to be an official act or to represent CBT opinion or policy;
  - involve the unauthorized use of work time or CBT premises, services, equipment or supplies to which they have access by virtue of their employment; and

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- gain an advantage that is derived from their employment as a CBT employee.

### **13. BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

- a. An employee who sits on a board of directors, other than at the request of CBT, must ensure steps are taken to avoid an unintended perception that they are acting on behalf of CBT.
- b. An employee who sits on a board of directors at the request of CBT must remit any associated remuneration received in his or her capacity as director, to CBT.

### **14. GIFTS, DONATIONS AND BENEFITS**

- a. Employees shall avoid giving or receiving a Gift or Benefit that affects the performance of their duties, obliges them to a third party, or diminishes the credibility of CBT. Employees shall, in all circumstances, refrain from requesting a Gift or Benefit.
- b. Employees uncertain of the appropriateness of a Gift or Benefit, whether before or after receipt, shall consult their manager, who will determine whether the Gift or Benefit may be accepted.
- c. If an inappropriate Gift or Benefit cannot be refused or returned without offense or damage to a business relationship, it may be donated to a charitable cause of the employee's choice. A Gift or Benefit so donated shall not be reported as a charitable donation.

### **15. EMPLOYEE INVENTIONS**

- a. Any invention such as computer programming or investment modeling, developed by an employee as part of his or her duties, whether within or outside business hours, is deemed owned by CBT.

### **16. USE OF CBT PROPERTY**

- a. CBT assets must not be misappropriated for personal use by employees. Employees are entrusted with the care, management and cost-effective use of CBT's property, including the use of CBT's name, and should not make significant use of these resources for their own personal benefit or purposes.
- b. Employees should ensure that all CBT property assigned to them is maintained in good condition and should be able to account for such property.
- c. Employees must not dispose of CBT property except in accordance with guidelines established by the CEO and/or the Director, Finance & Operations.

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## APPENDIX 1

### CODE OF CONDUCT DEFINITIONS

*“Confidential Information”* includes proprietary, technical, financial, legal, or any other information which CBT treats as confidential, with the exception of information that is already within the public domain.

*“Conflict of Interest”* means a circumstance in which an employee’s private or financial interest is, or could by a reasonable person be perceived to be, in conflict with (a) the interest of CBT or its stakeholders, (b) that employee’s obligation to act in the best interest of CBT or its stakeholders, (c) the discharge of an employee’s duties or responsibilities to CBT or its stakeholders.

*“Direct Relative”* is defined as an employee’s parent, spouse, child, grandchild, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and any other person with whom the employee permanently resides.

*“Discrimination”* means intentional or unintentional differential treatment of a person or a group of persons by reason of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, political belief or conviction of a criminal or summary offence unrelated to his or her employment, for which there is no *bona fide* or reasonable justification.

*“Gift or Benefit”* means a gift, preferential service, favour or other benefit conferred on a person by a party other than his or her employer including, without limitation, a physical gift, preferential pricing, ticket to an event, hospitality services or access to recreational property.

*“Harassment”* means any improper behaviour by an employee which is directed at and is offensive to another employee and which the employee knew or should have known would be unwelcome. It includes objectionable conduct, comment or display that demeans, belittles or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment to an employee. It includes harassment based on any of the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the *Human Rights Code*.

*“Private Interest”* is not limited to a financial interest or economic advantage and can include any interest that personally benefits an employee.

*“Related Party”* means a spouse, child, parent, sibling, business associate or other person connected to an employee by frequent or close association.