

Principles

The Alberta NDP Caucus is committed to cooperation, understanding and mutual respect as the basis of interaction between Members of the Legislative Assembly, staff, volunteers, and the general public. We are committed to a harassment-free workplace.

For too long, those who experienced harassment and abuse from people in positions of power were not believed and quickly dismissed. Women, in particular, were subjected to sexual harassment and taught to simply accept it if they wished to hold on to their jobs. LGBTQ2S people were forced into hiding for fear of being ridiculed, harassed or worse. And for vulnerable people including people living with disabilities, racialized people, and religious and ethnic minorities, that harassment and mistreatment was often exacerbated by a lack of economic opportunities. We start from the principle that we accept that people's stories should be heard and respected.

As our world increasingly refuses to accept mistreatment and harassment, as stories are told out loud in public, and as we move forward to build new and respectful workplaces, we are committed to ensuring that we maintain the principles of integrity and fairness. This means that as stories are told, we are responsible for supporting those who make complaints and those against whom allegations are made have an opportunity to engage in an impartial investigative process. We accept that the outcomes in every circumstance may not be the same and that true justice is restorative and also aims to reduce disrespect and harassment in all circumstances.

Application and Scope

The policy applies to current Alberta NDP MLAs, and their employees (including employees of Ministers' and the Premier's Offices), as well as interactions between MLAs, employees and the general public. In the case of former MLAs and staff, while attempts may be made to engage them in a process of investigation or reconciliation, it may not be possible to do so, in which case, processes will focus on learning from past experience and potentially reviewing and revising existing policy and practice.

The policy does not apply to party candidates. Candidates will fall under the party's harassment policy.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is any objectionable or unwelcome conduct or comment that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Disagreement on work performance or on other work-related issues is normally not considered harassment and is not dealt with under the provisions of this policy but in the context of performance management.

Sexual harassment includes any harassment of a sexual nature or for a sexual purpose; any harassment based on or because of the sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of an individual; any sexual advance or sexual solicitation in exchange for any work-related benefit; or any negative workplace-related treatment of an individual, or threat thereof, because he or she has refused

a sexual advance or sexual solicitation. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. We recognize that all people, regardless of gender may be victims or offenders.

Discrimination is any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability. Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated, or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority.

How to Direct Complaints

Complaints about a Minister or government staff will be made to Premier's Deputy Chief of Staff. If the Deputy Chief of Staff is the complainant or respondent the matter shall be brought to the Premier's Chief of Staff.

Complaints about Private Members, staff of Private Members or caucus staff will be made to the Caucus Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the complainant or respondent the matter shall be brought to the human resource and operations coordinator.

Informal Resolution

After a complaint is made, the individual to whom it is disclosed will consider, together with the complainant, the option of proceeding with an informal resolution. An informal resolution could include the complainant speaking directly to the individual against whom they are making the complaint, or a mediated resolution can be sought to rectify inappropriate behavior.

If the complainant does not wish to pursue an informal resolution, or attempts at informal resolution fail, a formal investigation may occur.

Formal Investigation

In the case of a formal investigation, an independent investigator will be engaged to conduct the investigation and recommend outcomes.

All independent investigators will be required to commit to maintain strict confidentiality in respect of any sensitive and/or proprietary information they may come across in the course of the investigation, and to not disclose such information publicly, outside of the organization, or within the organization except as may be necessary in the course of conducting and/or finalizing the investigation.

Public Complaints

If a member of the public makes a public complaint (for example, through social media) every reasonable attempt will be made to contact the individual to begin a complaint process. In the event that the complainant cannot be contacted, an assessment will be made of whether or not the information contained in the complaint provides sufficient details to be able to conduct a meaningful investigation.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the complaint but not to the exclusion of being able to mediate a resolution and/or conduct an investigation. However, only those individuals who are necessary to the investigation will be made aware of the complaint. All of those individuals will be required to keep the matter confidential. Failure to keep the matter confidential may result in disciplinary action.

In the event that a member of the public must be interviewed by an investigator in the course of the investigation, he or she will be provided only with the minimum amount of information necessary to enable a meaningful interview.

Legislative Assembly and Government Policies

The LAO and GOA policies may run concurrent investigations and processes if a complaint is made through those channels as well as the caucus policy; however, those processes will have no bearing on the outcome of the Caucus process.