

## ABUSE & HARASSMENT POLICY

### Policy Statement:

The MEA will not tolerate any form of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or psychological abuse, nor any form of neglect or harassment.

### Policy Applicability:

This policy applies to all volunteers, independent contractors, employees and the Board of Directors of the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA). It also applies to all visitors/delegates attending MEA sponsored events including but not limited to Board and Committee meetings, conferences and training sessions.

### Definitions:

- **Physical Abuse** is defined as but not limited to the use of intentional force that can result in physical harm or injury to an individual. It can take the form of slapping, hitting, punching, shaking, pulling, throwing, kicking, biting, choking, strangling or the abusive use of restraints.
- **Sexual Abuse** is defined as but not limited to any unwanted touching, fondling, observations for sexual gratification, any penetration or attempted penetration with a penis, digital or object of the vagina or anus, verbal or written propositions or innuendos, exhibitionism or exploitation for profit including pornography.
- **Emotional Abuse** is defined as but not limited to a chronic attack on an individual's self-esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing, habitual scapegoat, blaming.
- **Verbal Abuse** is defined as but not limited to humiliating remarks, name calling, swearing at, taunting, teasing, continual put downs.
- **Psychological Abuse** is defined as but not limited to communication of an abusive nature, sarcasm, exploitive behaviour, intimidation, manipulation, and insensitivity to race, sexual preference or family dynamics.
- **Neglect** is defined as but not limited to any behaviour that leads to a failure to provide services which are necessary such as withdrawing basic necessities as forms of punishment, failing to assess and respond to changes in health status and refusing or withdrawing physical or emotional support.
- **Harassment** is defined as but not limited to any unwanted physical or verbal conduct that offends or humiliates, including gender-based harassment. It can be a single incident or several incidents over time. It includes threats, intimidation, display of racism, sexism, unnecessary physical contact, suggestive remarks or gestures, offensive pictures or jokes. Harassment will be considered to have taken place if a reasonable person ought to have known that the behaviour was unwelcome.

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**Approvals:**

**Approved September 5, 2019**

- **Discrimination** is defined as but not limited to an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons, also called grounds, as protected under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

**Governing Documents:**

- *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, RSO 1990, c O 1
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*, RSO 1990, c H 19
- *Criminal Code of Canada*, RSC 1985, c C-46
- *MEA Constitution and By-laws*, as amended.

**Abuse Reporting Procedures:**

1. Volunteers shall report examples of abuse to any or all the following:
  - a. MEA's Member Services Coordinator,
  - b. MEA's Executive Director
  - c. MEA Board member(s)
2. Independent Contractors and/or employees of the MEA shall report examples of abuse to any or all the following:
  - a. MEA's Executive Director
  - b. MEA Board member(s)
3. Board members of the MEA will report examples to any or all the following
  - a. MEA's Executive Director

In any event, any volunteers, independent contractors, employees and members of the Board of Directors who feel threatened in any situation, should terminate the interaction in a non-threatening manner, if possible. This applies whether the interaction is in-person, on the phone or by e-mail.

Telephone/Email/In-Person:

- Interrupt the conversation firmly but politely and advise the person that you:
  - Do not like the tone of the conversation
  - Will not accept abusive treatment
  - Will end the conversation if necessary

In Person:

- Advise the person that you will ask him/her to leave the building/site
- If the behaviour persists
  - end the conversation
  - Ask the person to leave the building, or leave the site yourself if appropriate
- If you believe the person poses a physical threat:
  - Advise other staff if necessary, and leave the immediate area

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- Call police

**Review & Disciplinary Procedures:**

The MEA Board of Directors will review the reported abuse allegation, following applicable legislation and will take appropriate action as necessary which could include:

- i. Removal of volunteer from MEA committee
- ii. Banning of delegate/volunteer/member from MEA event's
- iii. Suspension of member from Association
- iv. Suspension or termination of MEA employee/independent contractor
- v. Termination of MEA Board Member

In the case where the allegation involves a member of the Board of Directors, the Board will review the matter independently (without the member present).

The Board may retain the services of an abuse/conflict professional to assist in the review process.

Where a dispute arises in the outcome, the Board may consider an Arbitration/Mediation process.

**Notice:**

All MEA volunteers, independent contractors, employees and members of the Board of Directors will be advised of the policy as they commence their role in the organization – and will be required to acknowledge the policy and agree to abide by it.

All delegates/visitors of attending MEA events will be advised of the policy through the event registration process.

Questions regarding the policy can be directed to the MEA's Executive Director.