

### WHISTLEBLOWING – REPORTING, INVESTIGATION AND PROTECTION:

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the disclosure of wrongdoing that is contrary to public interest. This policy sets out guidelines for the reporting and investigation of serious misconduct where there are no procedures in place for doing so, and provides protection from retaliation to those who report serious misconduct in good faith. Reporting serious misconduct in good faith is also referred to as whistleblowing.

#### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Britannia Community Services Centre (“Britannia”) and Park Board staff seconded to Britannia.

#### **POLICY STATEMENTS**

##### **1 General**

- 1.1** Britannia Community Services Centre (“Britannia”) is committed to the principles of integrity, accountability, responsibility, leadership, respect, and openness.
- 1.2** Staff are to act in a way that enhances public confidence in Britannia and to fulfill their duty to act honestly and exercise reasonable care and diligence.
- 1.3** Staff have a responsibility to report instances of serious misconduct. Examples of serious misconduct are set out in Schedule “A” to this policy.
- 1.4** This policy is intended to supplement existing procedures at the Britannia whereby employees may already raise matters of serious concern. This policy is not intended to override or replace existing reporting processes provided for under Britannia policies, collective agreements or legislation and does not create an independent reporting requirement where other reporting processes exist.
- 1.5** Reports made under this policy may be redirected where other more appropriate procedures are applicable such as:
  - Grievance procedures (see applicable collective agreement)

- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/human rights complaint procedures related to harassment or human rights violations (see human rights legislation and applicable policies)
  - Procedures for reporting safety concerns (see Workers' Compensation Act and Health & Safety Policy)
- 1.6** Protection for reporting in good faith of alleged serious misconduct (see 5.0 – Whistleblower Protection against Retaliation) applies in all cases regardless of the Britannia policy or process under which the report was made.

## **2 Roles & Responsibilities**

- 2.1 *Executive Director:*** The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing this policy. The Executive Director is to appoint the Manager of Administrative Services as the Designate responsible for the day-to-day administration and stewardship of the policy. The Executive Director will report serious misconduct issues to the Britannia Board as appropriate. The Executive Director will execute the roles and responsibilities of the Designate should alleged serious misconduct involve the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate.
- 2.2 *Designate:*** The Manager of Administrative Services receives in confidence all reports of alleged serious misconduct unless the Executive Director or Manager of Administrative Services as Designate is alleged to be involved. The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate is responsible for overseeing the investigation of allegations of serious misconduct and/or retaliation for the reporting of serious misconduct. The Designate is responsible for assigning investigations to the most appropriate party, notifying the appropriate parties of investigations and outcomes, reporting to the Executive Director, and ensuring the confidential retention of investigation documentation in accordance with Britannia's Records and Information Management Policy and the requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 2.3 *Britannia Board:*** In the event an allegation of serious misconduct involves the Executive Director, the matter will be dealt with in-camera by the Britannia Board who will determine and assign responsibility for the investigation and disposition of the matter.
- 2.4 *Managers/ Supervisors:*** Any level of manager or supervisor receiving a report of alleged serious misconduct from an employee is to promptly

forward it in an impartial and strictly confidential manner to the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate. A copy is to be given to the Manager whose area of responsibility is involved, unless the alleged misconduct may involve, or have been condoned by, the Manager.

- 2.5** **Staff:** Staff are to report alleged instances of serious misconduct in good faith to their supervisor, manager, Executive Director or directly to the Manager of Administrative Services. Should the alleged serious misconduct involve the Manager of Administrative Services, staff should report the misconduct to the Executive Director, or should the alleged serious misconduct involve the Executive Director, staff should report the misconduct to the Britannia Board as outlined in section 2.3 above.
- 2.6** Should an employee who brings forward a complaint under the Policy be dissatisfied with the process by which the complaint is handled, she/he may seek independent review of the matter by contacting the BC Office of the Ombudsperson

### **3 Reporting of Serious Misconduct**

- 3.1** **Acting in Good Faith:** Reports of serious misconduct are a serious matter. Staff reporting alleged serious misconduct are to act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the report to be true.

Where staff come forward to report their own serious misconduct under this policy, they will not be exempt from discipline appropriate to the serious misconduct; however, such reporting will be given appropriate consideration as a mitigating factor and these instances will be dealt with on an individual basis in accordance with this policy.

- 3.2** **False or Frivolous Reports:** Knowingly making false allegations or making allegations in a malicious manner will be viewed as serious misconduct.

Reports that are found to be frivolous, false, malicious or in bad faith will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

- 3.3** **Process for Reporting Serious Misconduct:**

- Staff aware of serious misconduct have a responsibility to report it either to their supervisor, manager, Executive Director or directly to the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate.
- Should the alleged serious misconduct involve the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate, staff should report the misconduct to the Executive Director, or should the alleged serious misconduct involve the Executive Director, staff should report the misconduct to the Britannia Board.

- Staff are to report serious misconduct in writing (see “Schedule B: Form for Reporting Serious Misconduct”). Where an employee reports serious misconduct to his or her supervisor/manager verbally, the supervisor/manager receiving the report must document the discussion, confirm its accuracy with the employee and promptly forward the report in an impartial and strictly confidential manner to the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate with a copy to the manager whose area of responsibility is involved unless the alleged misconduct involves the Manager of Administrative Services.

#### **4 Confidentiality**

- 4.1** The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will make every reasonable effort to provide confidentiality to those reporting serious misconduct. Staff may remain anonymous when reporting; however; investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identifiable. The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate may investigate a report made on an anonymous basis and will determine whether to do so in light of all of the circumstances, including the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.
- 4.2** Investigations will be carried out in a manner that limits disclosure of the report and allegations on a “need to know” basis. Information about a report of serious misconduct will only be disclosed to those responsible for investigating and/or addressing the report. Reports will be made to the Executive Director as identified under 7.0 – Retention and Documentation of Investigations.
- 4.3** Confidentiality extends to all records relating to reports, including but not limited to meetings, interviews and investigation results. Personal information, including the identity of the person reporting the alleged serious misconduct, will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Individuals making a report, investigators, witnesses and individuals against whom a report has been made are expected to maintain confidentiality. Breaches of confidentiality may be regarded as serious misconduct and will be treated accordingly.
- 4.4** Although the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the individual reporting the serious misconduct, information collected and retained may be required to be released by law including release required in court proceedings, arbitration or other legal proceedings.

## 5 Whistleblower Protection against Retaliation

- 5.1 *Forms of Retaliation:*** Any form of retaliation, discrimination or reprisal against an employee because that person reported serious misconduct in good faith or because that person acted as a witness or otherwise participated in an investigation in good faith will be considered a serious violation of this policy. Such retaliatory actions are themselves serious misconduct and may result in discipline up to and including dismissal.
- 5.2 *Reporting Retaliation:*** If an employee believes that they have been subjected to retaliation as set out above, that person may submit a written report to the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate who will ensure the allegation is appropriately investigated.

## 6 Investigations

- 6.1 *Investigation Process:*** The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate has primary responsibility for investigating allegations of serious misconduct. The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will review and assess the seriousness of all reports promptly and determine the manner in which the report will be investigated. This determination will not be influenced by the position or length of service of the employee(s) accused of serious misconduct. At the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate's discretion an investigation may be carried out by the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate directly, assigned to management in the area affected, assigned to an investigative team, assigned to an independent third-party or re-directed to a more appropriate existing process. Where the Executive Director or the Britannia Board is executing the roles and responsibilities of the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate, they will determine, based on the circumstances, the appropriate party to investigate the allegation of serious misconduct, which may include the Britannia Board, an independent third-party or other appropriate party.
- 6.2 *Material Financial Concerns:*** If upon initial assessment it appears that the concern raised could materially affect the financial position of Britannia or the integrity of Britannia's system of internal controls, the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will advise the Executive Director and Director of Finance. The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will notify the Director, Risk Management of the amount of any potential loss for insurance purposes. Britannia will make every reasonable effort to pursue the recovery of Britannia losses from the offender or other appropriate sources.
- 6.3 *Criminal Activity and Other Illegal Conduct:*** In circumstances where it appears that a criminal act may have occurred, the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate may report the matter to the appropriate police agency. In circumstances where it appears that there may have been violations of other laws, the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate may advise the appropriate enforcement agency.

- 6.4 Acknowledging Reports:** Within ten working days of a report being received, the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate (or Executive Director or the Britannia Board assuming the role of the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate per sections 2.1 & 2.3) will respond in writing to the employee making the report acknowledging that the allegation of serious misconduct has been received. Subject to legal constraints, the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will also inform the employee making the report at the conclusion of any investigation. The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate may not be able to disclose the precise action being taken where doing so would be contrary to *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or other requirements for confidentiality.
- 6.5 Opportunity to Respond to Allegations:** In all but exceptional circumstances, individuals accused of serious misconduct will be given an opportunity to know and respond to the allegations made.
- 6.6 Consequences of Serious Misconduct:** Consequences for employees found guilty of serious misconduct may include discipline up to and including dismissal.

It is understood that union staff may grieve any disciplinary action under the applicable collective agreement.

## **7 Retention and Documentation of Investigations**

The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will document the results of each investigation in a confidential report. If an investigation determines that serious misconduct has occurred, the Manager of Administrative Services/Designate will immediately report the details and any action taken to the Executive Director.

A summary of reports made under this policy and outcomes of subsequent investigations will be submitted immediately to the Executive Director and to Britannia Board.

## **8 Mitigation of Further Risk**

The Executive Director will conduct a review of each investigation report where serious misconduct was found to have occurred and will assign responsibility to ensure steps are taken to address underlying causes and to then take appropriate actions to mitigate the risk of further occurrences.

## **9 Media**

Concerns regarding serious misconduct may have a significant impact on Britannia's legitimate interests. Staff have a responsibility to use the internal

whistleblowing reporting process when they have such concerns. Matters covered by this policy are considered confidential and breaches of that confidentiality, including making public statements or disclosing information to the media, will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

## 10 Federal or Provincial Legislation

In the event that any portion of this policy is inconsistent with a binding City collective agreement or federal or provincial legislation, that portion and only that portion of the policy will have no application to the extent of that inconsistency. All other portions of the policy will continue in full force and effect.

### REFERENCE

Schedule A: Examples of Serious Misconduct  
 Schedule B: Form for Reporting Serious Misconduct

### RELATED POLICIES

<p><b><u>AE-002-03</u></b>  <b><u>AG-002-01</u></b></p>	<p><b>Code of Conduct</b>  <b>Harassment – Complaints</b>  <b>Corporate Records and Information Management</b></p>
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### APPROVAL HISTORY

<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	General Manager, Human Resources	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Council	<b>DATE:</b>	2008/05/15
<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	Manager of Administrative Services to Britannia Executive Committee	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	BRITANNIA BOARD	<b>DATE:</b>	2009/2/11
<b>Revised By:</b>	General Manager, Human Resources	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Council	<b>DATE:</b>	2017/10/31
<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	Manager of Administrative Services to Britannia Executive Committee	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	BRITANNIA BOARD	<b>DATE:</b>	2017/11/08

## **Schedule A: Examples of Serious Misconduct**

The following are examples of serious misconduct that should be reported pursuant to this policy:

- serious violations of the Code of Conduct and other Britannia policies;
- manipulation of Britannia resources for any illegal, improper or unethical purpose including fraud, theft, embezzling funds, or accepting kickbacks or bribes;
- misappropriating funds, misdirecting or misuse of funds, assets or corporate information;
- manipulating Britannia accounting or audit records or destroying any accounting or audit-related records except as otherwise permitted by Britannia's Corporate Records and Information Management policy;
- actions likely to cause serious harm to persons, public safety, property or the environment;
- actions resulting in the Britannia being exposed to liability or financial loss;
- failure to take reasonable steps to report and/or rectify actions that may impact negatively on the Britannia's reputation resulting in the public losing confidence in the organization's ability to deliver services;
- deliberately concealing information relating to any of the above.

It should be noted that the above are examples only and are not an exhaustive list of what amounts to serious misconduct.



## Schedule B: Form for Reporting Serious Misconduct

This form should be completed by anyone aware of serious misconduct and forwarded to the appropriate individual as outlined in Section 3.3 – Process for Reporting Serious Misconduct of this policy.

### ***TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUAL RAISING CONCERN***

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT (include dates, times, individuals involved):

I hereby declare that I am raising this concern in good faith and have reasonable grounds to believe the information above is accurate and true.

Signature (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Staff making a report under this policy are encouraged to provide their name in confidence which permits for follow-up questions and clarification if necessary. Investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identifiable. The Manager of Administrative Services/Designate may investigate a report made on an anonymous basis and will determine whether to do so in light of all of the circumstances, including the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources).

Date Submitted to Supervisor/Manager/Department Head/GM (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted to Manager of Administrative Services/Designate: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***TO BE COMPLETED BY MANAGER OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/DESIGNATE***

ACTION TAKEN:

Manager of Administrative Services Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

The above information is collected in accordance with the *Vancouver Charter* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. It is collected for purposes set out in the policy

**Whistleblowing – Reporting, Investigation and Protection.** Questions about the collection of this information may be directed to the Manager, Corporate Information & Privacy, 453 West 12th Avenue, (604) 873-7999.