

Code of Ethics

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Code of Ethics

of the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA)

General Introduction

In this code, “OHSA” refers to Occupational Health and Safety Authority. This preamble defines a Code of Ethics as a foundational framework that guides ethical behaviour and decision-making across all professional relationships. Its core purpose is to establish principles, promote the adoption of best practices, and uphold the highest standards of integrity, probity, and professionalism. This Code focuses on the overarching ethical conduct of all OHSA employees. Thus, it is to be considered as the ethical benchmark, delineating the scope for action and behaviour in relationships with seniors, peers and subordinates.

Rationale

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) relies on the respect it earns from employees in both its Malta and Gozo offices. The basis of this Code is built around the Authority's core purpose and Mission Statement **Every Worker Counts**.

This respect is built on public confidence and the integrity of the system. Every OHSA employee has an important role in upholding this trust. The public expects OHSA staff to be honest, fair, efficient, loyal, and competent and anticipates OHSA's full compliance with the law, ensuring decisions are made fairly, impartially, and promptly. Public funds must be spent judiciously, and property must be used responsibly. Employees are expected to act ethically, demonstrating conscientiousness, courtesy, and competence. Service users hold OHSA staff members accountable for their actions, hence any misuse of trust, resources, or information weakens public confidence. Upholding high standards of integrity is essential.

This Code of Ethics defines the structure guiding the behaviours and actions for this to be achieved, which behaviours are built upon our core values:

- Worker centred philosophy
- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Transparency

Applicability

This Code of Ethics is applicable to:

- a. All OHSA employees & offices. This also applies to OHSA employees seconded to organisations external to Malta's Public Administration and OHSA employees who work with Ministries or Parliamentary Secretariats.
- b. The chairperson and members of standing boards and commissions within the OHSA.
- c. The Code covers behaviour and actions both inside and outside of the Authority.
- d. OHSA employees who belong to a regulated profession and who are consequently adherent to a professional code of ethics nonetheless must abide by this Code.

The Values of Public Employees and Board Members

OHSA Employees and Board Members shall uphold and operate with this set of values:

- a) Act with Integrity and Respect;
- b) Show Loyalty and Trust;
- c) Strive for Quality and Accountability;
- d) Act with Impartiality and do not Discriminate;

1. Integrity

OHSA employees shall;

- (a) Act consistently with integrity, diligence and honesty to stand public scrutiny even when there are no applicable laws, policies, or procedures;
- (b) Use public resources in an appropriate conscientious, efficient, and effective manner in the public interest;
- (c) Use official Authority information, or resources to achieve goals and carry out responsibilities in a fair, impartial, and equitable manner;
- (d) Refuse any gifts, payments, compensation, privileges, or solicitations unless the gift is nominal and does not influence duties as an OHSA employee.

OHSA employees must avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest between official duties and any personal or financial interests, including those of close relations. A conflict arises if the ability to perform duties impartially is questioned or if placed in a position of bias.

All cases of alleged conflict of interest must be brought to the attention of the first line superior and HR.

OHSA employees who resign from their role/position within the Authority are expected to abide with DIRECTIVE NO. 14 - "GOVERNING FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE REVOLVING DOOR POLICY FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. Issued on 18 June 2020 by the Principal Permanent Secretary in terms of the Public Administration Act (CAP 595)."

Directive 16 - GOVERNING FRAMEWORK FOR PREVENTING AND MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

2. Respect

OHSA Employees and Board Members must:

- a) Treat everyone with respect and courtesy.
- b) Avoid any form of discrimination or harassment.
- c) Respect others' opinions, beliefs, and individuality.
- d) Ensure own health and safety, as well as that of others.
- e) Collaborate cooperatively with colleagues.

3. Loyalty

OHSA Employees and Board Members must:

- a) Follow the law and the Constitution or any amendment issued from time to time.
- b) Adhere to official policies and guidelines of the Authority.
- c) Offer objective, informed, and honest advice.
- d) Obey lawful instructions, both written and verbal, from superiors.
- e) Regardless of paragraph 4(d), OHSA employees who identify more effective ways to achieve objectives are encouraged and expected, to inform their superiors before executing instructions. If they receive verbal directives that contradict the Code of Ethics or seem improper, they may request those instructions in writing.

4. Trust

OHSA Employees and Board Members must:

- a) Act to gain and maintain the public's and superiors' trust.
- b) Safeguard confidential information, especially personal data, and do not reveal or use it without proper authorisation.
- c) Act in a way, both officially and privately, that upholds and reinforces Malta's reputation and that of its governing institutions.
- d) Confidential information must be protected, disclosure of such information must respect the Freedom of Information Act and data protection regulations.

5. Quality

OHSA Employees and Board Members must:

- a) Develop skills and stay updated with changes in their areas of expertise to enhance duty execution and service delivery.
- b) Apply knowledge, experience, drive, and initiative to continuously improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of service delivery.
- c) Use appropriate discretion in interpreting rules intelligently and fairly, avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach.
- d) Coordinate activities with other staff in the Authority to enhance efficiency in public administration.
- e) Identify and remediate poor performance, misuse of resources, or misconduct.

6. Accountability

OHSA Employees and Board Members must:

- a) Act transparently and comply with all laws, regulations, procedures and policies.
- b) Be prepared to have actions judged by others.
- c) Provide clear explanations of judgements, behaviours, intentions, and actions to authorised stakeholders.
- d) Report any Code of Ethics violations by OHSA employees to the CEO/HR department.
- e) Cooperate fully with investigations by authorised internal or external entities.
- f) Take responsibility for actions and behaviour, including errors, misjudgements, and negligence.
- g) Assign tasks appropriately to subordinates, provide necessary oversight, and ensure accountability, while giving credit where it is due.

7. Non-discrimination

OHSA employees and Board Members must:

- a) Ensure that no discrimination occurs based on the race, origin, skin colour, nationality, political opinions, creed, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, mental/physical well-being, or civil status of any employee.
- b) Ensure fundamental rights and freedoms are respected without infringing on others' rights or public interest.
- c) Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

8. Impartiality

OHSA employees and Board Members must:

- a) Act by official OHSA Policy and Procedures.
- b) Ensure employees' affairs are handled impartially and fairly.
- c) Ensure any decision is based on objective criteria, avoiding personal bias, conflict, or prejudice, and not giving unjustified preferential treatment to any individual.
- d) Stay politically neutral and avoid discrediting the Authority with private actions.
- e) Ensure that any public comments, including via social media, and participation in political activities, do not affect or compromise public confidence in the competence and impartiality of the Authority and public administration, nor place OHSA employees and board members in conflict with their duties. This so they serve the Government of Malta in an impartial manner.
- f) Remain loyal to the Authority and avoid actions that undermine its policies or public confidence.
- g) Political participation and public comments by OHSA employees may be restricted according to regulations that may be drawn to uphold public trust in the Authority's impartiality.

Compliance with the Code

Compliance with this Code should result in:

- An Authority that is effective, motivated, and committed, upholding high moral and ethical standards;
- High-quality service delivery by OHSA employees;
- Greater satisfaction among OHSA users and clients;
- A professional ethos focused on excellence and continuous improvement.

Non-Compliance with the Code

Employees who do not comply with this Code may face;

- Disciplinary proceedings;
- The implementation of relevant provisions derived from any applicable undertakings; and, or
- The initiation of criminal proceedings that may be required for serious breaches of trust or non-compliance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our Code of Ethics serves as the foundation of our commitment to integrity, accountability, and respect in all aspects of our duties and responsibilities. Upholding these principles is not only essential for fostering trust among our employees and stakeholders but also for ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory standards. Adherence to this Code is a shared responsibility, and each individual's commitment strengthens our collective reputation and success. Let us continue to embody these values, ensuring that our actions reflect the highest ethical standards and contribute to a sustainable and honourable future for the OHSA.

OHSA Corporate Services