



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Code of Conduct

Effective June 2025



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Code of Conduct

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Effective date

This Code is in effect as of June 20, 2025, and revokes and replaces the Code of Conduct in effect as of February 26, 2009.

Objectives of the CFIA Code of Conduct

The CFIA is dedicated to safeguarding food, animals, and plants, which enhances the health and well-being of Canada's people, environment, and economy.

Whether working in offices, labs, the field, third-party facilities, or on the front lines, CFIA employees make many decisions every day – decisions that help maintain public trust, reinforce the confidence of our stakeholders, and create a healthy, equitable workplace.

The Code of Conduct reflects our values and sets clear expectations for ethical and professional behaviour across the CFIA. It helps ensure that everyone – individually and as a team-acts in a way that supports our mission and mandate, and it provides resources for resolution when we do not.

This Code of Conduct (or "the Code") applies to all CFIA employees regardless of position, level, or work arrangement.

CFIA values and expected behaviours

CFIA employees are proud of the contributions we make to the quality of life of Canadians. We value everyone's part in this, from those who work on the front line to those who work in offices

and are committed to creating an environment where everyone can learn, contribute meaningfully, thrive, and feel valued.

We value scientific rigour. We maintain our regulatory independence, develop effective regulations, and enforce them with courage, free from personal bias.

We embed equity in our culture, policies, and practices, addressing systemic barriers to ensure fair access to opportunities.

We advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples by fostering respectful relationships, incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our work, and supporting meaningful engagement.

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or violence in the workplace, between employees (any group and level) or toward and originating from third parties.

Our CFIA and public sector values guide us in building a healthy work environment, making ethically sound decisions, and conserving public confidence. Longstanding CFIA values dictate our behaviours, as reflected in the integration of public sector and CFIA values below.

Respect for democracy

We respect democracy, recognizing that elected officials are accountable to Parliament and ultimately to the Canadian people, and that a non-partisan public sector is essential to our democracy.

- We align our efforts, energy, and expertise with government and CFIA priorities
- We provide decision makers with information, analysis, and advice, always striving to be open, candid, and impartial
- We never criticize the CFIA to a regulated party or client but raise our questions and concerns regarding CFIA directions through appropriate internal channels

Respect for people

Treating every person, internal and external to the CFIA, with respect, dignity and fairness is fundamental to our relationship with our colleagues, third parties and the Canadian public. Showing respect for people contributes to a safe and healthy work environment.

- We are committed to our physical and psychological well-being, creating a healthy workplace where people thrive, are treated with respect, and have equal career opportunities

- We have no tolerance for harassment or discrimination
 - We address unfair, inequitable, and inappropriate practices when we see them
- We listen to others and share our own ideas to combine the unique qualities and strengths inherent in a diverse workforce
- We foster a culture where we support each other by openly sharing mistakes, asking questions, and seeking help when needed
 - We are able to ask questions, seek feedback, report mistakes and problems, or propose new ideas without fear of negative consequences to ourselves or our careers

Integrity

The reputation and credibility of the CFIA are vital to our ability to deliver our mandate in Canada and abroad. As such, we behave, internally and externally, in a way that trust is preserved.

- We make evidence-based decisions and recommendations that are open and transparent, free of any real or perceived bias or influence
- We maintain our regulatory independence
 - We have the courage to make difficult and potentially unpopular decisions and recommendations, free from personal bias
- We value scientific rigour and professional and technical competence
 - These play a crucial role in our decision making
- We do not manipulate science to achieve a desired outcome but acknowledge that other factors must be taken into account in this decision making
- We never use our official roles to inappropriately obtain an advantage for ourselves or to advantage or disadvantage others

Stewardship

As federal public servants, we are entrusted to use and care for public resources responsibly, for both the short term and long term. At the CFIA, we make sure our resources-money, information, and systems-are used responsibly and effectively.

- We act with courage and rigour in identifying risks, taking decisive action, and managing challenges
- We acquire, preserve, and share knowledge appropriately, protecting personal and third-party information
- We treat public property with respect, committing to values and ethics through training, daily interactions, and reporting wrongdoing
- We innovate and manage resources in the public interest, ensuring decisions consider long-term impacts and comply with relevant legislation and policies

Excellence

Excellence at the CFIA means designing and delivering science-based policies, regulations, and services that support public trust, international market access and emergency response.

Through engagement, collaboration, and continuous professional development, CFIA fosters a high-performing organization committed to protecting the health of Canadians and our economy.

- We value a competent, qualified, and motivated personnel, whose efforts drive the results of the agency
- We work as one agency, fostering respect, teamwork, professional development, and equitable job opportunities.
- We develop effective, inclusive regulations, policies and strategies that reflect the diverse perspectives of the stakeholders who are affected by our decisions, internally and externally
 - We enforce them with rigour and provide accessible services in both official languages
- We foster an inclusive and safe environment that promotes equity, psychological and physical well-being, learning, innovation, and open communication

Application of the Code of Conduct

When signing their letter of offer, all CFIA employees agree to uphold the organization's values and expected behaviours as a condition of their employment.

Supervisors, managers, executives, and senior leaders are further responsible for leading by example and supporting employees in upholding the Code and related policies by allowing time for training, promoting CFIA values, and guiding ethical decision-making.

Even while on leave, CFIA employees remain accountable to the Code. This commitment also extends to contractors and students, who are expected to act in the spirit of the Code.

The Code is how we implement our values, outlining the legal policy and operational requirements including applicable federal acts and regulations, collective agreements, agency policies including the Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Policy that we must all abide by.

Any breach of the Code may lead to an investigation and appropriate corrective actions, this could range from coaching or additional training to more serious disciplinary measures, including suspension or termination, depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Resources for upholding the code

The agency offers a range of guidance, policies, and tools to support employees in meeting their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. These resources included throughout the Code and outlined in Annex A, are here to guide you, support your well-being, and help you make sound decisions in your day-to-day work.

Incivility, discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace

The CFIA is committed to providing a safe workplace and does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or violence in the workplace, between employees (any group and level) or toward and originating from third parties. The CFIA adopts the definition of discrimination provided in [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) and follows the [Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy](#).

The CFIA provides support and resources to prevent and address harassment and violence. This includes training, confidential counselling, conflict resolution services, and a formal recourse process for reporting concerning behaviour.

Anyone who is subjected to or witnesses aggressive, harassing, inappropriate or threatening behaviour or experiencing discrimination, is required to file a Security Incident Report and must report the occurrence to any management representative or to the CFIA's Office for Workplace Civility and Prevention of Harassment and Violence. The employer will assess the situation and implement measures to address and co-ordinate the appropriate response action in

Accordance with the CFIA's Directive on the Resolution of Work Place Harassment and Violence.

The CFIA's Office of the Ombuds can also be consulted for guidance.

Managers are responsible for supporting their employees and working to resolve the situation constructively. Employees will not be penalized or disciplined for making a complaint or submitting a notice of occurrence in good faith. In fact, employees have a legal obligation to report all hazardous situations noted during the course of employment and should be encouraged to report occurrences of work place harassment and violence so that they can be addressed and prevented.

While CFIA employees are expected to fully cooperate and participate in any investigation resulting from reporting the occurrence, employees requiring assistance during this process can reach out to the CFIA Office for Workplace Civility and Prevention of Harassment and Violence for guidance and support.

Conflict of Interest and Post Employment Policy

A conflict of interest arises when we allow personal assets, interests, or activities to affect in any way, or have the potential or appear to affect, the honest, impartial performance of our duties or our judgement to undertake those duties in the public interest.

A conflict of duties happens when we have competing or concurrent official responsibilities. For example, this could be our primary function at the CFIA and another role, like being on a board of directors or another outside function, which is also part of our official duties.

The Conflict of Interest Policy provides guidance on issues such as political activity, solicitation of donations and accepting hospitality and gifts.

All CFIA employees must review the CFIA's Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Policy at least annually to assess their situation with respect to possible conflict of interest, or immediately if their personal or employment situation changes. The CFIA's Conflict of Interest Self-Assessment Tool can help employees identify their potential for a conflict of interest. For any potential conflicts related to their personal assets, interests or activities, employees must submit a confidential report to the CFIA Conflict of Interest Secretariat for review and decision by the delegated authority.

Safety and security

Everyone has a role to play in keeping our workplace safe and secure.

The CFIA has designed and implemented an occupational health and safety system, also referred to as a Hazard Prevention Program (HPP) – an overarching framework that includes national and workplace program standards, guidelines, training and tools aimed at addressing and preventing workplace hazards for employees across the agency.

Managers and supervisors are responsible to provide employees with the information, instruction, equipment, protective clothing, and training necessary to ensure their health and safety during the performance of their duties.

Managers also have obligations within resolution processes, workplace incident reporting and investigation, and workers' compensation.

All employees are expected to take all reasonable and necessary precautions to ensure their own safety and health and that of other employees and any persons granted access to the workplace.

To safeguard CFIA information, assets and people, all employees are expected to:

- comply with agency security policies, procedures, and practices
- promptly report security incidents or events
- report any changes in personal circumstance that may affect their security status or security clearance

Care and use of government property and valuables

CFIA employees have a duty to care for government assets, valuables and property in their possession and only use government-owned or leased property or valuables for authorized business purposes, and never for personal use unless authorized. No external parties can be transported in a government-owned or leased vehicle unless that person's presence relates to official business or is in the CFIA's best interest.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

The [Privacy Act](#) defines what is considered personal information. Together, the *Privacy Act* and the [Access to Information Act](#) establish federal government requirements for the collection, use, storage, disclosure, and disposal of information held by government

institutions, and protects the release of information that could cause harm or be contrary to Canadian law.

CFIA employees are required to safeguard sensitive or personal information and may only use, process, store or handle protected or classified information for purposes specified by the CFIA including information obtained about the CFIA's clients, such as establishments and their affairs.

Employees of the CFIA do not remove, hide, change, mutilate, copy, destroy, falsify, or make public any sensitive information, record, or document, or direct anyone to do so, without express authorization from their supervisor, unless it is part of their official CFIA duties.

Supervisors are expected to provide support when employees need guidance on how to treat specific information and to report any accidental or intentional disclosure by completing a security incident report.

Off-duty activities

As public servants, CFIA employees need to be mindful of the need to balance their freedom of thought, belief, opinion, association, and expression under the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) with their obligations as non-partisan and impartial public servants, even while off-duty. Making a public statement or taking public action critical of a policy, direction, position, or program of the CFIA or the Government of Canada could bring into question the CFIA's ability to perform its duties in a completely objective and impartial manner.

What we do outside of work can still have an impact on the CFIA. Off-duty behaviour – including actions that could be seen as an extension of the workplace – that involves harassment, sexual harassment, or anything that harms the CFIA's reputation – may lead to disciplinary action. This could include anything from a warning to termination of employment.

This also applies to any off duty conduct that breaks the law or damages the public's trust in the CFIA and its employees.

Annex A – Resources

Everyone at the CFIA has a responsibility to make our workplace respectful and safe. If you witness or experience an act of misconduct or a violation of a work-related rule, report the incident to your supervisor, access reporting resources, or reach out to the Office of the Ombuds.

- Office of the Ombuds is a confidential, voluntary resource that can assist employees in identifying the appropriate resources or recourse mechanism(s)
- Office for Workplace Civility and Prevention of Harassment and Violence is the central location where employees and managers can access information, raise enquiries or concerns, and submit a notice of occurrence of workplace harassment or violence
- Office for the Prevention and Resolution of Conflict is an office which offers a range of services, including the Informal Conflict Management System, to help employees at all levels prevent, manage, or resolve conflicts through informal approaches by working directly with the parties involved
- Labour Relations is the division of human resources responsible for providing support to managers dealing with situations of misconduct
- Corporate Security is the division responsible for safeguarding CFIA's employees, information, and assets
 - The division can provide information and guidance and is responsible for investigating potential breaches of security requirements
- **Reporting lost, stolen or damaged CFIA property:** If any CFIA property is lost, stolen, or damaged, the situation should be immediately reported to a manager
 - Supervisors then have a responsibility to report the incident to CFIA security
- Scientific Integrity Lead is the senior executive within Science Branch appointed by the CFIA President, with overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate conduct of science at the CFIA and for investigating potential breaches of the [Scientific Integrity Policy](#)
- [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#) is a government agency that promotes and protects human rights in Canada by addressing and preventing discrimination by investigating discrimination complaints, resolving disputes through mediation, promoting awareness of human rights, protecting equal opportunities, and advising on policies to prevent discrimination

Disclosure of wrongdoing

As provided by sections 12 and 13 of the [Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act](#) (PSDPA), when you have information that could indicate a serious breach of this Code, you should bring this matter to your immediate supervisor, the agency's Senior Integrity Officer or the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

The PSDPA prevents anyone from taking any reprisal against a public servant because the public servant has made a protected disclosure or has, in good faith, cooperated in an investigation into a disclosure.

- **CFIA Senior Integrity Officer (SIO):** the senior executive appointed by the CFIA President who serves as an independent and neutral entity on matters of internal disclosure of wrongdoing, in accordance with the PSDPA and the Policy on the Internal Disclosure of Wrongdoing
- [Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada](#): provides a safe and confidential process for public servants and the general public to disclose wrongdoings committed in the public sector

Annex B – Acts and legislation

- [Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act](#) protects federal public servants who disclose wrongdoing in the workplace from retaliation, promoting transparency and integrity in the public service
- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to all Canadians, such as freedom of expression, equality, and legal rights
- [Canadian Human Rights Act](#) prohibits discrimination in employment and the provision of services based on grounds like race, gender, age, disability, and religion, promoting equality and preventing unfair treatment
- [Canada Labour Code](#) establishes fair, safe, and productive workplaces in federally regulated sectors by setting out rules for employment standards, occupational health and safety, and labour relations
- [Government of Canada and the duty to consult](#) outlines the legal obligation to engage and consult with Indigenous peoples when considering actions or decisions that may affect their Aboriginal or treaty rights, in order to ensure meaningful participation, accommodation of concerns where appropriate, and the protection of Indigenous rights
- [Access to Information Act](#) provides the public with the right to access records held by federal government institutions and provides information on the role of public servants in support of this right, including maintaining accurate records to support transparency
- [Privacy Act](#) protects individuals' personal information held by federal government institutions, ensuring it is collected, used, and disclosed fairly and securely while allowing individuals access to their own data
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) seeks to ensure federal laws align with the rights of Indigenous Peoples as outlined in the UN

Declaration, by committing the government to work in consultation with Indigenous Peoples to develop an action plan, align laws, and report annually on progress

- [Public Servants Inventions Act](#) regulates the ownership and rights of inventions made by federal public servants in the course of their employment, ensuring proper management and use of such inventions, accommodation of concerns where appropriate, and the protection of Indigenous rights

Annex C – Directives and policies

- [Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector](#) outlines the values and expected behaviours that guide public servants in all activities related to their professional duties
- [Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy](#) aims to prevent and protect against all forms of workplace harassment and violence by promoting a respectful, safe, and inclusive work environment and ensuring appropriate support and resolution processes
- The CFIA Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Policy provides direction and measures to assist CFIA employees in effectively dealing with real, potential, and apparent conflict of interest situations which may arise during and after employment with the CFIA
- The CFIA Occupational Health and Safety Policy ensures a safe and healthy work environment by preventing workplace hazards, promoting safety practices, and complying with health and safety laws
- The CFIA Directive on the Acceptable Use of IMIT Systems and Devices sets out requirements for employees on their duty to care for government assets, valuables, and property in their possession
- The CFIA Standard on the Use of Acquisition Cards outlines the responsibilities of anyone who is entrusted with an acquisition card, including the requirement to use the card for official CFIA purchases only
- The CFIA [Scientific Integrity Policy](#) aims to foster a culture that supports and promotes scientific integrity in the design, conduct, management, review and communication of research, science, and related activities
- The CFIA Policy on the Internal Disclosure of Wrongdoing ensures that any employee who makes a disclosure of wrongdoing is treated fairly and is protected from reprisal
- The CFIA Discipline Policy establishes clear guidelines for addressing and handling of employee misconduct and accountability

Annex D – Guidance

- The CFIA Guidance on political activities for CFIA employees provides employees with the information to manage their political activity as it applies to federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal elections in order to avoid a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest
- The [CFIA collective agreements](#) provide information on terms and conditions of employment, including hours of work and scheduling
- The CFIA Terms and conditions of employment for employees other than members of the Executive (EX) Group or Special Program Advisory (SPA) Group outlines the terms and conditions of employment of excluded or unrepresented employees of the CFIA, except members of the EX Group, the Personnel Administration (PE), or the SPA Group
- [Responsible use of artificial intelligence in government](#) pulls together all guidance, directives and policies to support public servants in the appropriate use of this tool
- [Guidance for public servants on their personal use of social media](#) brings together information about public servants' responsibilities when they use personal social media, on personal devices, on non-Government of Canada networks and on personal time
- [Duty of Loyalty](#) outlines how public servants are expected to support government without letting personal views interfere with their professional responsibilities
- [Canadian Council on Animal Care](#) establishes guidelines and policies for the ethical treatment of animals used by scientific institutions
 - When working with animals, CFIA employees must ensure that the animals receive proper care in compliance with these guidelines and requirements
 - All projects involving the use of animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care Committee
- The CFIA Laboratory Safety Manual is a comprehensive guide developed to provide CFIA laboratories with a structured Occupational Health and Safety program which outlines safe work practices, guidelines, and standards
- The CFIA Security Program Management Framework outlines the roles and responsibilities of parties involved in security management at CFIA and that provides clear and concise direction and guidance to ensure consistency in delivering security activities
- The CFIA Ethical decision-making model helps employees make fair and honest decisions by guiding them through ethical principles and considerations

Annex E – Training and resources

Employees are expected to complete all required training as outlined on the CFIA intranet.

To foster a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace, all employees are encouraged to engage with the available training, and resources designed to enhance understanding and support of equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and mental health.

Canada School of Public Service training

- [Fostering an Inclusive Workplace](#) is an introductory course serves as a starting point for anyone who wants to learn about equity, diversity, and inclusion to help create, foster, and promote an inclusive workplace for everyone
- [Moving from Bias to Inclusion](#) is a course that helps participants understand unconscious biases and how to recognize them in the workplace
- [Reflecting on Cultural Bias: Indigenous Perspectives](#) is a course which aims to demystify the idea of unconscious cultural bias, and which explores issues of prejudice and discrimination

Resources

- Mental health and wellness resources on the CFIA intranet provide information, tools, and support related to mental well-being such as the Employee and Family Assistance Program, links to mental health services, and guidance on creating a healthy work-life balance
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: calls to action](#) outlines recommendations to address the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians
 - The calls to action urge governments, institutions, and all Canadians to take concrete steps toward justice, healing, and systemic change