




**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**  
**Human Resources Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	September 7, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	RZone Respectful Environments Policy (HUR23012) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Yakov Sluchenkov (905) 546-2424 Ext 2655 David Lindeman (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5657 Michelle Lokun (905) 546-2424 Ext 5539
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Lora Fontana Executive Director Human Resources
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

### RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the RZone Respectful Environments Policy (Appendix “A” to Report HUR23012), be approved; and
- (b) That the RZone Respectful Environments Procedure (Appendix “B” to Report HUR23012), be approved.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public and City employees are entitled to a safe, respectful, and supportive environment when attending or working at events at City facilities or accessing or providing City services.

A policy was created based on the RZone procedure first developed by the Town of Oakville and subsequently adopted by many Ontario municipalities. The “R” in RZone stands for Respectful behaviours and personal Responsibility.

The purpose of this policy is to promote safe, positive, and supportive environments and interactions for all members of the public and City employees during the delivery of City

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

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services at any City facility, program, or event. It outlines the City's expectations regarding appropriate behaviours and lists the roles and responsibilities of all employees and the public when responding to incidents involving bad behaviour, harassment, and/or violence. Education and awareness campaigns will be an important part of implementing the policy.

This policy applies to all City employees, including but not limited to permanent, temporary and contract employees, volunteers, students, and interns.

This policy also applies to the public while attending at City facilities, buildings, parks, and trails or while using City services or programs including, but not limited to, patrons, clients, guests, spectators, residents, community volunteers and non-City workers, collectively called "Public".

This policy addresses incidents of bad behaviour, harassment and/or violence: (1) directed at City employees by a member(s) of the public, or (2) directed at a member(s) of the public by another member(s) of the public.

The policy addresses inappropriate behaviour, including, but not limited to:

- Conduct that is not in line with the City of Hamilton's expectations for respectful behaviour. This can include, but is not limited to, the following behaviours:
  - Loud verbal assaults directed at participants, officials, members of the public or City staff deemed to be aggressive or intimidating or having the potential of inciting violence.
  - Threats and/or attempts to intimidate.
  - Throwing of articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner.
  - Aggressive approaches to another individual (physical/verbal assault).
  - Physical striking of another individual.
  - Attempts to incite violence in others.
  - Theft of property.
  - Possession of weapons.
  - Vandalism to building or property
  - Refusal to follow the rules outlined by the City of Hamilton.
  - Discriminatory comments based on the prohibited grounds set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
  - Use of illegal drugs.
  - Use of alcohol on non-licensed premises.
  - Harassment (Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome)
  - Contravention of City by-laws or policies

City of Hamilton staff will take appropriate actions when incidents pertaining to this procedure occur in City facilities, parks, program, properties or anywhere services are delivered. City staff are to respond in accordance with the RZone Policy and Procedure if inappropriate behaviour or violence is observed or reported.

Actions considered for individuals or groups in response to incidents from the Public can include:

- Warnings (verbal or written)
- Limitations on accessing facilities or services
- Changes in how services are accessed
- Expulsion from property
- Suspension of access
- Banning from City properties
- Revoking permits
- Contacting police

The RZone policy complements but does not replace other policies, procedures and laws related to individual action and behaviours. These policy instruments work together to create and maintain safe environments for staff and the public. Related policies include:

1. RZone Enforcement Procedure
2. RZone Enforcement Guidelines
3. Code of Conduct for Employees
4. Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy
5. Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Policy
6. Violence in the Workplace Prevention Policy
7. Bylaws
8. Provincial and federal laws and codes.

The policy, procedure and supporting communication will be rolled out starting in November 2023.

**Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable**

## **FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: Costs associated with installing signage at City of Hamilton Facilities and public awareness campaign.

Staffing: None

Legal: None

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The RZone Respectful Environments Policy was developed in order to address inappropriate behaviours between staff and the public as well as promoting positive workplace behaviours by providing a consistent approach that would apply to the public and staff for all City of Hamilton facilities, properties, events, programs, and services.

The City's "Our People Survey", conducted in 2017 and 2021 reported that many employees experienced external harassment at work on a weekly or daily basis (20.3% in 2017; 19% in 2021). The RZone policy and procedures is aimed at helping to address the employee concerns identified in the surveys.

As well, users of City of Hamilton facilities, programs and services expect an environment free from harassment, violence, and incivility.

The purpose of this policy is to promote safe and supportive work environments and ensure positive interactions for all members of the public and City employees during the delivery of City services at any City facility, program, or event.

The policy outlines the City's expectations regarding appropriate behaviour and lists the roles and responsibilities of all employees and the public for promoting respectful behaviour and for responding to incidents involving bad behaviour, harassment, and/or violence.

The policy addresses incidents of bad behavior, harassment and/or violence: (1) directed at City employees by a member(s) of the public, or (2) directed at a member(s) of the public by another member(s) of the public.

In 2005, the Town of Oakville introduced a procedure to promote a positive, safe, and supportive environment for all individuals and user groups of their recreation and cultural centres, facilities, parks, events, and those participating in their recreation programs. The procedure was branded as RZone with an emphasis on Respect and Responsibility. Since then, 24 other Ontario municipalities have adopted and adapted the program to meet the needs of their staff and communities, including:

- City of London
- City of Guelph
- City of Niagara Falls
- City of St. Catharines
- City of Sarnia

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## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

The relevant legislation and City of Hamilton policies include:

- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy
- Personal Harassment Prevention Policy
- Policy HR-61-13 Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy (pending approval)

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

- Inter-departmental Advisory Committee
- Ontario municipalities using the RZone program
- Senior Leadership Team

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Based on nearly 20 years of experience in other municipalities and our examination of its applicability to the needs of the City of Hamilton, adoption of the RZone framework will offer a number of benefits for our employees and community:

- Focus on promotion of respectful behaviours and personal responsibility
- Support from staff and the community
- Familiarity and consistency across communities
- Access to tools used by other municipalities
- Recognizable “brand” that can be communicated in all facilities and programs
- Enforceable and clear expectations for behaviour
- Low costs for implementation

## **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

## **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

- Appendix “A” to Report HUR23012 - RZone Respectful Environments Policy
- Appendix “B” to Report HUR23012 - RZone Respectful Environments Procedure