
Code of Ethics

For BC SPCA staff, volunteers and members



THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Approved by the Board of Directors December 12, 2009

1. Introduction

The Code of Ethics is referred to in section 2.3 of the BC SPCA Constitution and Bylaws, Duties of Members, as follows: Every member must uphold the Constitution and comply with these Bylaws and the Code of Ethics and an undertaking to do so shall be included in every membership application. As a condition of employment, every employee is required to abide by the Code of Ethics.

For the purposes of this Policy, ethics is defined as the sum of morals, principles and rules of conduct for all employees, members and volunteers of the BC SPCA for the purposes of:

- i. the care and treatment of animals as specified in the BC SPCA Charter;
- ii. effective and respectful interpersonal relationships; and
- iii. the consistency with which Society-owned and operated equipment, processes and systems are used to achieve the Society's Guiding Principles and Charter as well as generally accepted community norms.

The Code is based on the vision of the BC SPCA Charter and the values outlined in the Guiding Beliefs and Principles. It was developed to bring together and organize various BC SPCA documents, policies and expectations concerning the ethical conduct of Society members, volunteers and employees. The Code is an ethical guide for day-to-day work, interactions and decision-making for those who conduct the business and affairs of the Society. The Code is a living document that is subject to review and amendment to ensure and maintain high standards of integrity and accountability for all members, volunteers and employees. The Code of Ethics reflects the core values and Guiding Principles of the BC SPCA and constitutes a compilation of guidelines to provide and promote ethical standards and principles.

2. Scope of the BC SPCA Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics applies to employees, members and volunteers.

3. General Principles

The Code of Ethics is based on the following:

3.1 Charter

Whereas:

The world is inhabited by many species sharing a common ecosystem of air, earth and water. We recognize and value our interconnectedness with all animals.

Therefore:

The BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for the animals of the world we share.

We pledge our energies to inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which animals, who depend on humans for their well-being, experience as a minimum five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst;
2. Freedom from pain, injury and disease;
3. Freedom from distress;
4. Freedom from discomfort; and
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The following beliefs and principles guide our attitudes and actions:

PRINCIPLED BEHAVIOUR

We are open, honest and transparent in our relationship with our staff, volunteers, members, donors and the public. We treat each other and those we serve, including the animals, with integrity, respect and compassionate caring.

PARTNERSHIPS

By forming partnerships and strategic alliances with those who share our vision, guiding principles and respect for animals, we can do more than any of us can do on our own.

LEADERSHIP

We exercise leadership in the protection and promotion of animal welfare by demonstrating courage, compassion, knowledge, wisdom and advocacy.

LEARNING

We honour the need to grow and learn, using an evidence-based approach to guide improvements and constantly evaluate the impact of our work.

RESPONSIBILITY

Animal welfare is not solely the responsibility of the BC SPCA. It is also a matter of individual and community responsibility. We are committed to working with individuals and communities through educational and other initiatives to promote greater responsibility for animal welfare.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We will be accountable in order to deserve the trust of those we serve. We measure, track and report regularly on what we have achieved as well as on what we have not.

4. Practical Guidelines

4.1 Ethical Behaviour toward Animals

We will act at all times in accordance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the Five Freedoms, BC SPCA Animal Welfare Policies and Animal Care Guidelines and Animal Management Program procedures.

Please also refer to the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Code of Ethics.

4.2 Internal Relations

We will treat each other with respect and consideration so that each of us can fulfill our duties and responsibilities to the highest standards. We believe that volunteers and employees play equally important and complementary roles in implementing the mission and programs of the BC SPCA. Therefore, we will recognize each other's contributions and strive to understand and respect each other's needs and abilities when working together for the benefit of the Society. We will endeavour to consult before making decisions that impact upon others.

Please also refer to BC SPCA Human Resources Harassment Policy - Chapter 12.

4.3 Conflict of Interest

We will avoid creating or becoming involved in situations that give rise or could give rise to a conflict of interest or which may reasonably be perceived as a conflict of interest. We will disclose any conflict between our personal interests and the interests of the BC SPCA and resolve such conflicts in a transparent manner. We will not engage in any activity or transaction, hold any position or perform any function, whether paid or unpaid, that is incompatible with or detracts from the proper performance of our duties or that may bring the Society into disrepute.

Please also refer to the BC SPCA Human Resources Hiring Policy, Policy L3: Hiring.

4.4 Accountability

We will be accountable for the decisions we make and the actions we take. We will be responsible stewards of the BC SPCA's assets, including ensuring the appropriate use of funds and accountability to donors.

Please also refer to the Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code.

4.5 Communication and Confidentiality

We will be effective representatives in all of our communications to ensure that the BC SPCA presents and maintains a positive public image at all times. We will speak on behalf of the BC SPCA only if we have the authority to do so.

Consistent with our Guiding Principles and Charter, we will respect the principle of confidentiality.

Please also refer to the BC SPCA Media Relations Policy, A4: Media Relations Policy.

5. Administration

- 5.1 The BC SPCA is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service to animals, employees, members and volunteers. In order to fulfill this commitment, the Society encourages the reporting of any conduct or activity in apparent contravention of this Code of Ethics.

- 5.2 The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Society together will take a leadership role to ensure that the Code of Ethics is promulgated among members, volunteers and staff and that it remains current and reflective of the Society's core values and guiding principles. Consistent with that leadership role, the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer will review the Code on a regular basis to ensure its continuing effectiveness.

Approved by the Board of Directors
December 12, 2009