**{ORGANIZATION NAME}**

**{COMPANY LOGO}**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**Instructions on Compiling Your Customized Employee Handbook**

Each of the policies has been written as a ‘stand alone’ document so that the user can customize the Employee Handbook to match the needs of the company. Once you have copied and pasted the policies that are important for your company into a document, the following will have to be added:

* Each of the policies should be given a number. The first policy in ‘The General Organizational Policies and Procedures’ would start with the Policy 1.0 and the first policy in ‘Human Resource Policies and Procedures would start with 2.0;
* Add a ‘footer’ with your company logo (if desired) and page numbers. Once the pages are numbered the Table of Contents can be updated with the page numbers;
* When there is a parenthesis { }, the company information will need to be added.

**{ORGANIZATION NAME}**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**PART I GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES**

**Introduction**

The Landscape Horticultural Industry is a profession that is “a vibrant, dynamic part of Canadian agriculture. It provides us with healthy, nutritious food; enhances the beauty of our cities and gardens; enriches our environment; contributes to our agricultural exports; and employees thousands of workers.” [[1]](#footnote-2) Its objective is to contribute to a healthier environment by promoting the attitudes of respect, care and responsibility by all those involved in the sector.

The policies within this section are designed to ensure that every employee within {company name} represents the company and the Landscape Horticultural Industry in an ethical and responsible manner. The guiding principles in developing the policies and procedures are the {company name} Mission statement.

**{Insert Company Mission Statement}**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

{Company name} is committed to uphold the highest standard of ethical conduct in all its business activities. The code of conduct sets out accountabilities for how management will oversee business activities and relationships; and how all employees’ will act related to proper conduct at work. Every employee has a responsibility to understand and comply fully with the Code of Conduct. Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with appropriate disciplinary action. This action may include the termination of employment. Where laws have been violated {company name} will cooperate fully with the appropriate authorities.

**Management Accountabilities**

***Integrity***: We will operate the business with the highest ethical standards and treat all employees fairly and with respect. {Company name} promotes business and human resource practices that positively impact people, society and the environment.

***Leadership***: Anyone who supervises employees (i.e. team leader, supervisor, manager) has the responsibility to be a role model for appropriate business conduct and to ensure that this Code of Conduct is adhered to. This includes:

* Ensuring all employees have read, signed and retained a copy of the Code of Conduct;
* Ensuring all employees understand and comply with the Code of Conduct;
* Offering assistance and explanation to any employees that have questions;
* Reporting any apparent violation of the Code of Conduct or any other policy.

Management is responsible for ensuring that employees are properly trained and function as a team. Management decisions are focused on providing employees with a work environment that is safe, positive and productive. {Company name} can only stay competitive if employees are learning and evolving their skills and it is management’s role to objectively and fairly evaluate performance, develop training and learning goals for employees and promote a continuous learning environment.

***A diverse and engaged team***: {company name} values the skills, strengths and perspectives of our diverse workforce. We will foster a work environment which enables employees to get involved in making decisions about their work, that advance our goals, and that provide the highest level of service to our customers.

***Good corporate citizen***: Our objective is to provide a safe workplace and protect the environment. We will promote the health and well being of our employees. We will follow legislation and regulations that govern how we run the business, prevent discrimination, provide equal opportunity for all individuals and aspire to the compliant levels of safety in the workplace.

**Employee Accountability**

***Job expectation***: Employees are expected to perform their job duties to the best of their abilities and to abide by the company’s policies and legislation and regulations that outline employees’ responsibilities on the job. Employees are expected to work the specified hours as outlined in the letter of offer or employment contract.

Employees will be courteous and maintain a positive attitude when interacting with customers, the public and fellow employees. Employees will maintain a professional manner, refraining from swearing, demonstrating a negative attitude and acting in a manner that would not represent {company name} in a professional/businesslike manner.

The quality of our employees’ work leads to customer satisfaction, long lasting customer relationships and a competiveness advantage. Employees are required to fully follow job instructions and project specifications to fulfill {company name} commitments to our clients.

***Respect the rights of all individuals***: discrimination or harassment, of any type, with regard to race, national and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, family or marital status, sexual orientation or disability will not be tolerated from an employee. {Company name} expects all employees to treat customers, other employers, the public and management with dignity and respect.

***Personal Appearance/Clothing:*** Personal appearance, proper hygiene and appropriate attire are important in the work environment. Clients may gauge the quality of the company by the attention that employees show to personal appearance and attire.

Employees are expected to report to work wearing clean clothing appropriate to their position. In the field, appropriate attire includes safety footwear, shirts or sweaters are to be worn at all times and pants or shorts should be free of tears or rips.

***Safety***: {Company name} is committed to providing a safe and secure work environment to reduce/prevent risks of injuries. Each employee must assume personal responsibility for understanding and complying with health and safety policies and regulations by:

* Observing all occupational health and safety laws and regulations;
* Wearing required protective equipment;
* Operating equipment in compliance with company policies and maintaining all required licences.

***Conflict of interest***: Employees must avoid conflicts of interest or situations in which the employee’s personal interests could be or appear to be in conflict with {company name} interests. This includes opportunities that make themselves apparent while on customer locations or through the use of company information or property. An employee cannot compete with {company name} while employed by the company.

***Use of company property/equipment***: It is the responsibility of the employee to use company property or equipment in a safe manner and to safeguard the use of property or equipment from unauthorized or inappropriate access or destruction.

**CELL PHONE USAGE**

It is paramount that the employees’ focus is maintained on performing the job or driving a company vehicle and minimizing distractions and opportunities for accidents. {Company name} complies with Ontario’s legislation, under the Highway Traffic Act, on banning the usage of cell phones and other hand held devices while driving a vehicle. For the purpose of this policy, cell phones refer to any device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, surfs the Internet or downloads and allows for the reading and responding to email.

**Cell Phone Usage Protocol**

**General Use**

1. Employees cannot use personal cell phones during work hours, on company property or while on company business;
2. If required for the job, {company name} will provide a cell phone and a hands-free device and the cell phone is to be used only for company related communications or emergency situations;
3. All communications using {company name} supplied cell phones, either verbal or written, must meet the requirements within the ‘Code of Conduct’ policy. Employees are expected at all times to communicate in a professional manner;
4. Employees who use personal cell phones during working hours, on company property or while doing company business will be subject to the {company name} disciplinary process up to and including termination as outlined in the Human Resource Policies;
5. Employees using company cell phones for personal reasons, excluding an emergency, during working hours, on company property or while doing company business will be subject to the {company name} disciplinary process up to and including termination as outlined in the Human Resource Policies.

**Ban on Cell Phone Usage while Driving**

1. {Company name} employees are required to exercise due diligence while operating a motor vehicle while on company business. Employees are not permitted to use a cell phone either hand held or hands free while driving a vehicle;
2. It is mandatory that an employee will pull over to the side of the road, in a safe location, when making a phone call, creating or responding to an email or listening to messages on voice mail;
3. To answer incoming calls, an employee will pull over to the side of the road in a safe location and if that is not possible the call will go to voice mail;
4. Keep conversations as short as possible;
5. There will be no work related reprisal if an employee refuses to answer his or her cell phone or participate in a conference call while driving.

**Employee Responsibility**

Employees who choose to violate this policy will face disciplinary action up to and including termination depending on the severity of the infraction and its consequences. There could be the possibility of facing legal consequences if in the course of fulfilling job duties an employee is involved in a car accident and there is evidence of distraction because the individual was using a cell phone while driving. There could also be legal ramifications to {company name} if this occurs.

**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

**Confidential Information**

From time to time, employees of {company name} may come into contact with confidential information, including but not limited to information about {company name} customers, suppliers, employees, financial information or business plans. Employees are required to keep such information that may be disclosed to them or learned by them confidential.

Furthermore, any confidential information, obtained through employment with {company name} must not be used by an employee for personal gain or to further an outside enterprise.

**Intellectual Property**

Any intellectual property, such as trademarks, copyrights and patents and any work created by an employee in the course of employment with {company name} shall be the property of {company name} and the employee is deemed to have waived all rights of ownership to {company name}. Work, for the purpose of this policy refers to written, creative or media work. All source material used in presentation or written documents must be acknowledged.

**Information Technology (I.T.) Usage, Storage and Security**

Employees at {company name} acknowledge the use of any storage devices (CD’s, USB’s and Floppy Discs, etc.) and their contents are the property of {company name}. Furthermore, it should be understood by employees, that company equipment should be used for company business only during agreed upon working hours. Downloading of personal material on company equipment is prohibited. Electronic media may not be used for knowingly transmitting, retrieving or storing any communication that is:

* Considered to be discriminatory, offensive or harassing;
* Insulting, threatening or offensive to any individual or group;
* Obscene, sexually explicit, profane or pornographic;
* Fraudulent;
* In violation of any licence governing the use of software;
* Engaged in any purpose that would be considered a criminal or civil offence.

Any employee who abuses the technology systems, equipment, data and/or the privilege of access to email, Internet or other I.T. services will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or legal action.

**DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE**

{Company name} supports a drug and alcohol free workplace and this policy applies to all employees. The inappropriate use of illicit or prescription drugs or alcohol can have serious adverse effects on an employee’s heath, job performance and workplace safety. Safety is important to employees and employers. Although safety is paramount in the workplace, {company name} will ensure that no employee who is accused or found using drugs or alcohol in the workplace will be discriminated against as the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability or perceived disability and disability includes those with a previous or existing dependence on alcohol or drugs.

**Dealing with Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace**

1. Employees are expected and required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to work;
2. The unlawful distribution, possession or use of a controlled substance or alcohol on {company name} property or while conducting {company name} work off-site is absolutely prohibited;
3. Violations of this policy must be immediately reported to a supervisor/manager.
4. Employees are responsible for ensuring that medication they take will not affect the safe performance of their duties. It is the employee’s obligation to report any necessity for modified work to their supervisor/manager and follow the instructions for modified duties to minimize risk to safety;
5. The allegation of drug or alcohol usage at the workplace will be promptly investigated, in a fair and timely manner, and respecting the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. Appropriate actions or steps to safe guard the safety of all employees within the workplace will be taken while providing rehabilitation assistance instead of discipline.

**EMERGENCY PLANNING**

{Company name} emergency planning policy describe the actions all employees must take to ensure safety in emergency situations. The objective is to reduce the possibility of human injury and damage to property and equipment.

**Emergency Planning Protocol[[2]](#footnote-3)**

1. The following individual(s) {state either the position(s) or title(s)} will initiate the emergency action plan. Those individuals are designated as Emergency Coordinator(s);
2. The following duties, responsibilities and authorities will be managed by:

* Reporting the emergency {state either the position or title}
* Activating emergency plan {state either the position or title}
* Assuming overall command {state either the position or title}
* Establishing communications {state either the position or title}
* Alerting employees {state either the position or title}
* Ordering evacuation {state either the position or title}
* Requesting external aid {state either the position or title}
* Providing medical aid {state either the position or title}
* Sounding the all-clear {state either the position or title};

1. The following telephone numbers should be in the possession of the Emergency Coordinator(s), posted on the worksites, and/or in vehicles and prominently posted within the workplace:

* 911
* Fire departments
* Police departments
* Ambulance services
* Hospitals
* Poison control
* Ministry of Environment
* Ministry of Labour

1. When faced with an emergency employees should:

* ***Stay calm***: your example can influence others and thereby aid the emergency response;
* ***Assess the situation***: determine what happened and what the emergency is. Try to identify the cause that must be controlled to eliminate immediate, ongoing, or further danger;
* ***Take control***: the most senior person on the scene should take charge and call, or delegate someone to call, emergency services – generally 911. Assign tasks for controlling the emergency;
* ***Provide protection***: eliminate further losses and safeguard the area. Divert traffic, suppress fire, prevent objects from falling, shut down equipment and take other necessary measures;
* ***Aid and manage***: provide first aid or help those already doing it. Direct all workers to a safe location;
* ***Maintain contact***: keep emergency services informed of situation. Alert management and keep them informed;
* ***Guide emergency services***: meet services on site. Lead them to emergency scene. Explain ongoing and potential hazards and cause(s), if known;

1. The following are examples of emergencies and appropriate procedures. This is not an exhaustive list; the intent is to provide guidance on the most common emergencies.

**Examples of Emergencies and Appropriate Procedure:**

Evacuation:

1. A specific signal will be used to give the evacuation order i.e. siren, fire bell, paging system announcements, cell phone, radio call, etc.;
2. Once the signal is given, employees will proceed promptly to the nearest evacuation route/safe assembly area. Walk quickly, but do not run;
3. If evacuating a building, do not use the elevators, instead use stairwells to reach ground level;
4. Go immediately to specified safe locations to gather for head count to ensure that everyone has left the danger zone and remain in the safe assembly area;
5. A supervisor/manager will designate appropriately trained first aid staff to carry out treatment for the injured and the search for missing staff;
6. A supervisor/manager will contact, or will delegate the contact of appropriate outside emergency resources;
7. Employees are not to return to the work site until the emergency response team leader has deemed it safe and management has given permission to return to the work site.

In Case of Fire:

1. Activate appropriate alarms;
2. Call 911 or use the established and agreed upon means of reporting a fire emergency;
3. Stay calm and do not panic. Alert others in the area;
4. Evacuate as directed by your supervisor/manager to designated evacuation area. Walk, do not run. Remain in evacuation area till the supervisor/manager has accounted for everyone or you have been instructed otherwise;
5. Never use an elevator during a fire. Always use the stairs.
6. If there is smoke in the room, stay low (the air is cooler and cleaner closer to the floor); hold a wet cloth over your mouth and nose; and only break windows as a last resort;
7. If a door is hot, do not open it. Use an alternate door if one is available. If there is water available, wet cloths and seal the door and any vents;
8. Close all doors as you leave. Do not lock them.

In Case of a Chemical Spill:

1. Stay clear of the spill and warn others in the immediate area of the emergency and potential danger;
2. If persons are injured, supervisor/manager to organize first aid treatment;
3. Assess the situation and determine if it’s an emergency. An emergency situation exists when there is a high risk to persons, property or the environment;
4. If it is an emergency, contact appropriate emergency sources;
5. Get appropriate Material Data Safety Sheet (MSDS) and have it available for responders;
6. If an evacuation is required, evacuate as directed by your supervisor/manager to your designated evacuation area. Walk, do not run. Remain in the evacuation area until the supervisor/manager has accounted for everyone and you have been instructed otherwise;
7. Do not re-enter the work site until the emergency response team have deemed it safe and your supervisor/manager has given permission to go back to work site.

In Case of Severe Weather (this would exclude necessary emergency services i.e. snowplough contractors)

1. Monitor the local government weather service for announcements including warnings and other information such as the appropriate actions in the event of an emergency;
2. Be prepared to evacuate to designated safe areas;
3. Keep a portable radio, flashlights, spare batteries, and other emergency supplies ready;
4. Do not call 911 for information. This system must be kept open for emergencies.

Heat Stress Policy

1. {Company name} recognizes the potential problems caused by high temperatures in the work environment. This policy requires the full cooperation of all members of the {company name} team: senior management, Heath & Safety Representatives, the Joint Health and Safety Committee, supervisors, and employees.
2. In order to monitor and evaluate the potential for heat-related problems in the workplace, a reference guide called ‘*Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot – Heat Stress Prevention’* by Health & Safety Ontario - <http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca/Resources/Articles/WSPS/Feeling-hot-hot-hot-heat-stress-prevention.aspx> can be used as a reference;
3. Employees are asked to cooperate fully with this policy by reading the ‘*Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot – Heat Stress Prevention’* to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress – in themselves, as well as in other employees;
4. Employees experiencing symptoms of heat stress must report to first – aid personnel immediately to obtain proper medical attention;
5. During days when heat stress procedures are in place, all employees will follow the contingency plans. Extra water will be available and workers will be encouraged to drink it.

**HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

{Company name} affirms the right of every employee to work in an environment free of personal and sexual harassment and violence. Harassment for the purpose of this policy is defined as behaviours, including verbal or written comments, actions, imagery, etc. that are known, or ought to be known by a reasonable person, to be unwelcome. Workplace violence in this context is the attempt or actual exercise of physical force by a person against an employee that can, or does cause physical injury.

**Definition:** Harassment can take a variety of forms including, but certainly not limited to the descriptions below and it can come from employers, supervisors/managers, workers, customers, clients, strangers and domestic/intimate partners.

Personal Harassment:

Personal harassment occurs in circumstances where an employee is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, or exposed to imagery, including photos, posters, emails, etc. that is discriminatory or offensive because of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, family status and/or disability. It is when these behaviours create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment or otherwise interfere with an employee’s ability to do his/her job to the best of his/her ability that it is considered personal harassment.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is when an employee is subjected to unsolicited and unwelcome sexually-oriented behaviour, which may include:

* An implied or expressed threat of reprisal for refusal to comply with a sexually oriented request;
* A demand for sexual favours in return for (continued) employment or more favourable employment treatment;
* Demeaning and unwelcome remarks, jokes or verbal abuse of a sexual nature, about a person’s attire, body or sexual orientation;
* Display of pornographic or sexist pictures or material;
* Unwelcome physical contact or offensive gestures.

**Dealing with Harassment**

1. {Company name} is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respected and dignity. The management will not permit any situation where an employee’s submission to or rejection of harassment will jeopardize the employee’s employment;
2. Workplace harassment will not be tolerated from any person in the workplace. Everyone in the workplace must be dedicated to preventing workplace harassment;
3. Managers, supervisors and workers are expected to uphold this policy;
4. Employees who use harassment with the purpose of unreasonably interfering with another employee’s work performance, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment or adversely affecting an individual’s employment opportunities, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination;
5. Any employee who believes he or she has been harassed, in violation with this policy, has the responsibility to bring the situation(s) to his/her supervisor or manager’s attention immediately. If the discussion of the subject with the supervisor or manager would be embarrassing or uncomfortable, the employee has the right to go directly to the President/Owner;
6. The employee should gather all facts including dates, specific details about the situation and any witnesses to provide an accurate account of the alleged harassment;
7. All allegations will be investigated promptly, in a fair and timely manner, and respecting the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. Appropriate actions or steps to deal with the harassment will be implemented, and those actions will be communicated to harassed employee;
8. Actions to prevent further harassment will be implemented immediately.

**Workplace Violence**

Under Ontario Bill 168, Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act (Violence in the Workplace) 2009 workplace violence is defined as:

* The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker in the workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker. Those causing physical injury include customers, clients, employers, supervisors, workers, strangers, visitors, volunteers and domestic/intimate partners;
* An attempt to exercise physical injury to the worker;
* A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat or exercise physical force against the worker, in the workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

**Dealing with Workplace Violence**

1. The management of {company name} is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and is ultimately responsible for employee health and safety. We will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect our employees from workplace violence from all sources;
2. Violence in the workplace is unacceptable. It applies to any one who is on the work place site including customers, clients, employers, supervisors, employees, strangers, visitors, volunteers and domestic/intimate partners;
3. Everyone is expected to uphold this policy and work together to prevent workplace violence.
4. {Company name}respects the right of an employee to refuse to work where he/she has reason to believe that he/she is in danger of being a victim of workplace violence;
5. Incidents or threats of workplace violence must be reported to the employer or supervisor/manager immediately;
6. The allegations of workplace violence will be promptly investigated, in a fair and timely manner, and respecting the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. Appropriate actions or steps to prevent further violence will be implemented, and appropriate disciplinary action will occur if the allegation is proven to have occurred;
7. Supervisors/managers will adhere to this policy and the supporting workplace violence program. Supervisors/managers are responsible for ensuring that the procedures are followed by employees and that employees have the information they need to protect themselves;

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

{Company name} considers the health and safety of our employees to be of primary importance. Our objective is to conduct our business in the safest possible manner consistent with the Occupational Health & Safety Act, applicable Regulations and best practices in the Landscaping Horticultural Industry.

Through our wellness initiatives, we encourage and support wellness programs that will enhance the health of employees, improve attendance at work, improve morale and increase productivity.

The management of {company name} is committed to continuous improvement towards an accident-free workplace (road to zero) through effective health & safety procedures, education and training. All company activities will comply with the Occupational Health & Safety Act as they relate to planning, operation and maintenance of facilities and equipment. To this end, we will utilize a safety program in our daily activities.

Accidental loss can be controlled through good management in combination with active employee involvement. At {company name} safety is the direct responsibility of all managers, supervisors and employees. All employees will be equally responsible for preventing accidents within our facilities and on worksites. Employees should report all dangerous conditions and practices to their manager/supervisor immediately.

Disregard or wilful violation of this policy by employees at any level will be considered cause for disciplinary action in accordance with the Human Resource policies.

**Health & Safety Regulations**

1. Should a safety regulation be modified so that it jeopardizes an employee’s safety, the employee should inform the manager/President/Owner;
2. All questions concerning the reason for doing something may be asked of anyone, at any time;
3. Employee’s decisions should be guided by the company’s commitment to safety. Should a hazardous situation or condition exist when a decision has to be made on safety or production, safety concerns should always take precedence over production;
4. Supervisors will always inspect working conditions on a new job site and may suspend all work activity until an unsafe condition is corrected;
5. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to see that every employee at the company is provided with safe working conditions, that all safety regulations are observed and that employees use common sense to protect themselves and others;
6. Employees are expected to report any personal injury immediately, however minor.

**HIV/AIDS**

The purpose of this policy is to uphold the Ontario Human Rights Code which recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of employees exposed to or infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which is believed to cause the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS and other medical conditions related to infection by HIV are recognized as disabilities within the Code.

This policy supports practices which do not arbitrarily or unnecessarily restrict infected individuals from employment. Thus a hiring or dismissal decision cannot be based on whether an individual has or is perceived to have HIV infection. The HIV/AIDS status of individuals is a confidential matter and disclosure by the individual is only required if accommodation or modification of the work duties are required.

An employee infected with HIV has the right to continue in his/her position as long as he/she is able to carry out the essential requirements of the position in a safe and competent manner.

**HIV/AIDS Protocol**

1. Any employee who experiences discrimination or harassment because he or she is or is perceived to be HIV-positive, should report the incident immediately to their supervisor/manager who will be expected to handle the situation with the highest level of confidentiality;
2. Once an employee cannot carry out the essential requirement of his/her position, {company name} will make reasonable accommodations in order to make continued employment possible;
3. If the employee is unable to carry out the essential duties of the job, and for whom suitable alternative work is not available, the employee will be entitled to the same benefits as any other illness and all work-related benefits;
4. Since there is no evidence that HIV is transmitted through casual contact, an employee cannot refuse to work with another employee who is infected with HIV, unless a real risk can be identified and proven.

**USE OF COMPANY PROPERTY**

{Company name} employees understand that all {company name} physical property, equipment, tools, vehicles and resources are the property of {company name} and are to be used only for {company name} related worked. Employees have an obligation to perform their duties in a competent and safe manner when using the {company name} property/equipment/vehicles.

**Company Property**

1. No company property will be removed from the company’s premises or designated storage areas without the permission of a supervisor/manager;
2. An investigation will be conducted by a supervisor/manager if it is alleged that an employee has removed company property without permission. If after the investigation, it is found that an employee has removed company property without permission, the supervisor will enact the disciplinary process as outlined in the Human Resource policies;
3. It is deemed a cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination if an employee causing damage to company property, equipment or a vehicle in a deliberate manner due to negligence or recklessness. There may be financial repercussion to the employee dependent upon the extent of the damage.

**Tool and Supplies Used on the Job**

The company will pay for tools and supplies used by employees on the job. All tools and supplies purchased by the company remain the property of the company. It is the responsibility of the employee to whom tools and equipment are assigned to maintain and safeguard these assets as if they were their own personal property. It is the policy of this company to hold the individual responsible for small tool and equipment which is lost, stolen or damaged through negligence. The employee will be responsible for replacing the lost or damaged tools or reimbursing the company the value of the tool. If the employee leaves the company for whatever reason, the company expects the tool(s) to be handed in, and if not, their value will be deducted from the employee’s last pay cheque.

**Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed in the office or in company vehicles. The company would prefer a smoke free environment in the field. Employers that choose to smoke will limit smoke breaks to scheduled breaks or lunches.

**PART II HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES**

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

{Company name} will use a fair, consistent process of disciplinary action(s) that provide employees a fair and equitable opportunity to comply with company policies and to encourage employees to exercise self-discipline at all times in their conduct and performance.

When work performance is unsatisfactory, absenteeism exceeds company standard or a {company name} policy is not observed, the employee’s supervisor/manager will enforce the following progressive disciplinary procedure up to and including termination:

* An exploratory interview
* One verbal warning
* Three written warning
* Termination

It is the {company name} goal that no employee be unfairly treated or terminated. Supervisors/managers will use a positive approach to dealing with performance issues or misuse of a company policy.

**Exploratory Interview**

1. When an incident occurs the supervisor/manager has an informal counselling session with the employee to discuss the seriousness of the behaviour and its impact on other employees and/or the organization;
2. The supervisor will address only the facts about the incident that are gathered by first hand observation by the supervisor/manager or through other employees who witnessed the inappropriate conduct/behaviour;
3. The supervisor/manager and employee will meet to clearly identify the conduct/behaviour that needs to change and jointly discuss solutions;
4. A written corrective action plan is developed with a timeline for resolution.
5. A copy of the corrective action plan will be given to the employee, the supervisor, and the next level of management after the plan has been signed by the employee to verify that they have read it, agree they have received, understand the scope of the action and will make the commitment to fulfill the action plan. The supervisor/manager also signs the corrective action plan. A copy of each will be placed in the employee’s personnel file.
6. The supervisor/manager informs the employee of the consequences, which would be a verbal warning, if the employee repeats the unacceptable behaviour;
7. The supervisor/manager is accountable for following up with the employee to ensure the action plan is enacted and desired results are achieved.

**Verbal Warning**

1. A verbal warning can be issued when attempts at coaching and providing the employee support through setting a corrective action plan for inappropriate behaviour do not bring about the desired performance level;
2. A verbal warning can be issued if an incident occurs which seriously contravenes one of {company name} policies;
3. Conditions for issues a warning: the conditions for issuing a warning include but are not limited to the following:

* Evidence of inappropriate activity;
* Unexcused or excessive absenteeism or lateness;
* Conduct that makes other employees reluctant or unable to work with the employee;
* Abusive language or behaviour;
* Unacceptable work habits, wilful neglect of duty or refusal to abide by the directives of the supervisor/manager;
* Negligent or destructive use of company property;

1. Employees actions giving rise to the verbal warning must be investigated, the relevant facts determined and documented by the supervisor/manager;
2. The supervisor/manager will initiate the second interview with the employee, discuss the facts and the reasons for not achieving the previous corrective action plan;
3. The supervisor/manager and employee develop a second corrective action plan in writing with defined time lines for the employee to meet specified performance standards.
4. The supervisor/manager and employee will sign a ‘Corrective Action Plan’ form;
5. A copy of the ‘Corrective Action Plan’ is given to the employee, the supervisor/manager, and the next level of management. A copy of the ‘Corrective Action Plan’ will be placed in the employee’s personnel file.

**Written Warnings**

1. Written warnings are considered a severe disciplinary action and are usually issued after a verbal warning has failed to correct the performance issue;
2. The supervisor/manager will document all the pertinent facts related to the incident on the ‘Corrective Action Plan’ including dates and place of incident(s);
3. Upon issuing a written warning the ‘Corrective Action Plan’ is reviewed and revised and then mutually accepted and signed by both parties;
4. A copy of the ‘Corrective Action Plan’ is given to the employee, the supervisor/manager, and the next level of management after the plan has been signed by the employee to verify that they have read it, agree they have received, understand the scope of the action and will make the commitment to fulfill the action plan. The supervisor/manager also signs the corrective action plan. A copy of the ‘Corrective Action Plan’ will be placed in the employee’s personnel file;
5. A follow up meeting will be scheduled no later than thirty (30) days following the date on which the written warning and corrective action plan were issued;
6. The employee is notified that if performance is not corrected the employee’s continued employment could be at risk.

**DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any work environment. In an effort to resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, {company name} recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution:

1. Speak with the person you are having a dispute with as many times disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications;
2. If speaking to the individual does not produce satisfactory results, speak with your supervisor/manager. Request that the supervisor/manager arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute to determine a resolution. The supervisor will meet independently with those individuals involved in the dispute to gather facts and analyze the situation. The supervisor will then meet with all parties concerned to facilitate a resolution to the dispute;
3. If the supervisor/manager is unable to resolve the workplace dispute, the parties should be referred to the President/Owner for resolution.

**EMPLOYEE RECORDS**

All employee files are kept in a secure location and are not shared with anyone except authorized personnel and the employee. Information contained in an employee’s personnel file includes the following: resume, application form, letter of offer, acknowledgement of reading and understanding the Employee Handbook, performance reviews, job description and amendments, disciplinary notices, tax forms, payroll records, copies of enrolment for benefits, approved leave requests and any commendations.

Employees will have the opportunity, in the presence of authorized personnel, to examine his or her individual personnel file. A copy of the information contained in the file can be provided upon written request from the employee. If an employee believes the information on file is inaccurate, he or she may add a statement to the file to document that opinion.

**EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT**

{Company name} places a high value on employee growth and development to ensure employees’ delivery of services that have been entrusted to them. Success for both {company name} and its employees is dependent on each employee’s commitment to fully utilize his or her potential and to continually develop his or her abilities. {Company name} is highly committed to create a productive and positive work environment that provides orientation, performance management and training and development that allow employees to achieve their development goals.

**ORIENTATION**

1. All new employees will receive an orientation session that provides an overview of mission, general policies, procedures and operations;
2. The orientation also involves an opportunity for the employee to learn the performance expectations for his or her position;
3. The {company name} Employee Handbook and Safety Handbook will be reviewed in detail and the employee will be asked to sign off on his or her adherence to follow the policies.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT [[3]](#footnote-4)**

**Introduction**

Performance management is the process of which managers and supervisors delegate responsibilities to employees in order to achieve specific results, and the effort managers make to ensure the success of their employees. For {company name} performance management is the process to assist its employees to be successful by:

* Aligning employees’ day to day actions and attitudes with {company name} mission and policies;
* Clarifying the employee’s role and demonstrating how the employee fits into {company name} and how the employee’s job impacts the company’s ability to achieve its goals;
* Clearly defining performance expectations employees will have to meet;
* Ensuring employees have the capacity, resources and environment to achieve both their personal career and performance expectations;
* Identify training and professional development needs that will ensure a thriving career with {company name}.

**Purpose**

The purpose of having a structured performance management process is to ensure that EVERY employee receives direction and communication about his or her performance. The intent is to have an ongoing dialogue between the manager/supervisor and employee that occurs throughout the year, to discuss mutually set performance objectives, work expectations and targets.

**Goals for the Performance Management Process**

The performance management process is a partnership where employees strive to reach higher levels of performance to enable {company name} to achieve its goals. We want to encourage a process that is:

* A year-long collaboration between employees and management;
* Aligns individual performance and development goals with company objectives;
* Encourages balanced feedback and regular coaching;
* Recognizes individual achievements;
* Focuses on employee development.

**Supervisor/Manager Responsibility**

Supervisors/managers are responsible for creating and sustaining an environment that supports employees’ objectives for successful performance. Managers/supervisors lead the performance process by:

* Setting clear, measurable and attainable goals with input from employees;
* Providing honest and timely feedback where performance needs to be improved and recognizing achievements;
* Being committed to providing thorough feedback, concrete examples and objective scoring in the annual performance review meeting;
* Recommending and supporting training and development;
* Initiating and conducting an annual performance review.

**Employees’ Responsibility**

Performance management is a partnership. To get the most value from this process, employees need to:

* Fully participate in setting yearly performance goals;
* Proactively bring forward issues or concerns and follow through on individual commitments;
* Thoroughly understand how to give feedback in the annual performance review meeting or gain input from the manager/supervisor;
* Ask for, listen openly to feedback from supervisors/managers;
* Stay focused on achieving performance goals.

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. In certain cases, {company name} will pay for or reimburse the registration or tuition fee for pre-authorized or approved seminars, workshops or courses conducted by recognized landscaping and related trades associations and relevant institutions (apprenticeship, colleges, continuing education programs, etc);
2. An employee will request in writing, a minimum of four (4) weeks for financial assistance before the course is to take place to qualify for reimbursement;
3. Reimbursement will occur upon proven successful completion of the course;
4. Should the employee not attend a prepaid program, the cost will be deducted from the employee’s pay cheque(s).
5. A training log will be maintained in the employee’s personnel file detailing internal and external training courses completed.

**EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

An employment agreement usually in the form of a ‘Letter of Offer’ is given to each potential new employee. The job offer letter specifies the following information for a new employee:

* The date employment will commence;
* The title of the position;
* The salary or hourly rate;
* Hours of work;
* Probationary period;
* Performance management process;
* Termination of employment;
* Code of conduct;
* Safety requirements;
* Confidentiality;
* Vacation;
* Benefits;
* Training programs.

A job description and the {company name} Employee Handbook will be given to the new employee upon signing the job offer letter.

**HOURS OF WORK**

**Hourly Employees**

1. Standard Hours of Work: the standard hours of work are eight (8) hours per day or forty-eight (48) hours per week. Employees will receive a meal break of thirty minutes (30) after five hours of work. The employer and employee can agree that the meal break can be split into two eating periods within every five consecutive hours. Together these meal breaks must total thirty (30) minutes;
2. Overtime: All hours worked above forty-four (44) hours in a regularly scheduled work week, will entitle the employee to one and one half times (1½) their regular rate of pay. Employees have the right to refuse overtime work if it is beyond the regularly scheduled hours for that particular day;
3. {If your company falls under the ‘Landscape Gardener Exemption, include this section – if it does not leave this section out} Landscape Gardener Exception: Regulation 285/01 of the Employment Standards Act (ESA), 2000 provides that “a person employed as a landscape gardener” is exempt from the standard hours of work and overtime pay clauses within the ESA.[[4]](#footnote-5) A work schedule that exceeds forty-eight hours of work/week is acceptable under (ESA) during peak business months.

**Salaried Employees**

1. Employees Working Standard Hours of Work: the standard hours of work are eight (8) hours per day or forty-eight (48) hours per week. Employees will receive a meal break of thirty minutes (30) after five hours of work. The employer and employee can agree that the meal break can be split into two eating periods within every five consecutive hours. Together these meal breaks must total thirty (30) minutes;
2. Overtime: All hours worked above forty-four (44) hours in a regularly scheduled work week, will entitle the employee to one and one half times (1½) their regular rate of pay. Employees have the right to refuse overtime work if it is beyond the regularly scheduled hours for that particular day. Managers and supervisors do not qualify for overtime if the work they do is managerial or supervisory. Even if they perform other kinds of tasks that are not managerial or supervisory, they do not get overtime pay if these tasks are performed only on an irregular or exceptional basis. {Company name} and the employee can agree in writing that the employee will receive paid time off work instead of overtime pay. This is sometimes called "banked" time or "time off in lieu." If an employee has agreed to bank overtime hours, he or she must be given 1½ hours of paid time off work for each hour of overtime worked.

**PAID AND UNPAID TIME OFF**

{Company name} follows Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Ontario Ministry of Labour guidelines in determining paid and unpaid time off.

**Personal Days Off**

It is expected that employees will be on time for work and complete the pre-determined hours of work as stated in the employment agreement. If an employee is unable to report to work or arrives late, the supervisor should be contacted immediately.

1. All full time employees will receive (0) paid personal days;
2. If an employee exceeds more than 1 unexplained absence in a single month or exceeds 3 unexplained absences in a rolling three month period, it will be deemed to be above standard and will be handled through the disciplinary process;
3. An employee must submit in writing to the supervisor/manager a request for a personal leave day and is expected to give the supervisor/manager a minimum of a week’s notice;
4. {If you employee 50 employees or more, include the following} Employees are eligible for 10 days of unpaid job-protected leave each calendar year due to:

* Personal illness, injury, medical emergency;
* Illness, injury, medical emergency or urgent matter relating to the following family members:
  + Spouse
  + Parent, step-parent, foster parent, child, step-child, foster child, grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild or step-grandchild of the employee or employee’s spouse;
  + The spouse of an employee’s child;
  + A brother or sister of the employee;
  + A relative of the employee who is dependent on the employee for care or assistance.

**Vacation**

{Company name} recognizes that employees need a scheduled time away from normal work duties to refresh and re-energize.

1. Anew employee will not be able to take holidays in the first six months of employment unless a special arrangement has been established in the employment agreement. This allows for the accrual of vacation days as vacation time is accrued (earned) on a monthly basis and is to be taken only after it is earned;
2. Vacation pay is calculated at 4% of the employee’s regular pay;
3. An employee is entitled to 2 weeks vacation within one calendar year (January to December) but due to high volume in business, employees are encouraged not to request holidays between {include start month to end month};
4. An employee cannot carry over vacation days to the next calendar year;
5. An employee must submit a request in writing to the supervisor a minimum of a month prior to the request for vacation leave and the approval is dependent on availability. Vacation requests are granted on a first come first serve basis;
6. At five plus years employees of {company name} will be eligible for an additional third week paid vacation in each calendar year and requests for the third week will follow the above vacation request protocol.

**Statutory Holidays**

1. Employees are entitled to the following paid holidays:

* New Years Day *January 1st*
* Family Day *3rd Monday in February*
* Good Friday *Friday prior to Easter Sunday*
* Victoria Day *Last Monday on/before May 24th*
* Canada Day *July 1st*
* Labour Day *1st Monday of September*
* Thanksgiving Day *2nd Monday of October*
* Christmas Day *December 25th*
* Boxing Day; *December 26th*

1. If the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, either the Friday before or Monday after is observed as the holiday;
2. {If your company meets the Landscape Gardener Exemption include the following} If {company name} works on any of the above statutory holidays, employees will be expected to work the holiday without overtime.

**Bereavement Leave**

{Company name} will grant an employee time off with pay as per:

1. Three days for leave, with pay, may be taken in the case of the death of an immediate family member;
2. One day of leave, with pay, may be taken in the case of death of an extended family member;
3. An additional two days leave, with pay, for extensive travelling time, making funeral arrangements or settling estate matters;
4. When an employee is bereaved the supervisor/manager should be immediately contacted. The supervisor/manager is responsible for approving the length of the leave and informing the President/Owner.

For the purpose of this policy, immediate family members refers to father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, same sex partner, child, parent-on-law, son/daughter-in-law, grandchildren, grandparents, sister/brother-in-law or any other relative by blood or marriage residing with the employee.

**Maternity Leave**

1. After having completed thirteen (13) weeks of consecutive employment, an employee will be eligible for an unpaid leave for up to seventeen (17) weeks. Leave may be taken any time within the seventeen weeks of the expected delivery date. A special term of leave for unexpected illness related to the pregnancy may be taken before the expected date of birth but it is still counted toward the general entitlement to maternity leave;
2. The employee must give two weeks’ written notice identifying the date the leave will begin;
3. The same benefits apply when an employee is adopting a child. Documentation must be providing confirming the adoption and date of arrival of the child.

**Parental Leave**

1. After completing thirteen (13) weeks of continuous employment, an employee, who is the birth mother and who takes maternity leave, is eligible for up to thirty-five weeks’ (35) unpaid leave. Birth mothers who did not take maternity leave and all other new parents are eligible for up to thirty-seven (37) weeks’ unpaid Parental Leave for purposes of child care. Parental leave is not part of maternity leave and so a birth mother can take both maternity and parental leave;
2. Employment Insurance parental benefits can only be paid during the fifty-two (52) weeks after the week the child is born, or in the case
3. Either the mother or father is entitled to the Parental Leave;
4. The employee must give two weeks’ written notice identifying the date the leave will begin;
5. The same benefits apply when an employee is adopting a child. Documentation must be provided confirming the adoption and date of arrival of the child.

**Jury Duty**

1. An employee may be called on for jury duty that falls during working hours. {Company name} will grant paid leave to attend to jury duties for up to three days;
2. If the obligation extends beyond this time, further paid leave must be discussed with the President/Owner;
3. If the court dismisses the jury or witness early, the employee is expected to return to work as soon as possible to complete the regular work shift.

**Leave of Absence**

1. An employee may ask for a leave of absence without pay. {Company name} cannot guarantee to hold any position for more than a three (3) month period. Any request for a leave of absence must be made in writing and must be approved in advance by (position title}.
2. Due to the seasonal nature of the Landscape Horticultural Industry, {company name} will require each employee to take unpaid leave of absence from December to April of each year. The length of this company initiated leave of absence will vary dependant on seasonal weather conditions and the employee’s duties;
3. During any approved leave of absence the following will apply:

* The employee will retain their original date of employment showing no interruptions in years of service;
* The employee will retain his/her benefits and membership in any profit sharing plans up to the time allowed in the plan, proportionate to years of employment; {if applicable}
* Credit for paid vacation leave or vacation pay will not be accrued during an approved leave of absence.

**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

{Company name} recruitment and selection practices comply with the Human Rights, Employment Standards and Employment Equity Acts to ensure a fair and transparent process in hiring the most suitably qualified candidate for the position. {Company name} is an equal opportunity employer where employment decisions are based on job related criteria. We are committed to support non-discriminative and affirmative action in our recruiting and selection processes.

The procedures and processes used in recruiting and selecting the most qualified candidate will be consistently used by all individuals who make hiring decisions for {company name}. The policy applies to the hiring of full time, part-time, casual and contract employees.

It is the responsibility of {company name} management to practice fair employment at all times and any violations of the Recruitment and Selection Policy must be reported immediately to management. All supervisory staff will be responsible for maintaining a work environment that is free of the prohibited areas of discrimination: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, family status and/or disability.

**Internal Recruitment**

1. When a position becomes vacant, the position will be posted internally for 10 days before posting on external sources;
2. Internal candidates will be interviewed and only when a candidate does not meet the requirements of the job will external postings be placed;
3. The job posting will be placed on the {company name} website and external job boards only if a suitable internal candidate is not identified.

**SALARY AND BENEFITS**

{Company name} has established salary rates based upon work classification. Salary is determined by three primary factors:

* Assigned work classification;
* Years of service;
* Individual performance as assessed in annual performance review.

The benefit plan outlines the benefits provided by {company name}.

**SALARY**

**Salary Payment**

Employees are paid on a {weekly, bi-weekly} basis and the net pay is deposited into the employees’ bank account {if applicable}. Net pay is determined by deducting income tax, EI and CPP from the gross pay (total hours worked x hourly rate). Salaries and benefits are administered by {title of position}.

**Salary Increases**

Salary increases normally occur at the beginning of each fiscal year which starts the beginning of {month}. Each employee’s salary is assessed annually based on performance, experience in the position, level of knowledge, skills, potential for advancement, etc. A decision for a salary increase should be based on the following factors:

* The employee’s position within the job grade (level and relation to the salary maximum);
* The employee’s performance evaluation for the year;
* Internal equity;
* Company performance.

**Banking Hours for Hourly Paid Employees[[5]](#footnote-6)**

It is possible for an employee to ‘bank’ hours worked during the season for compensation during the off season. For example, if an employee works an average of 120 hours every 2 weeks in the spring, then he/she can request that {company name} bank 40 of those hours towards payment over the winter months. In this instance, the employee would receive immediate compensation for 80 hours of work, while the compensation of the remaining 40 hours would be delivered during the off season.

The ‘banking of hours’ approach is an acceptable practice. The employee and {company name} must sign a contract detailing the terms and conditions that will govern the ‘banking’ process.

**BENEFITS**

**{Insert company benefits}**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**Acknowledgement of Reviewing, Understanding and Receipt of {company name} Employee Handbook**

The {company name} Employee Handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of {company name} policies, practices of employment and benefits. It is understood that the Employee Handbook is not a contract or guarantee of any type of employment.

As legislation or business requirements change, the Employee Handbook will be updated or supplemental information will be provided. Employees will be notified of any additions or deletions to the Handbook.

Upon completion of your review of the handbook, please ask your supervisor/manager any questions for clarification. Once you have read and clearly understand the Employee Handbook, please read and sign the acknowledgement below and give a copy to your supervisor/manager to put in your employee personnel file.

**Acknowledgment:**

I have received a copy of {company name} Employee Handbook, read it, asked any questions, understand the information and accept and agree to comply with the information provided in the Employee Handbook. I understand that this Handbook is not intended to cover every situation which arises during my employment, but it is a general guide to {company name} policies and practices.

I will retain a copy of the Handbook to use as reference during my employment with {company name}, or until requested to return it.

I will not divulge the contents of the Employee Handbook to anyone outside the company without permission of the President/Owner.

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. ‘Horticulture Works: A Call to Action to Develop the Workforce for the Future of Horticulture in Canada’: Canadian Horticultural Council, 2004. <http://www.hortcouncil.ca/uploads/file/English/Publications/Horticulture_Works_HR_Report_2004_Eng.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The following resources were adapted: Canadian Centre of Occupational Health & Safety: <http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/planning.html>

   Construction Safety Association of Ontario: Emergency Response Planning for Construction Projects:

   <http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/278_EmergencyResponsePlanning.pdf>

   Ontario Ministry of Labour: Heat Stress: <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/gl_heat.php>

   SHAPE Workplace Emergency Preparedness: <http://www.actsafe.ca/wp-content/uploads/resources/pdf/EmergencyPrep.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Reproduced with Permission by MEDA, Kitchener, Ontario from Human Capital Orientation Manual, updated July, 2011 by Contact Coaching & Training Services [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Landscape Ontario, ‘Defining Landscape Gardener’. <http://www.horttrades.com/defining-landscape-gardener>

   Employment Standards Act: [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\_regs\_010285\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_010285_e.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Landscape Ontario, “Banking hours”: <http://www.hort-trades.com/banking-hours> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)