

Human Rights in the Workplace

Tools for Employers

Why Attend?

In BC, close to 80% of all human rights complaints originate in the workplace. Equipping employers with knowledge and resource tools is a key preventative strategy that results in positive workplace practices and a productive workforce.

What's Inside?

Module Descriptions – Page 2 & 3
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Who Should Attend?

- business owners and executives
- managers and supervisors
- small business consultants or service providers
- human resource specialists and others with human rights responsibilities
- union representatives
- employees, and
- anyone interested in learning about human rights in the workplace

An educational program offered by the provincial Human Rights Clinic and funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

MODULE one

Human Rights Law & Procedures:

an Overview

Across Canada, there are human rights laws that protect the rights of citizens in certain areas, such as employment, and on specific grounds, such as race or disability. Everyone can benefit from knowing how to recognize discrimination that is legally protected and what steps to take in order to prevent it. We will review the *BC Human Rights Code* and the formal complaint process of the BC Human Rights Tribunal to ensure everyone knows what their rights are, and how to access them.

This module will:

- Provide an overview of human rights legislation – what is the scope of the legislation and what are the protected grounds,
- Define discrimination and discuss its different forms,
- Discuss the rights and responsibilities of employers, employees and unions in preventing discrimination,
- Describe how the formal complaint process of the BC Human Rights Tribunal works, and what to expect should you be involved in a complaint,
- Discuss the various options involved in dealing with a complaint, and when to consider a form of alternate dispute resolution, and
- Discuss the range of remedies available.

MODULE two

Dealing with Discrimination & Harassment

in the Workplace

A large number of human rights complaints originate in the workplace. There are a number of preventative steps that front line managers and supervisors can take to actively discourage discriminatory conduct in all aspects of employment.

This module will:

- Introduce participants to the *BC Human Rights Code* as it applies to employment practices and identify specific grounds where discrimination is prohibited,
- Help participants understand how the *Code* protects employees and job applicants and how managers and supervisors can make non-discriminatory decisions based only on job-related criteria,
- Help managers and supervisors work with non-discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, and help them offer neutral interviews and job performance evaluations,
- Assist participants in balancing the rights of employers and employees in such controversial areas as alcohol and drug testing, and
- Help managers and supervisors understand how human rights law interacts with other employment and labour laws.

MODULE three

Developing Anti-Harassment & Discrimination Policies for the Workplace

It is good business for employers to develop and implement anti-harassment policies and procedures. Canadian courts and tribunals require employers to provide employees with a harassment-free workplace and may assess significant financial penalties if they do not. In addition, employers will want to ensure that hiring and promotion procedures, drug and alcohol policies etc., are in keeping with the law in human rights. This module will be of interest to employers and human resource managers who want to minimize their liability and develop a discrimination-free workplace.

This module will help participants understand:

- What conduct constitutes harassment under the *BC Human Rights Code*,
- What a poisoned work environment is,
- The liability of employers,
- How appropriate policies, internal practices, and processes can create a work environment that is free from harassment and discrimination,
- What a good policy should include and how to develop and implement one,
- Sample policies for small, medium and large organizations.

MODULE four

The
Duty to

Accommodate

The workplace is increasingly diverse. Employers are required to make a serious effort to find ways to meet the needs of employees as they relate to the grounds protected under *BC Human Rights Code*. Employers' rights and responsibilities are increasingly complex and evolve as the courts continue to make precedent-setting decisions that affect the duty to accommodate.

In this module, participants will learn about:

- The duty to accommodate and examples related to grounds such as disability, pregnancy and religious beliefs and how they apply to the workplace,
- The three-part Meorin test to determine bona fide occupational requirements (BFOR) and examples related to specific grounds,
- The extent to which an employer must accommodate and the meaning of undue hardship,
- Guidelines on how to respond to individual accommodation needs in the workplace.

MODULE five

Human Rights Issues for Non-profit Organizations

In addition to reviewing the *BC Human Rights Code* and the formal complaint process of the BC Human Rights Tribunal, this module will discuss topics specific to non-profit organizations in order to ensure compliance with the *Code*.

This module will help participants:

- Identify where liability lies in the non-profit structure,
- Learn what questions can be asked when screening staff and volunteers,
- Develop anti-harassment and discrimination policies appropriate to your structure,
- Respond to a human rights complaint,
- Understand the duty to accommodate, and
- Identify how human rights legislation may assist in furthering your organizational mandate.

MODULE six

Recent Developments in
Human Rights

Legislation

This module will consider the effect of recent court and tribunal decisions dealing with equality and human rights law and is well suited to informal settings such as luncheon or breakfast meetings.

If your group has a specific request we can tailor these sessions. Alternatively, we will announce sessions as significant decisions are identified.

This format would be of interest to:

- Lawyers, law students, human resource professionals or special interest organizations or groups wishing to develop a better understanding of human rights legislation and its impact.

Human Rights in the Workplace

WORKSHOP

formats

Two-hour to full day workshop sessions are available and can be tailored to meet specific need. Modules 3 and 4 require a full day to deliver but may be broken down into 1/2 day segments.

WORKSHOP

presenters

Workshop presenters have extensive knowledge of the *BC Human Rights Code* and how it applies to the workplace. The presenters are staff from the provincial Human Rights Clinic funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General and have extensive teaching experience in this field.

WORKSHOP

fees

Scheduled workshop fees are kept low and cover associated expenses only.

See inserted registration form for fees, dates and information on scheduled sessions.

For More **information** on **Workshops**

For more information about workshop dates and locations, or to discuss sponsoring or hosting a session in your community, please contact:

**The BC Human Rights Coalition,
Human Rights Clinic Program**

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The BC Human Rights Coalition is a non-profit, community-based organization. Our mandate is to promote and foster strengthened human rights in BC and Canada. The Human Rights Clinic Program, jointly run by our Coalition and the Community Legal Assistance Society, is one of several programs run by each organization. We gratefully credit and thank the Alberta Human Rights Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund for allowing us to borrow design and content for the creation of this brochure.