

SECTION A: SOCIETY POLICIES

POLICY A1: CODE OF ETHICS

Policy Owner: Craig Daniell
Amended: 15 July 2005

1. Introduction

The Code of Ethics for the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) was developed to bring together and organize various SOCIETY documents, policies and expectations concerning the ethical conduct of BC SPCA members, volunteers and employees. The Code of Ethics is referred to in the BC SPCA Constitution and Bylaws in section 2.3 *Duties of Members* where it states: *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 also agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics. The Code is based on the vision of the BC SPCA Charter and the values outlined in the Guiding Beliefs and Principles which were presented at the 2002 Annual General Meeting. The BC SPCA Ethics Committee, with the input of staff and volunteers, developed the Code of Ethics Practical Guidelines to guide its members, staff, and volunteers in their day-to-day work, interactions, and decision-making. The Implementation section was designed to provide a process to deal with ethical questions and breaches of the Code and to ensure that the Code continues to be a living document by providing for review and amendments. The Board and the Chief Executive Officer of the BC SPCA is committed to uphold high standards of integrity and accountability, to act according to the core values and guiding principles of the BC SPCA and to promote these standards and principles.

2. Scope of the BC SPCA Code of Conduct

The Practical Guidelines for the BC SPCA have been developed for BC SPCA members, staff and volunteers.

3. General Principles

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;

5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

3.2 Guiding Beliefs and Principles

As a volunteer-based organization the following beliefs and principles guide our attitudes and actions:

PRINCIPLED BEHAVIOUR

What we do is principle-driven. We are open, honest, and transparent in our relationships with our staff, volunteers, and the public. We strive to 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 respect for animals, we can accomplish more than any of us can do on our own.

LEADERSHIP

By demonstrating courage, as well as compassion, knowledge and wisdom, we exercise leadership in the protection and promotion of animal welfare.

LEARNING

We honour the need to grow and learn, using the best possible evidence to guide improvements and constantly evaluate the impact of our work.

RESPONSIBILITY

We believe that animal welfare is not solely the responsibility of organizations like the BC SPCA. It is 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 at the community level.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We strive to 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 Towards Animals

We will strive to act 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 see the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Code of Ethics.

4.2 Internal Relations

We will treat each other with respect and consideration. We will communicate and consult with each other openly and collegially and in a manner that assists each of us to fulfill our duties and responsibilities faithfully and efficiently. We believe volunteers and staff plays equally important but complementary roles in implementing the mission and programs of the BC SPCA, therefore we will recognize each other's contributions and will strive to understand and respect each other's needs and abilities when working together for the benefit of the SOCIETY. We undertake to ensure consultation before making decisions, which 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 which give rise to a conflict of interest or which may be reasonably perceived as a conflict of interest. We will disclose any conflict between our personal interests and the interests of the BCSPCA 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, and that may bring the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals into disrepute.

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

4.4 Attaining Knowledge

We will strive to attain knowledge and stay abreast of information regarding SOCIETY policies, directives and literature relevant to our position in the SOCIETY, and to achieve current "best practices" in our work.

4.5 Accountability

We will be as open as possible about the decisions and actions we take while respecting and upholding confidentiality as required, will make full and fair disclosure of all relevant information to all those who have the right to know. We will be responsible stewards of the SOCIETY's assets and shall conduct its finances in such a way as to assure appropriate use of funds and accountability to donors.

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

4.6 Communication and Confidentiality

We will strive to be effective representatives of the BC SPCA and ensure that the SOCIETY enjoys a good public image. We will speak on behalf of the SOCIETY only if we have the authority to do so. We will treat information obtained through the BC SPCA with confidentiality when its nature calls for it or when this is explicitly requested.

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

5. Implementation

5.1. Whistle Blowing

The BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service to animals, staff, volunteers, the public and its Directors. In order to achieve this, it encourages staff and volunteers to report any cases of malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions, which adversely affect the SOCIETY's provision of high quality service and care.

No one who raises concerns responsibly and reasonably shall be discriminated against, disciplined or reprimanded for reporting their concerns or requesting guidance concerning bad practices or application of the Code of Conduct.

5.2 Raising an Issue

Any concerns about an interpretation, application or suspected violation of the Code that members, staff or volunteers are not comfortable raising directly with the person(s) concerned should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Advisor or the Ethics Committee.

The Ethics Advisor, appointed by the Board of Directors:

1. shall give confidential advice on ethical questions to members, staff and volunteers who request it, and
2. shall receive complaints where members, staff or volunteers have reason to believe that a breach of the Code has occurred and can give advice or refer the complaint to the Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee will address ethical issues or claims brought forward by members, staff or volunteers or by the Ethics Advisor and upon reaching a conclusion, make a written recommendation to all persons involved and, as appropriate, to the Board of Directors.

5.3 Amendments

The Code of Conduct shall be reviewed regularly and its effectiveness evaluated by the Ethics Committee

Amendments to the Code shall be discussed with all stakeholders and must be approved by the Board of Directors.

6. Information and Contacts

6.1 Ethics Committee

Meredith Thornton
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Dorothy Garrett
Carol Morgan
Marguerite Vogel

6.2 Ethics Advisor

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