

GENERAL

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

VERSION 2.0
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ENGINEERS &
GEOSCIENTISTS
BRITISH COLUMBIA

PREFACE

These *Professional Practice Guidelines – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* were developed by Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia (Engineers and Geoscientists BC) to guide professional practice related to equitable, diverse, and inclusive environments and interactions. These guidelines are distinct from other practice guidelines, in that they address social and cultural matters relevant to the professions.

The professions of engineering and geoscience exist within a broader social and cultural context. This context informs how engineers and geoscientists act in the course of practicing their professions, whether in the office, on site, or in other environments where engineers and geoscientists work. Furthermore, this context also shapes how Firms are set up and operate, including how they manage standard company processes, systems, and physical spaces.

In recent years, on a societal level, there has been a paradigm shift in people’s understanding of issues related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This shift has become more apparent as a result of certain events and social movements that have sparked worldwide discussions and accountability for EDI for Equity-Seeking Groups related to race, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors.

Within the professions of engineering and geoscience in British Columbia (BC), the *Professional Governance Act* (the “*Act*”), which came into force in 2021, requires that Engineers and Geoscientists BC provide continuing education programs and other requirements for Registrants that support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in BC. The organization’s Code of Ethics, which was updated when the *Act* was introduced, requires Registrants to act at all times with fairness, courtesy, and good faith towards all persons. Additionally, the organization’s Bylaws include requirements for Firms, which are now regulated entities, to develop and

implement documented codes of conduct that outline how they, as Registrant Firms, will ensure all of their employees comply with ethical standards, including those described in these guidelines.

All Registrants are responsible for contributing to inclusive workplace environments and professional interactions that are welcoming for all people. These guidelines are intended to provide pertinent information to help Registrants meet their professional obligations as outlined in the *Act*, and under the Bylaws and Code of Ethics. These guidelines contain broadly defined key requirements along with important considerations, which all Registrants are strongly encouraged to review and implement.

These guidelines were first published in 2016 under the title *Human Rights and Diversity Guidelines* to address human rights and diversity issues relevant to professional practice. This update was initiated in 2021 to address the growing need to understand evolving concepts of EDI, provide more information on EDI, clarify expectations of Registrants, and align the content with the requirements of the *Professional Governance Act*.

With the purpose of updating and expanding the *Human Rights and Diversity Guidelines* with current understanding of EDI, Engineers and Geoscientists BC engaged TransFocus Consulting to conduct a multi-stakeholder consultation process among Registrants who are part of Equity-Seeking Groups. The findings and results of this consultation process informed the development of this document, which aims to provide Registrants with tangible actions to improve EDI within the engineering and geoscience professions.

The concept of EDI is complex and nuanced. These guidelines are not intended to be used as a comprehensive guide to EDI, but as a starting point,

and as such provide only essential and foundational information for Registrants. Continuous growth and learning align with existing practices and culture within the professions and apply to both technical and non-technical topics, including EDI. Registrants are encouraged to embark on their own continuous learning journey, which could, for example, include choosing EDI as a topic for the mandatory ethical learning requirements under the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Continuing Education Program.

These guidelines are written for both Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms, and they apply to everyone, including those who are part of one or more Equity-Seeking Groups and those who are part of Advantaged Groups. The roles and associated responsibilities of individuals reading these guidelines may differ, depending on their own personal identities and their roles within organizations. Each person has their own complex tapestry of identity factors, some of which encounter cultural and structural challenges and barriers that can detract from an individual's ability to fulfill their potential, both professionally, as an engineer or geoscientist, and personally, as a human being.

This current revision of these guidelines is intended to:

- provide an overview of current EDI topics and challenges;
- set expectations for the conduct of all Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms with respect to EDI;
- set expectations for Registrant Firms with respect to creating EDI policies and procedures;
- provide considerations for EDI principles that apply in a variety of professional interactions and structures;
- provide guidance on responding to Harmful Situations and making formal complaints; and
- provide resources for further education on the topic of EDI.

These guidelines describe expectations and obligations of professional practice in relation to EDI at the time they were prepared. However, understanding of EDI is continually evolving, and Registrants are expected to keep themselves informed of any changes in approaches to EDI. Furthermore, these guidelines are a living document that will be revised and updated as required in the future, to reflect the developing state of EDI and its relation to the professions of engineering and geoscience.

CONTENT WARNING:

This document contains content that may be difficult for some to read based on prior or ongoing personal experiences, especially among people in Equity-Seeking Groups. It contains information about challenges (such as Discrimination, Harassment, and Microaggressions) and provides examples across groups.

More specifically, this document contains a summary of past and ongoing injustices faced by Indigenous people in Canada (e.g., residential schools, lack of access to lands, and other past and present institutional harms).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	TERM
BC	British Columbia
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People
2SLGBTQ+	two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other (+) gender and sexual minorities

DEFINED TERMS

The following definitions are specific to these guidelines. These words and terms are capitalized throughout the document.

Note: For terms and concepts pertaining to specific Equity-Seeking persons (i.e., women, Indigenous Peoples, people with disability, people of colour, newcomers, 2SLGBTQ+ people), refer to the Engineers and Geoscientists BC website, under the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) page.

TERM	DEFINITION
Act	<i>Professional Governance Act</i> , S.B.C. 2018, c. 47.
Advantaged Group	A group that has been historically, systemically, and persistently given advantages in Canadian society over other groups. This is often based on being the majority; however, that is not necessarily the case. Advantaged Groups are often considered the default norm for whom processes, physical spaces, and systems are designed, which other groups often need to adapt to or navigate.
Ally; Allies	Part of an Advantaged Group who support Equity-Seeking Groups through awareness and action to neutralize or dismantle inequities. Individuals can identify as part of an Equity-Seeking Group and still be an ally of people in other Equity-Seeking Groups.
Bullying	Repeated action taken that intentionally harms, humiliates, intimidates, or coerces others, especially those who are vulnerable and/or within a power imbalance.
Bylaws	The Bylaws of Engineers and Geoscientists BC made under the <i>Act</i> .
Conduct Unbecoming a Registrant	As defined in the <i>Act</i> : “...conduct of a registrant that (a) brings the regulatory body or its registrants into disrepute, (b) undermines the standards, methods or principles that are the foundation of the profession, or (c) undermines the principle of holding paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public, including the protection of the environment and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace in the manner that reflects the stewardship of a given profession by each regulatory body.”
Discrimination	An action, decision, or practice that has an adverse effect on an individual or group based, in part, on a protected characteristic, such as, for example, race, place of origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability.
Diversity	The variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we each possess. Some of these elements are physical (such as age, sex, and physical abilities), others are socially constructed (such as race and gender), and others are a result of our circumstances and experiences (such as religion, education level, and nationality). Diversity is the inclusion of different types of people—such as people of different genders, sexual orientations, races, cultures, religions, physical, or mental ability—in a group or a Firm.

TERM	DEFINITION
Duty to Report	<p>The duty of a Registrant, who must report to Engineers and Geoscientists BC and, if applicable, any other appropriate authority, if the Registrant, on reasonable and probable grounds, believes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the continued practice of a regulated practice by another Registrant or other person, including Firms and employers, might pose a risk of significant harm to the environment or to the health or safety of the public or a group of people; or b) a Registrant or another individual has made decisions or engaged in practices which may be illegal or unethical.
Engineers and Geoscientists BC	<p>The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of British Columbia, operating as Engineers and Geoscientists BC.</p>
Equity	<p>Determines the specific and unique needs of each group that has been historically, systemically, and persistently marginalized, with a view to what needs to be done to create inclusive environments without barriers to participation and advancement. Equity is sometimes used interchangeably with the concept of equality; however, their meanings are different. In particular, equality is focused on providing everyone with the same amount or types of resources without a view to whether these resources address their specific barriers.</p>
Equity-Seeking Group(s)	<p>Groups that have been historically, systemically, and persistently marginalized in Canadian society, and seek to address the inequities they continue to face. Equity-Seeking Groups are often not considered the default norm for whom processes, physical spaces, and systems are designed, which they often need to adapt to or navigate. Examples of Equity-Seeking Groups include people who are marginalized, disadvantaged, or discriminated against based on their race, colour, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.</p>
Firm	<p>As defined in the <i>Act</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “(a) a legal entity or combination of legal entities engaged in providing services in respect of a regulated practice, or (b) a ministry or agency of the government prescribed by the government, but does not include a legal entity or combination of legal entities that may be exempted from this Act by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.”
Harassment	<p>Unwanted behaviour that offends, demeans, intimidates, or humiliates. (See also the definition for Sexual Harassment.) Includes any inappropriate conduct or comment that was known or reasonably ought to have been known would cause humiliation or intimidation.</p>
Harmful Situation	<p>Types of conduct or structural issues, which are discriminatory, including Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Microaggressions, or Lateral Violence. Harmful Situations can be experienced on several levels, including on an individual basis or a systemic level across a group, Firm, or industry. A Harmful Situation can occur through actions or structures even if there is no intent to harm by the person or organization that is taking the action or supporting the structure.</p>
Inclusion	<p>Having a sense of belonging and/or being valued for one’s unique contributions, as well as those held in common with others. Inclusion is an environment or culture that strives for Equity, and values and respects Diversity.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
Indigenous Rights	Collectively-held rights to a range of activities and title held before contact with non-Indigenous settlers. These rights include (but are not limited to) title, hunting, trapping, fishing, cultural practices, language, archaeological artefacts, and self-governance. These rights are broadly affirmed in Section 35 of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK)</i> , and have been and continue to be clarified through numerous court cases across Canada and internationally with the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which has been adopted into legislation provincially and federally.
Individual Registrant	An individual who is registered with Engineers and Geoscientists BC as a Registrant, including professionals, trainees, and those who have non-practicing status.
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person or group of people as affected by overlapping Discrimination and disadvantage. It takes into account the layering of an individual’s unique identity and/or characteristic factors, such as race, class, ability, or gender. It affects how other people and systems treat them, often with cumulative adverse impacts based on multiple identity and/or characteristic factors. It also recognizes that the layering of individual identity and/or characteristic factors creates a unique lens through which individuals view and experience the world.
Invisible Identities	People in Equity-Seeking Groups whose identities are less visible or not visible but are still historically, systematically, and persistently excluded, if they are read as or known as being a part of a group. Examples of Invisible Identities include some people with mental health conditions or neurodivergence and 2SLGBTQ+ people. Some people of colour or certain physical disabilities may also have a degree of invisibility.
Lateral Violence	Harmful Situations directed inward towards members of one’s own Equity-Seeking group.
Marginalization	The intentional or unintentional exclusion of a group of people based on stereotypes, Unconscious Bias, misinformation, and/or superiority.
Microaggression(s)	Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to the target person or group (BCOHRC 2021).
Permit to Practice	A certificate bearing a Permit to Practice number that is issued to a Registrant Firm by Engineers and Geoscientists BC and confirms that the Registrant Firm is entitled to engage in the reserved practice in BC, subject to any suspensions, limitations, conditions, or restrictions on the Registrant Firm’s registration.
Privilege	Mostly unearned access to resources and power available primarily to people in Advantaged Groups. Privilege may not be visible to or understood by people who have it.
Professional Environments	Encompasses all of the people, circumstances, objects, and the atmosphere—mental, cultural, or physical—surrounding a Registrant during the performance of their profession as an engineer or geoscientist. This includes professional activities or work as an engineer or geoscientist performed in the office, during field work and travel, and in communities in a professional capacity.

TERM	DEFINITION
Professional Misconduct	In the <i>Act</i> , Professional Misconduct is defined as misconduct by a Registrant as a professional, relating to the performance of duties while engaged in a regulated practice, including a failure to comply with, or a breach of, the <i>Act</i> , the <i>Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation</i> , or the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Bylaws.
Protected Grounds	Identity factors or characteristics that are protected from Discrimination in the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i> and in British Columbia's <i>Human Rights Code</i> . Protected Grounds in the <i>Human Rights Code</i> may include race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age.
Registrant	Means the same as defined in Schedule 1, section 5 of the <i>Professional Governance Act</i> .
Registrant Firm	A Firm that is registered with Engineers and Geoscientists BC as a Registrant.
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the work or service environment or leads to adverse consequences for the victim. A broad range of conduct may fall within the definition of Sexual Harassment. The conduct may be physical or verbal, overt or subtle, and may arise from one incident or a number of incidents.
Tokenization	Any action taken or decision made based solely on Diversity without intent of Inclusion. Tokenization occurs when something is done only to prevent criticism or give the appearance of fairness. Tokenization also occurs in instances where an individual who is part of an Equity-Seeking Group is asked or expected to speak on behalf of the whole Equity-Seeking Group. This kind of request typically stems from the misconception of group homogeneity (i.e., individuals within Equity-Seeking Groups have the same experiences or needs).
Unconscious Bias; Unconscious Biases (also known as Implicit Bias)	Mental shortcuts about groups of people that inform someone's actions or words towards people of that group. Everyone has Unconscious Biases that are influenced by personal experiences and cultural context. Unconscious Bias refers to attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. We rely on these biases to navigate the multitude of decisions we need to make every day. Unconscious Biases can differ from declared or conscious beliefs.

VERSION HISTORY

VERSION NUMBER	PUBLISHED DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
2.0	December 9, 2021	Updated to reflect the growing need to understand evolving concepts of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), provide more information on EDI, clarify expectations of Registrants regarding EDI, and align with the requirements of the <i>Professional Governance Act</i> .
1.0	April 16, 2016	Initial version (titled <i>Human Rights and Diversity Guidelines</i>).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Engineers and Geoscientists BC firmly believes that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equitably, and is committed to establishing standards of conduct for and addressing issues related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Professional Environments. The *Professional Governance Act* (the “*Act*”) guides Engineers and Geoscientists BC and its Registrants in performing their duties, including expectations for conduct and structures related to EDI.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC recognizes the importance of fostering Professional Environments that welcome and advocate for Diversity among Registrants, and enable Registrants to contribute to their full potential. This includes people who are part of one or more Equity-Seeking Groups that have been historically, persistently, and systemically marginalized in Canadian society based on their identity, such as race, colour, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age.

Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia is the regulatory and licensing body for the engineering and geoscience professions in British Columbia (BC). To protect the public, Engineers and Geoscientists BC establishes, monitors, and enforces standards for the qualification and practice of its Registrants.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC provides various practice resources to its Registrants to assist them in meeting their professional and ethical obligations under the *Act* and Bylaws. Those practice resources include professional practice guidelines, which are produced under the authority of Section 7.3.1 of the Bylaws and are aligned with the Code of Ethics Principle 4.

Each professional practice guideline describes expectations and obligations of professional practice that all Registrants are expected to have regard for

in relation to a specific professional activity. Engineers and Geoscientists BC publishes professional practice guidelines on specific professional activities where additional guidance is deemed necessary. Professional practice guidelines are written by subject matter experts and reviewed by stakeholders before publication.

Having regard for professional practice guidelines means that Registrants must follow established and documented procedures to stay informed of, be knowledgeable about, and meet the intent of any professional practice guidelines related to their area of practice. By carefully considering the objectives and intent of a professional practice guideline, Registrants can then use their professional judgment when applying the guidance to a specific situation. Where the guidelines refer to professional obligations specified under the *Act*, according to the organization’s Bylaws and Code of Ethics, and under other regulations/legislation, Registrants must understand that such obligations are mandatory.

These *Professional Practice Guidelines – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* provide guidance on professional practice to assist Registrants in understanding the expectations, obligations, and considerations related to EDI. These guidelines are distinct from other practice guidelines, in that they address social and cultural matters relevant to the professions.

These guidelines were first published in 2016 as the *Human Rights and Diversity Guidelines* and were revised in 2021 to provide additional context and understanding of EDI, to expand on the responsibilities of the various parties involved, to provide current guidance on the expectations and obligations for Registrants related to EDI, and to align the content with the requirements of the *Act*.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

This document provides guidance on professional practice to Registrants related to the best practices of EDI. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a common set of expectations and approaches for increasing awareness of issues surrounding EDI, and to outline considerations that can be applied to increase EDI in the professions of engineering and geoscience.

Following are the specific objectives of these guidelines:

1. Describe expectations and obligations for professional practice (which includes professional conduct) that all Registrants are expected to have regard for in relation to EDI, as outlined in these guidelines, by:
 - referring to the relevant professional obligations under the *Act*, according to the organization’s Bylaws and Code of Ethics, and under other regulations/legislation, including the primary obligation to protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public and the environment; and
 - describing the expectations of professional practice as it relates to EDI.
2. Provide a high-level description of the types of EDI challenges that may arise.
3. Describe and delineate the roles and responsibilities of Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms.
4. Describe how Registrants can respond in situations that provide greater adherence to the principles of EDI.

These guidelines form one part of a larger system of support for EDI at Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [Table 1](#) summarizes other organizational components that underpin these guidelines.

1.2 ROLE OF ENGINEERS AND GEOSCIENTISTS BC

These guidelines form part of Engineers and Geoscientists BC’s ongoing commitment to maintaining the quality of professional services Registrants provide, which includes the quality of their professional interactions with colleagues, clients, and the public.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC has the statutory duty to serve and protect the public interest as it relates to the practice of professional engineering and professional geoscience, including regulating the conduct of Registrants. Engineers and Geoscientists BC is responsible for establishing, monitoring, and enforcing the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for Registrants. One way that Engineers and Geoscientists BC exercises these responsibilities is by publishing and enforcing the use of professional practice guidelines, as per Section 7.3.1 of the Bylaws.

Guidelines are meant to assist Registrants in meeting their professional obligations. As such, Registrants are required to be knowledgeable of, competent in, and meet the intent of professional practice guidelines that are relevant to their area of practice.

The writing, review, and publishing process for professional practice guidelines at Engineers and Geoscientists BC is rigorous. These guidelines were prepared by subject matter experts, along with input from in-depth consultation with Registrants from various Equity-Seeking Groups, and desk-based research of other regulators in various industries across North America. Drafts of these guidelines were reviewed at various stages by a formal review group, by various advisory groups and committees, by members of divisions of Engineers and Geoscientists BC, and by Registrants who are part of Equity-Seeking Groups. These guidelines and the current revision were then approved by Council and, prior to publication, underwent final editorial and legal reviews.

Table 1: Summary of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Organizational Components that Support These Guidelines

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENT	DETAILS
Code of Ethics	As per the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Code of Ethics (especially the introductory paragraph and principles 1, 9, and 13), Registrants must act at all times with fairness, courtesy, and good faith toward all persons with whom the Registrant has professional dealings, and in accordance with the public interest.
Bylaws	Engineers and Geoscientists BC exercises its responsibilities by publishing and enforcing the use of professional practice guidelines, as per the organization’s Bylaw 7.3.1. A Firm must include in their professional practice management plan a code of conduct for its employees that includes compliance with the Code of Ethics, these guidelines, and ethical business practices, as per Bylaw 7.7.3.
Professional Governance Act	Section 57(1)(f) of the <i>Act</i> specifically requires “continuing education programs or requirements that support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.”
EDI Statement	Engineers and Geoscientists BC adopted the following council-approved EDI Statement in early 2021: “Engineers and Geoscientists BC recognizes the importance and value of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the organization and within the professions of engineering and geoscience as part of its regulatory mandate. In keeping with these principles, Engineers and Geoscientists BC is committed to supporting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and recognizes the lands on which British Columbia was founded. Engineers and Geoscientists BC acknowledges the need to address systemic issues of inequity and is committed to building an inclusive environment within our organization, across all volunteer groups, and for registrants and registrant firms that promotes equity and diversity within the professions of engineering geoscience.”
Strategic Priority	Engineers and Geoscientists BC has identified fostering Diversity and Inclusion as a key principle, and this has been a major strategic focus for the organization. The organization’s commitment to EDI and fostering EDI within the professions is actioned through a variety of programs and ongoing initiatives, the organization’s strategic plan, and commitment to specific initiatives such as the Engineers Canada 30 by 30 program.
EDI Resources	Resources for further exploration and awareness of EDI programs and actions are available on the Engineers and Geoscientists BC website, which includes links to a variety of EDI topics across Equity-Seeking Groups. See egbc.ca/About/Programs-Initiatives/Equity-Diversity-Inclusion . Registrants can also become involved in EDI initiatives in the organization by signing up for volunteer opportunities with groups, such as the Division for Women in Engineering in Geoscience and the 30 by 30 Champions. Registrants can also bring an EDI lens to other volunteer positions on advisory groups, committees, and branches.

1.3 INTRODUCTION OF TERMS

See the [Defined Terms](#) section at the front of the document for a full list of definitions specific to these guidelines.

Note: For terms and concepts pertaining to specific Equity-Seeking persons (i.e., women, Indigenous Peoples, people with disability, people of colour, newcomers, 2SLGBTQ+ people), refer to the Engineers and Geoscientists BC website, under [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#).

1.4 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY OF THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines provide guidance on professional practice, which includes expectations for professional conduct, for Registrants regarding EDI. They apply to both Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms. These guidelines address both professional obligations outlined in the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Bylaws and Code of Ethics, as well as expectations and considerations established by current best practices in EDI.

For Individual Registrants, obligations include both those within the Bylaws and those outlined in the Code of Ethics. Professional conduct of Individual Registrants includes:

- maintaining the safety, health, and welfare of the public;
- conducting themselves with fairness, courtesy, and good faith; and
- fulfilling their Duty to Report ethics violations.

Individual Registrants must have regard for applicable standards, policies, plans, and practices established by the government and by Engineers and Geoscientists BC, including professional practice guidelines.

For Registrant Firms, obligations outlined in the Bylaws require the Firm to have a code of conduct in place that ensures compliance with these guidelines. The code of conduct must explain how the Firm will ensure compliance with ethical standards, including compliance with these guidelines, for all individuals employed or under contract with the Registrant Firm.

Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms are strongly encouraged to extend expectations for professional conduct beyond the obligations outlined in these guidelines, and to use these guidelines to inform and deepen their understanding and practices related to EDI. This includes being aware of updated terms and concepts, reviewing the challenges and opportunities outlined in these guidelines, seeking additional education and resources, and taking proactive steps to make Professional Environments more equitable for people in Equity-Seeking Groups.

Registrants are held to a high ethical standard because the public places their confidence and trust in the professional activities and work of Registrants. In exchange, the paramount ethical duty of Registrants in their professional activities and work is to protect public health, safety, and welfare, including the health and safety of all individuals within their workplace.

These guidelines pertain primarily to Professional Environments, nevertheless many of the principles presented for professional conduct can be extrapolated and applied beyond the professional context.

Professional Environments include these five key settings:

- **In offices:** This includes the Registrant's own offices and those of clients, contractors, authorities, and peers.
- **On site:** This includes during field work and site visits, and while travelling to or from a site.
- **In communities:** This includes when working in a community setting in a professional capacity, and presenting on engineering and geoscience projects to community members as part of Indigenous and public consultation processes.

- **In general communications:** This includes written and verbal communications, such as letters, emails, memos, phone calls, text messages, and visual presentations used to conduct engineering and geoscience business.
- **Online:** This includes virtual communications such as emails, virtual meetings, and media communications made while working in a professional capacity.

While Registrants’ professional conduct is the focus of these guidelines, their personal conduct may also be informed by these guidelines. Engineers and Geoscientists BC may have jurisdiction over Registrants’ off-duty conduct if it constitutes Conduct Unbecoming a Registrant, which arises when one or more of the following occur:

- The profession is brought into disrepute.
- The conduct undermines the profession’s standards, methods, or principles.
- The conduct undermines the principles of holding paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.

Note that these guidelines should not be interpreted as legal advice and do not cover broad workplace issues addressed by employer policies and efforts (e.g., affinity groups organized by employees, pay equity).

1.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The content of this document was informed by Registrants who are part of Equity-Seeking Groups who participated in focus groups that took place in early 2021. Furthermore, a draft of these guidelines was reviewed by a group of subject matter experts, as well as by various advisory groups, committees, divisions of Engineers and Geoscientists BC, and Registrants who are part of Equity-Seeking Groups.

Authorship and review of these guidelines does not necessarily indicate the individuals and/or their employers endorse everything in these guidelines.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC thanks the authors and reviewers of the original document, as well as the authors and reviewers of this revision, for their time and effort in sharing their knowledge and experience. In particular, Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia acknowledges and appreciates the time, energy, and insights from Registrants of Equity-seeking Groups who participated in the roundtable sessions in early 2021 and reviewed the draft guidelines in October 2021.

2.0 EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

2.1 OVERVIEW

This section provides key context and information related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) (including Intersectionality) to help Registrants understand the main issues and develop skills to identify Harmful Situations. This section also provides tangible and specific examples of EDI challenges that may arise in the Professional Environments in which engineers and geoscientists operate. Although the issues outlined in this section are not unique to the engineering and geoscience professions, there are distinct ways that EDI challenges arise in these professions as a result of the culture and nature of engineering and geoscience work.

It is important for Registrants to be able to recognize Harmful Situations so they can eliminate them from their own actions and communications and speak up when they observe them in the actions of others or within systems and structures. [Section 2.3 Harmful Situations](#) describes various types of Harmful Situations, including Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Unconscious Bias, Microaggressions, and Lateral Violence.

The issues presented in this section should be considered the minimum knowledge and understanding of EDI that is expected of Registrants. Depending on the nature of their professional activities or work and their roles, Individual Registrants (especially those in supervisory or managerial roles) and Registrant Firms may need to explore these concepts in greater detail.

See [Section 5.0 Additional Resources](#) and [Section 6.0 References](#) for more information.

2.2 CONTEXT

2.2.1 LEGAL CONTEXT

2.2.1.1 Indigenous Rights

Registrants are expected to be aware of and remain updated on issues pertaining to Indigenous people and their rights, and concerning reconciliation efforts, to inform professional conduct and project work.

Indigenous Rights are collectively-held rights to a range of activities and title held by a group of Indigenous people before contact with non-Indigenous settlers. These rights are integral to the distinctive culture of the Indigenous group. For example, there is the right to hunt, fish, trap, and gather plants for food and medicinal purposes, and the right to cultural practices and language, as well as the right to self-government and title as part of self-determination.

While Indigenous people are Equity-seeking and share many issues in common with other groups (e.g., racism and sexism), their issues and rights are also distinct and separate from EDI. This stems from the fact that Indigenous people and their nations are the original occupants of these lands, predating the establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867.

However, government laws and practices have displaced and prevented Indigenous people from accessing their lands, undertaking land-based harvesting, and practicing their culture and language, and have devastated close-knit family fabrics—practices and impacts that continue to this day.

Examples of these practices include:

- displacing Indigenous people onto reserves;
- removing Indigenous children from their families and placing them in residential schools or non-Indigenous homes;
- limiting the movement of Indigenous people by imposing and requiring travel passes;
- restricting cultural gatherings and ceremonies;
- assimilating Indigenous people into economic activities (including farming and ranching);
- restricting Indigenous forms of dress;
- over-policing or neglecting to provide policing to Indigenous people; and
- neglecting to provide medical care to Indigenous people and subjecting them to medical experimentation.

Infrastructure developments, including bridges, roads, highways, railways, and mines, which are designed by engineers and geoscientists, as well as related activities such as prospecting, have also contributed to and continue to exacerbate the harms and injustices experienced by many Indigenous people and their communities across Canada.

Past and current systemic injustices, along with their legacy of intergenerational trauma, were documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which culminated in ninety-four calls to action that were published in the “Calls to Action” report in 2015 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Engineers and Geoscientist BC subsequently engaged an Indigenous specialist to review all ninety-four of the calls to action and identify any that relate to the primary duty of Engineers and Geoscientists BC to serve the public interest; five calls to action were identified in the report (Morin 2018).

More recently, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identified past and ongoing systematic violence against Indigenous girls and women, as well as government neglect to intervene and protect them (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019). In 2021, discriminatory practices in health care revealed persistent systematic dismissal of issues and lack of adequate care for Indigenous people in British Columbia (Turpel-LaFond 2020).

Since the 1980s, in response to persistent and mounting legal actions, the courts have increasingly ruled in favour of Indigenous people. Furthermore, moral petitions by Indigenous people to various levels of government, along with societal shifts in attitude, have solidified Indigenous Rights in Canada. The first change was that Indigenous Rights were outlined in Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, in *Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK)*, which affirms existing Indigenous and treaty rights of Indigenous people across Canada.

In addition, an international framework identifies and recognizes Indigenous Rights, which is outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (UN General Assembly 2007). UNDRIP contains 46 articles supporting seven areas of Indigenous Rights to promote wellbeing and longevity. A key part of UNDRIP is free, prior, and informed consent, which is particularly relevant to engineering and geoscience work and underscores the necessity for meaningful and sustained consultation with and participation of Indigenous nations.

UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 by most nations, except four nations (including Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand). Since then, the Province of British Columbia officially adopted UNDRIP by passing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in 2019. The federal government endorsed UNDRIP through the *United Nations Declaration for Indigenous Rights Act* (Bill C-15), which received Royal Assent in June 2021.

2.2.1.2 Human Rights

In British Columbia, all employers (including Registrant Firms, corporations, societies, partnerships, unions, and government entities) are governed by either the federal *Canadian Human Rights Act*, or the *Human Rights Code* of British Columbia. The *Canadian Human Rights Act* governs all federally regulated activities. The *Human Rights Code* sets the legal standard for all activities in British Columbia that are not federally regulated.

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Human Rights Code* each list prohibited grounds of Discrimination with respect to employment practices, job advertisements and applications, and membership in trade unions or employers. As of 2021, Protected Grounds in the *Human Rights Code* include:

- race;
- colour;
- ancestry;
- place of origin;
- political belief;
- religion;
- marital status;
- family status;
- physical or mental disability;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender identity or expression;
- age of that person or that group or class of persons; or
- because that person or member has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offense that is unrelated to either the membership or employment, or the intended membership or employment.

2.2.2 CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

This section outlines important background to EDI challenges, including the origins of inequities, the difference between intent and impact, the spectrum of challenges from subtle to overt, differences between visible identities and Invisible Identities, and the cumulative effects of Intersectionality. This conceptual context provides important perspective to assist Registrants in identifying Harmful Situations.

EDI challenges stem from historic and persistent Marginalization of certain groups. Exclusion can be intentional or unintentional, and occurs at various levels from interpersonal interactions to institutional structures to government laws. This exclusion has led to deeply engrained patterns of thinking and behaviours towards people in Equity-Seeking Groups. These types of conduct pervade most parts of society, industries, and professions, including engineering and geoscience.

Often, the thinking that one group's ways of being are better than others, coupled with relative power in terms of force (e.g., military or police) and/or resources (e.g., financial or natural) produce these patterns that persist today in similar forms. This context has led to privileging one group or groups above others, including unearned advantages and prioritization. These patterns do not simply disappear when they are known or acknowledged (although understanding is an important part of the process). Removing these patterns takes active reflection, thorough assessment, and a move to alternative practices, which are discussed in more detail in [Section 3.2.3 EDI Considerations for Individual Registrants](#) and [Section 3.3.3 EDI Considerations for Registrant Firms](#).

Furthermore, with EDI challenges there is an important distinction between intent and impact. Even if people do not mean to bear ill will towards someone in an Equity-Seeking Group, this does not preclude harm from occurring. Therefore, intent is not an acceptable justification for patterns of behaviour or speech that harm.

2.2.2.1 Spectrum of Challenges

Different types of challenges exist along a spectrum, ranging from subtle to overt issues (Figure 1). The impact of a Harmful Situation on someone from an Equity-Seeking Group is not correlated to the position on this spectrum. For example, repetitive incorrect assumptions, which would be categorized as a more subtle type of challenge, can be quite harmful.

Generally, overt issues are clearly covered by the law, and because they are more obvious, they can be easier to identify and rectify. However, if an EDI challenge is subtle, it may be difficult to point out or explain to others who do not share their experiences. Sometimes, people in Equity-Seeking Groups are told they are being too sensitive, or worse, imagining what is happening. These responses make it difficult to identify and address subtle forms of EDI challenges.

2.2.2.2 Visibility

While many challenges are shared across Equity-Seeking Groups, there are also key differences between the experiences of people whose identities and/or protected characteristics are visible to others, and those of people with less-visible identities or characteristics.

Visible identities are obvious or evident and signal to others that an individual is part of an Equity-Seeking Group (e.g., some people of colour). Non-visible identities and/or protected characteristics are sometimes not discerned by others (e.g., invisible types of disability, religion, sexual orientation).

In addition, depending on how individuals express their identities and/or protected characteristics, as well as the circumstances of interactions, different factors may or may not be visible. For example, a physical disability may not be visible when meeting virtually but may be apparent when meeting in person. It is also recognized that some people in Equity-Seeking Groups may have varying degrees of visibility (e.g., less-visible people of colour with lighter skin tones, or persons whose gender identity does not match societal norms for their appearance).

2.2.2.3 Intersectionality

People have varying and diverse identity and/or characteristic factors, meaning some people identify with two or more Equity-Seeking Groups. The term Intersectionality refers to the layering of these diverse identity and/or characteristic factors (Crenshaw 1991), creating a unique lens through which an individual sees, experiences, and interacts with the world.

The individual's unique factors are Diversity, and the layering of these factors is Intersectionality (Figure 2: Intersecting Identity-based Factors). The intersection of Diversity factors not only creates a unique lens through which a person views their environment, but also layers in experiences of Discrimination and Marginalization that individuals may face. This may increase an individual's chances of encountering barriers in Professional Environments.



Figure 1: Examples of Harmful Situations along a Continuum from Subtle to Overt



Figure 2: Intersecting Identity-based Factors

NOTE: Adapted from Women and Gender Equality Canada 2021.

For example, the experience of a white female geoscientist working in the field on an exploration project will differ from the experience of an Indigenous female geoscientist in the same environment. While both geoscientists may face sexism, the Indigenous geoscientist may also experience racism, which may have a cumulative adverse impact on her.

The full breadth of the history and context of each Equity-Seeking Group are beyond the scope of these guidelines. However, educational resources are available through Engineers and Geoscientists BC and Engineers Canada. See [Section 5.0 Additional Resources](#) for information on resources.

2.2.2.4 Allyship

Allieship provides constructive ways for Individual Registrants to make Professional Environments more inclusive, equitable, and diverse. Allies are part of Advantaged Groups who support people in Equity-Seeking Groups through awareness and action.

Recognizing that every individual has a blend of different identities, everyone can be an Ally, including people who identify with one or more Equity-Seeking Groups and experience advantages on other factors. For example,

a white woman can be an Ally for Indigenous people or a man with a disability can be an Ally for women.

Allies are an important part of EDI efforts, because their understanding of issues can help make important changes. Allies leverage their position of not being directly impacted by the issues faced by an Equity-Seeking Group to promote change to benefit people in that group, without relying solely on those impacted to take the lead. Allies help set the tone and signal to others important shifts in expectations.

Allieship can take many different forms. Following is a broad list of examples of allieship actions:

- Allies listen to a person from an Equity-Seeking Group without asking that person to represent the issues facing their entire group, which is Tokenization.
- Allies take responsibility for their own education to stay up to date on the current issues and needs of Equity-Seeking Groups.
- Allies identify issues facing Equity-Seeking Groups and work with others to determine the best course of action or next steps.
- Allies initiate and take part in ongoing discussions about EDI challenges.

- Allies inquire about, provide space for, and celebrate diverse experiences, abilities, and needs without making assumptions that everyone is like them.
- Allies recognize the value of integrating people in Equity-Seeking Groups as part of the larger group, but also recognize the importance for people in Equity-Seeking Groups to connect among themselves.

2.3 HARMFUL SITUATIONS

Harmful Situations occur in Professional Environments when people are treated differently because of a particular attribute or intersection of attributes, such as race, gender, age, disability, culture, religion, or other factors of Diversity.

Harmful Situations arise in actions, words, processes, physical spaces, and systems that present challenges to people being able to participate and contribute within Professional Environments, including:

- direct Discrimination;
- indirect Discrimination;
- Harassment;
- Bullying;
- systemic Discrimination;
- Unconscious Bias;
- Microaggressions; and
- Lateral Violence.

Any given Harmful Situation can include more than one of these elements. As illustrated in [Section 2.2.2.1 Spectrum of Challenges](#), Harmful Situations exist along a spectrum from subtle to overt, and the types of Harmful Situations also fit along this spectrum, with some elements appearing across the entire spectrum ([Figure 3](#)).

2.3.1 DISCRIMINATION

It is illegal to discriminate against people who are part of Equity-Seeking Groups based on Protected Grounds, as explained in [Section 2.2.1.2 Human Rights](#).

Discrimination comes in many forms but generally includes the following:

- Assumptions are made and biases are applied based on stereotypes and presumed traits.
- Individual abilities, unique capabilities, and personal circumstances are not equitably assessed.
- A person is excluded, denied benefits and fair opportunities, or has inequitable burdens imposed.

Often, Discrimination results from a propensity to build systems and structures that align with the Advantaged Group, without considering the unique needs, challenges, and different perspectives of those in Equity-Seeking Groups. Not considering a broad range of perspectives and the unique experiences and needs of different people may result in the development or reinforcement of systems and structures, as well as beliefs and attitudes, that create barriers for people in Equity-Seeking Groups.

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, or systemic

2.3.1.1 Direct Discrimination

Direct Discrimination means adverse treatment is based, in part, on one or more Protected Ground(s), as defined in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* or the *Human Rights Code*. This may include:

- denying employment to a person;
- overlooking someone for promotion;
- excluding someone from important activities; and/or
- making jokes and comments intended to disparage or diminish a person.

Discriminatory acts may be one-time occurrences or part of a pattern of behaviour, but the frequency does not directly correlate to the impact. Discrimination does not require intent, meaning that Discrimination can occur through actions or structures, even if there is no intent to harm by the person or organization that is taking the action or supporting the structure.

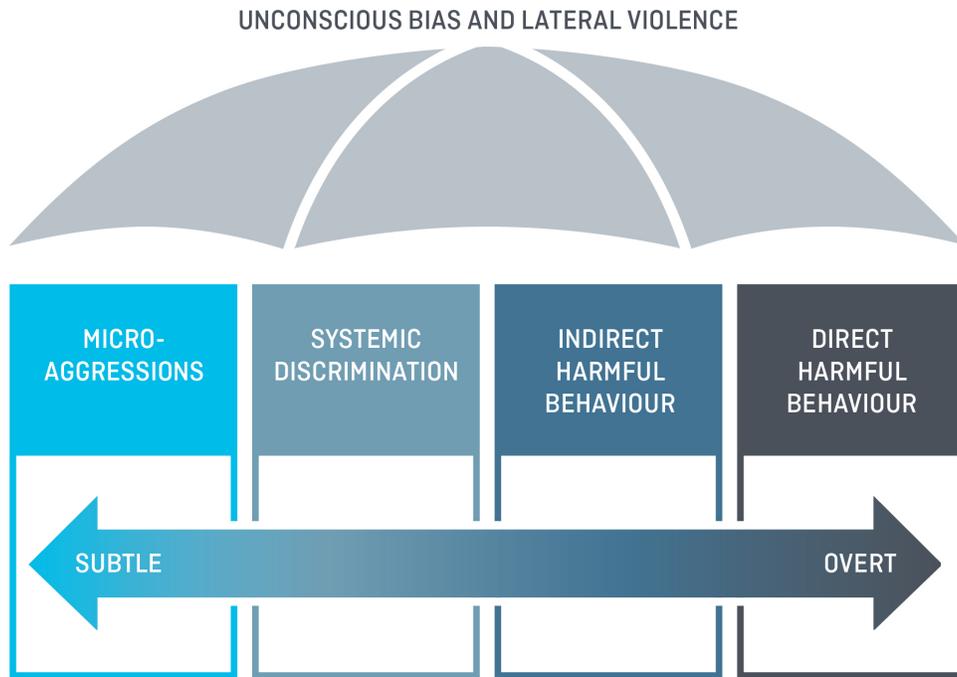


Figure 3: Types of Harmful Situations along the Spectrum from Subtle to Overt

2.3.1.2 Indirect Discrimination

Unlike direct Discrimination, where individuals and groups of people are treated differently based on one or more Protected Grounds, indirect Discrimination occurs when everyone is treated the same, but that sameness puts certain groups at a disadvantage.

Indirect Discrimination results from a practice, policy, or rule that is intended to treat all individuals uniformly, but which in reality has an adverse effect on an individual or group of individuals because of one or more protected characteristics.

Identifying indirect Discrimination requires assessing the effect that the application of a practice, policy, or rule will have on individuals beyond the express or apparent purpose of the policy or rule. Understanding the difference between equality (i.e., giving everyone the same resources) and Equity (i.e., giving resources based on need to overcome barriers) is important to identifying indirect Discrimination. In other words, a company policy or rule that provides everyone with

the same tool may inadvertently complicate or not adequately address the specific or unique needs of those in Equity-Seeking Groups.

Following are examples of indirect Discrimination:

- A company policy requires continuous employment experiences with no gaps, which could disproportionately affect people with a disability or people who have taken parental leave.
- An employer policy requires that all staff use the same model of office chair. Although this may seem like a good idea to manage inequities in chairs and simplify asset management, a single chair model may not fit all body sizes and may not work for people with physical disabilities.
- An employer introduces a dress code in the workplace that includes gender-based distinctions (e.g., only women can wear dresses) and disallows certain hair styles (e.g., no cornrows or dreadlocks).

However, it is important to understand that there are circumstances in which an apparently discriminatory policy or practice may be justified. To be justified, the policy must:

- have been adopted for a purpose or goal rationally connected to the function being performed;
- have been adopted in the good-faith belief that it was necessary for the achievement of the identified purpose or goal; and
- be necessary in the sense that it would be impossible to accommodate the individual without undue hardship.

The process of creating practices, policies, and rules requires consideration of the impacts on different people and the evaluation of biases that may be influencing the reason for developing the practice, policy, or rule.

For example, a dress code or safety policy requiring that a hard hat be worn for all site visits might discriminate against members of the Sikh faith whose religious belief necessitates the wearing of a turban. Such a policy might nevertheless be justified if:

- it was adopted for a purpose or goal that is rationally connected to the function being performed (e.g., ensuring a safe site visit);
- it was adopted in the good-faith belief that it was necessary for the achievement of the identified purpose or goal (e.g., protecting the health and safety of the worker during site visits); and
- it was necessary in the sense that it would be impossible to accommodate the individual without undue hardship (e.g., due to activities on the site, workers not wearing hard hats risk head injury from falling, flying, or thrown objects, or other harmful contacts, which contravenes WorkSafeBC safety requirements).

The necessity requirement must be based on fact and context-specific. For example, the policy outlined above might be absolutely necessary if the site visit involves a worker personally entering an active construction site. The same policy might not be necessary (and therefore

is not justifiable) where the site visit involves the worker taking soil samples to consider the construction of sewerage system for a recreational property.

2.3.1.3 Systemic Discrimination

Systemic Discrimination refers to practices or attitudes that have the effect of limiting an individual's or group's access to opportunities that are generally available to others. Systemic Discrimination is Discrimination that is institutionalized, rather than the result of individual behaviour. In particular, people in Equity-Seeking Groups are often disadvantaged due to historical injustices with long-lasting effects that can be presently experienced.

This type of Discrimination is not random; it is based on established and often widely-accepted policies, procedures, and behavioural norms within society, industries, and organizations. These accepted policies, procedures, and behavioural norms may appear neutral on the surface but have an adverse impact on people in Equity-Seeking Groups.

In some instances, the difference between indirect and systemic Discrimination can be difficult to discern, and the discriminatory practice may have elements of both types. In both cases, the Discrimination is not directed at one person, but in the case of systemic Discrimination, the systems and structures are based on established and widely-accepted practices.

Systemic Discrimination is often carried out through decision-making processes, resource allocations, informal and formal communications and social practices, and formalized policies that lack Inclusion of the perspectives of people in Equity-Seeking Groups, and thus fail to account for the effects of those elements on them. Systemic Discrimination can occur intentionally, or it can occur unintentionally through lack of awareness or understanding of the needs of people in Equity-Seeking Groups.

Systemic Discrimination may appear in:

- formal systems and structures for hiring and managing people, such as performance reviews and promotion policies;

- workplace expectations that, while part of the traditional workplace culture, are not required to effectively perform the professional activities or work (e.g., lack of part-time positions or not providing reasonable accommodations); and
- workplace cultural norms and behaviors that reflect historical traditions and majority views and are thus not inclusive of the Diversity of people (e.g., office celebrations that only recognize some religious holidays, and cultural norms and messaging that discourage displays of emotions because they are considered a sign of weakness).

2.3.2 HARASSMENT

Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted physical or psychological behaviour that humiliates or intimidates, thereby negatively impacting the work environment. When Harassment is based on one or more of the Protected Grounds, it may constitute Discrimination prohibited by the *Human Rights Code*. Harassment may be physical or verbal, may be overt or subtle, and may involve one incident or multiple incidents.

In the workplace environment, Harassment creates a hostile or poisoned work atmosphere. It interferes with the quality of professional activities or work and can affect an individual's personal life. Even jokes that cause awkwardness or embarrassment can undermine a person's self-esteem and can lead to a wide range of impacts to the person(s), including stress-related illnesses. Individuals experiencing Harassment often feel intimidated, humiliated, and degraded.

Harassment is often persistent and more obvious than Bullying and may include:

- physical or sexual assault;
- physical or emotional threats;
- frequent interruptions and criticisms;
- not allowing someone to express themselves;
- unwanted sexual comments or advances;
- unwanted touch (whether sexual or neutral in intention);

- reprisal for filing a complaint;
- spreading rumours and gossip;
- ignoring or isolating someone;
- name calling with derogatory terms; and/or
- telling racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or xenophobic jokes.

Harassment does not include:

- providing constructive feedback or having difficult conversations as part of managing employees; and
- friendly gestures among people who know and mutually trust each other.

Sexual Harassment is a particular form of Harassment that happens in Professional Environments. This kind of Harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favours, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that offends, demeans, or humiliates an individual on the basis of gender and/or sex.

Even if certain behaviour is, or was, commonplace in a certain Professional Environment, this does not make it acceptable. Registrants may not recognize their behaviour is Harassment towards others. Nevertheless, a lack of awareness is not adequate justification for Individual Registrants failing to fulfill their professional obligations.

Harassment is not harmless, funny, or trivial. It is the obligation of all Individual Registrants to be aware of how their behaviour affects others. This kind of behaviour is hurtful, and it can be serious, have long-lasting effects, and make others feel uncomfortable.

2.3.3 BULLYING

Bullying is primarily psychological in nature and happens within Professional Environments in ways that undermine the wellbeing and psychological safety of individuals. It entails a range of intentional behaviours, including humiliation and intimidation, especially where there is a power imbalance between two individuals or groups. An important distinction from Harassment is that Bullying does not always include Protected Grounds.

There are different forms of Bullying, including the following:

- **Verbal Bullying:** name calling, insults, sarcasm, threats, making rude or negative remarks or references with respect to someone's identity
- **Social Bullying:** spreading rumours, scapegoating (i.e., singling out an individual for undeserved blame), excluding others from a group, humiliating someone in front of peers or superiors, harming someone's reputation
- **Physical Bullying:** physical harm, tripping/ pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, making mean or rude gestures
- **Cyber Bullying:** making online threats, imitating others online, posting or sending hurtful texts, emails, posts, images, or videos

2.3.4 UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Unconscious or implicit bias consists of the underlying attitudes and stereotypes that people involuntarily or unknowingly attribute to another person or group, which affects how they understand or engage with that person or group. Bias entails aversion to or preference for certain groups or for certain traits and qualities.

When biases are unconscious, they are not intentional, and people may not be aware that they are at play, but they can still affect how people judge and treat others. As such, it takes intentional effort to recognize and undo these biases. Unconscious Biases are not trivial and are at the basis of many Harmful Situations.

There are many different forms of bias that operate at the subconscious level. Following are some of the bias types that are most relevant to EDI:

- **Affinity bias:** Providing better treatment to or assuming more positive intent of someone who is more similar to or familiar with oneself.

- **Attribution bias:** Attributing negative or positive reasons for someone's accomplishments that do not reflect the reality. In some instances, people attribute outcomes based on chance (i.e., good luck) rather than hard work and persistence. At other times, outcomes are attributed too much to hard work rather than the influence of Privilege.
- **Conformity bias:** Bowing to pressure to think and behave like others on the team or in the organization.
- **Confirmation bias:** Using selective information to prove or support an existing belief.

2.3.5 MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are subtle ways of speaking or acting that harm people in Equity-Seeking Groups. Microaggressions are brief and frequent ways of acting or talking that are derogatory, and are often rooted in stereotypes, beliefs, and prejudices. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional, and they may, when based on a Prohibited Ground, constitute Discrimination.

Despite the low-level impact of singular incidents, Microaggressions often recur and, as such, their adverse impact can accumulate over time into a substantial level of hurt for affected persons.

Microaggressions may include the following:

- Assuming people from Equity-Seeking Groups are more or less intelligent or capable
 - An example is when someone says: "You speak English very well" in a surprised tone, which implies that the person in the Equity-Seeking Group is an exception to the negative stereotype formed in the speaker's mind.
- Assuming level or quality of education
 - An example is when someone says: "It's amazing that you have a master's degree" to a person in an Equity-Seeking Group.

- Assuming level of ability or denying disability
 - An example is when someone says to a person with disability: “Come on now, we all have some disability.”
 - Another example is assuming that because someone is a woman, she cannot lift heavy equipment during a site visit, rather than asking everyone (regardless of gender) whether they can or cannot lift a specific weight.
- Making seemingly considerate or positive comments that are insulting
 - An example is when someone says: “You’re beautiful for a trans woman” or “it’s really impressive that you’re a female engineer.”
- Touching someone’s personal attire or hair without permission
 - An example is touching a Black person’s hair or a Muslim woman’s hijab without permission.
- Using assumptions about someone’s gender and using pronouns based on how they look or sound in interactions or communications with that person or others.
 - An example is sending out an email to introduce a new staff member to the team, sharing information about the hire, using statements that include gender such as “she previously worked at...” and “she likes to spend her free time...” when you have not asked the new hire what pronouns they use.
- Repeatedly or intentionally mispronouncing someone’s name
 - An example is when someone says: “Your name is too hard for me to pronounce, so I’ll call you XYZ instead.”
- Excluding someone in communications, such as by using pronouns in a document or email that exclude women or other genders.
 - An example is when an email is addressed to “Gentlemen” or a generic letter starts with “Dear Sir/Madam,” neither of which encompass all genders.

2.3.6 LATERAL VIOLENCE

Most of the interpersonal EDI challenges described up to this point occur between people in an Equity-Seeking Group and those who are part of an Advantaged Group. However, challenges also arise within Equity-Seeking Groups, which is called Lateral Violence.

Lateral Violence can entail any of the behaviours described in the previous sections, including Harassment and Bullying, but it is directed inward, towards members of one’s own group. It is often used as a way of managing the sense of powerlessness and negative emotions experienced from Discrimination by those with more power and Privilege.

While the term first arose in Indigenous communities handling substantial trauma, Lateral Violence also occurs within other Equity-Seeking Groups. This can take many forms, including the following examples:

- One person says that another person in the same Equity-Seeking Group does not fully belong, based on an arbitrary measure of one or more characteristics (e.g., skin colour, accent, behaviour, interests, or blood quanta).
- One person says, in a demeaning way, that another person in the same Equity-Seeking Group acts like people from an Advantaged Group.
- One person says that another person in the same Equity-Seeking Group is damaging their group’s image by behaving in a certain way.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGISTRANTS

3.1 OVERVIEW

Registrants must work to create inclusive Professional Environments that are equitable and just for all. This section builds on the awareness of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) challenges provided in [Section 2.0](#) with information about the obligations and expectations for Registrants' interactions with the public, fellow Registrants, direct reports, clients, and other individuals with whom Registrants have a professional relationship, and considerations for creating equitable and inclusive Professional Environments.

In particular, this section:

- provides details on the obligations of Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms regarding EDI addressed in the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Bylaws and Code of Ethics;
- outlines EDI considerations for ways Registrants can enhance their understanding of EDI and contribute to making Professional Environments more equitable and inclusive; and
- provides tangible examples of EDI actions that are specific to the Professional Environments in which engineers and geoscientists conduct their work.

It should be noted that although many Individual Registrants and Registrant Firms have already started their journey towards deeper understanding of EDI and may be at different stages in this process, the work towards improving Professional Environments requires continuous effort and ongoing commitment.

3.2 INDIVIDUAL REGISTRANTS

3.2.1 BYLAWS

Individual Registrants have obligations as per the Bylaws to have regard for applicable standards, policies, plans, and practices, including professional practice guidelines, which includes these guidelines. Section 7.3.1 of the Bylaws requires that Individual Registrants be aware of and meet the intent of these guidelines.

3.2.2 CODE OF ETHICS

The existing framework of ethical requirements within the professions of engineering and geoscience establishes a baseline from which Individual Registrants can expand and adopt their practices to incorporate EDI principles within professional settings. There is a direct relationship between ethics and EDI.

- **Ethics** is identifying and doing the right action in each situation while thinking of others (especially in terms of impact). Ethics is primarily about proactively seeking to do what is right, not just what is required, and involves making good decisions and acting responsibly with due consideration of the implications and consequences of such decisions and actions on others (see the *Guide to the Code of Ethics*; Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2021a).
- **Equity** is about understanding the unique needs and challenges of different people and providing adequate supports and structures to ensure all people feel included and welcomed and can contribute to their full potential.

Ethics not only informs technical practice for Registrants but is also a powerful tool to achieve EDI goals through continuous self-reflection and interventions among peers in the professions. This can be accomplished by continuously asking questions such as these, which aim to understand the experiences of others:

- Am I and other Registrants being fair towards this person or group?
- Am I and other Registrants contributing to human welfare?
- Am I and other Registrants safeguarding human welfare, including health and safety, which includes elements of mental and emotional health and safety?

The relationship between EDI and ethics can be applied to all of the principles of the Code of Ethics; however, for Individual Registrants, the connection is more direct in principles 1, 9, and 13, which are outlined below with further context to illustrate the link to EDI.

3.2.2.1 Principle 1 (Act in the Public Interest)

Registrants must hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including the protection of the environment and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace.

The concepts of safety, health, and welfare are typically associated with obvious physical aspects; however, they also extend to social and psychological factors, which are directly related to EDI challenges.

Principle 1 recognizes the impacts of engineering and geoscience on the public in ways that require more attention and deliberation to ensure negative impacts do not outweigh positive impacts (see the *Guide to the Code of Ethics*; Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2021a).

Congruence between word and actions is critical in maintaining public trust.

3.2.2.2 Principle 9 (Duty to Report)

Registrants must report to Engineers and Geoscientists BC and, if applicable, any other appropriate authority, if the registrant, on reasonable and probable grounds, believes that:

- a) the continued practice of a regulated practice by another registrant or other person, including firms and employers, might pose a risk of significant harm to the environment or to the health or safety of the public or a group of people; or
- b) a registrant or another individual has made decisions or engaged in practices which may be illegal or unethical.

The Duty to Report extends to EDI-related issues where severity and effects of Harmful Situations are significant and/or unethical or illegal (see [Section 4.0](#) for details on making a formal complaint).

Severity may be more difficult to establish for EDI challenges, which can be nuanced, complex, and multifaceted. The questions outlined in [Figure 4](#) can provide key insights to help Registrants make a determination of significance.

Registrants must report if they have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a Harmful Situation poses a risk of significant harm. The *Guide to the Code of Ethics* provides discussion on reasonable and probable grounds (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2021a).

It is the responsibility of Registrants to determine who to inform about Harmful Situations, including their employer, the client, and/or Engineers and Geoscientists BC. Registrants must promptly report Harmful Situations to Engineers and Geoscientists BC that are significant or relate to illegal or unethical activities. The *Guide to the Code of Ethics* outlines the responsibilities of Registrants for reporting, including notification and escalation, if needed.

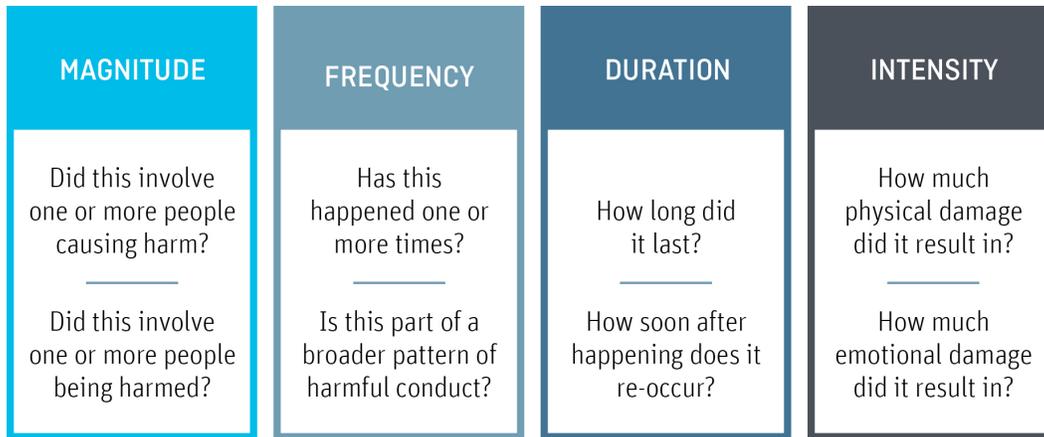


Figure 4: Questions to Determine the Severity of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Challenges for Reporting Purposes

Where there are conflicting duties, the *Guide to the Code of Ethics* states that public safety, health, and welfare are the priority over the interests of clients and employers. The Duty to Report is necessary even in the face of discomfort and uncertainty.

If Registrants are unsure about whether they should report Harmful Situations, they should consult with trusted peers and/or Engineers and Geoscientists BC practice advisors to determine the best course of action.

3.2.2.3 Principle 13 (Do Unto Others)

Registrants must conduct themselves with fairness, courtesy, and good faith towards clients, colleagues, and others, give credit where it is due and accept, as well as give, honest and fair professional comment.

This principle requires conduct from Registrants that aligns with fairness, courtesy, and good faith. These concepts are also integral to EDI.

- **Fairness** is just treatment without favoritism or Discrimination, based on the principles of Equity, not equality.
 - Giving one group more Privilege and advantage over another, or allowing systems that perpetuate that Privilege to remain in place is antithetical to fairness.

- Fairness does not imply equal treatment but considers the unique needs of each group rather than applying equal treatment regardless of unique needs and situations. These efforts are part of widening the circle rather than excluding people from the circle.
- **Courtesy** is being respectful and considerate in word and action.
 - Courtesy entails active listening along with clear, concise, and iterative communications that account for different styles, approaches, and barriers.
 - Caution should be exercised because courtesy can be used to disguise or distract from discriminatory conduct. Tone may not provide the full picture, but rather content is key.
- **Acting in good faith** is having a sincere belief or motive without ill-intention or taking advantage of others.
 - Specifically, good faith entails avoiding Discrimination and Harassment. Discrimination, Harassment, or intimidation by Registrants are clear violations of Principle 13 of the Code of Ethics and may result in an investigation or disciplinary action by Engineers and Geoscientists BC.

- Registrants in leadership positions lead by example in creating diverse and inclusive workplaces through honest and timely communications with subordinates.

Individual Registrants acting as supervisors, managers, mentors, and/or business leaders have a greater responsibility to consider EDI-related matters, as EDI relates directly to oversight and management tasks. It is an expectation that managers recognize and address power imbalances and acknowledge that they are an influential link between the direct report and the Registrant Firm.

As such, Individual Registrants who are in positions of leadership and management should:

- be available for open and safe communication with their direct reports;
- be a role model, leading by example by acting with courtesy, fairness, and good faith and creating equitable and inclusive environments;
- avoid authoritative leadership styles that block or inhibit honest and open communication;
- educate direct report(s) to make them aware of workplace policies regarding EDI;
- listen to direct reports concerns regarding Harmful Situations and appropriately act on those concerns;
- seek to provide their direct report anonymity in the workplace to raise sensitive issues and shield them from fallout resulting from such issues being raised; and
- take responsibility for ensuring EDI principles are applied to hiring and promotion practices.

3.2.3 EDI CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REGISTRANTS

Many best practices in EDI go beyond the obligations outlined in the Code of Ethics and Bylaws, as discussed in [Section 3.2.1](#) and [Section 3.2.2](#). Expectations and considerations for how Individual Registrants can enhance their understanding of EDI and contribute to making Professional Environments more equitable and inclusive apply to all Registrants, whether they are part of an Advantaged Group or an Equity-Seeking Group.

[Table 2: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Actions for Individual Registrants](#) illustrates opportunities for Individual Registrants to grow and develop their EDI practices. The information in this table is intended to be a starting point with tangible and actionable information, not an exhaustive list of actions.

Table 2: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Individual Registrants

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR INDIVIDUAL REGISTRANTS	EXAMPLES
Be responsible for your own education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking out education and information to further understanding of EDI concepts, and the challenges and needs of Equity-Seeking Groups If a Registrant is part of an Advantaged Group, being mindful not to burden people from Equity-Seeking Groups with being the source of education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They may want to share their lived experiences but one cannot assume or expect this, so other avenues of information or education should be sought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand terms and concepts specific to Equity-Seeking Groups. Build awareness of EDI challenges that are common across and specific to different Equity-Seeking Group. Learn what to do and what to avoid with respect to people from Equity-Seeking Groups.
Participate in discussions about EDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being aware that EDI discussions are for everyone, not only people in Equity-Seeking Groups. Understanding that everyone should contribute to meaningful discussions and explore EDI topics. Having ongoing conversations within formal meetings as well as informal gatherings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend panel discussions on racism in the workplace. Read and share articles, videos, or podcasts on EDI topics, and discuss these with colleagues during breaks or during other opportunities such as travel to and from work sites.
Respect dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and appreciating that someone’s name, history, practices, and family are an integral part of their lived experiences and dignity. Avoiding assuming someone has particular experiences and providing space for them to share as much or as little as they like. Understanding that sometimes respecting dignity is about what we choose not to say to another person to maintain that person’s privacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time to learn correct pronunciation of someone’s name. Take time to learn and use correct pronouns. Do not draw attention to someone’s cultural attire or practices. Avoid assumptions about someone’s history, family, or identity. Avoid asking invasive questions about someone’s upbringing, medical history, and traumatic experiences.
Avoid Tokenization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tying actions to increase Diversity with those that improve Inclusion, and understanding that decisions or actions designed solely to prevent criticism or give the appearance of fairness do not to genuinely advance EDI. Not asking individuals in Equity-Seeking Groups to represent the experiences and opinions of the entire group, which is a large and unrealistic responsibility. Instead, relying on published research and/or outside subject-matter experts to gain additional insights into the range of experiences and needs of Equity-Seeking Groups. Respecting that some people in Equity-Seeking Groups may feel comfortable sharing their experiences to highlight issues and are free to do so. However, if not, recognizing that they can decline to comment and express discomfort with being asked to represent a group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid putting people from Equity-Seeking Groups on the spot by asking questions about sensitive issues or expecting them to respond on behalf of an entire group. Do not ask someone to deliver a presentation or represent the organization in a public-facing event solely because of their identity.

Table 2: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Individual Registrants (continued)

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR INDIVIDUAL REGISTRANTS	EXAMPLES
<p>Learn from mistakes: apologize and make a correction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening if someone raises issues, thanking them for raising the issue, acknowledging the impact, and making a correction. Due to deeply-engrained patterns of behaviour, cultural practices, and Unconscious Bias, individuals may not realize what they are doing has a harmful impact on someone in an Equity-Seeking Group. • Trying not to become defensive or panic if a mistake has been made; recovering well is part of the learning process. • Recognizing that for some people in Equity-Seeking Groups, it can be difficult to raise these issues because they are concerned that their issues will be dismissed, downplayed, or denied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuinely listen to the feedback given if someone identifies a mistake. • If you catch your own mistake, such as using the incorrect pronoun, acknowledge the mistake, apologize, and move forward. • Do not make the apology about yourself or your own feelings, and do not expect the impacted person(s) to make you feel better. • Do not assume that the impact to the other person is small, even if you do not see it as a big issue. Their experience is different than yours.
<p>Interject in the moment, or follow-up after, if you witness an event where Unconscious Bias is at play or Microaggression occurs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interjecting or responding in the moment, if it is safe to do so, to stop and address the Harmful Situation as soon as possible. • If the Harmful Situation seems unintentional, drawing attention to the Harmful Situation and advising the person(s) who caused harm on how they can continue the conversation respectfully, using the principles of EDI; taking the opportunity to educate the person(s) causing harm on why and how the behavior is harmful, and how to avoid it in the future. • If the Harmful Situation seems intentional, and it may be less safe or comfortable to interject in the moment, consider following up later with a conversation, preferably soon after the experience has occurred while memory is still fresh but emotions have settled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to a joke or comment by saying: “I don’t find that funny” or “What made you say that?” • Advise or suggest that the person(s) causing harm needs to stop by redirecting the conversation topic or, if comfortable, addressing the specific Harmful Situation. • Interject with a response such as “I don’t understand, could you explain what you mean?” • For a follow-up discussion, select a location that is private and neutral. • Bring a witness to the follow-up conversation (the witness may or may not have witnessed the experience).
<p>Support multiple communication styles and methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing multiple methods for providing input, to hear from the widest range of people with different perspectives and knowledge. • Building in sufficient time to gather different perspectives and support open and iterative communications. • Supporting and giving credit to Equity-Seeking persons for their work and contributions. • Applying these methods to both internal and external meetings (including those related to project work). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for verbal and written communications, recognizing that different people have different comfort levels with how they communicate. • Ensure there is opportunity to provide input both during and after a meeting. • Be aware of how much input the different participants or team members are providing, and find ways to gather more balanced input.

Table 2: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Individual Registrants (continued)

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR INDIVIDUAL REGISTRANTS	EXAMPLES
Respect and incorporate different ways of knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to and considering information from different sources, even if it is not the normally accepted or go-to sources for information in a particular field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into plans. Value the knowledge and perspective that is found in lived experiences.
Maintain privacy: it is their story to tell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining confidentiality and a person’s desire for privacy, and trusting that they may have good reasons for not disclosing. Everyone should be able to protect and keep in confidence their less-visible or Invisible Identities and experiences. Being mindful that if you have information about someone, you should have a conversation with the person before sharing the information with others. Recognizing that this is particularly important for people with less-visible or Invisible Identities who may have many reasons, including personal safety, for not sharing this information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before disclosing information about someone, ask yourself these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is this personal information relevant or necessary to the discussion at hand? – Do I have their consent to share this information? Even though a new employee may be someone you know from outside the workplace, it is not appropriate to share information about their neurodivergence, sexual orientation, or gender identity with other employees or clients.
Celebrate diversity and promote inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrating, acknowledging, and learning about Diversity of experiences, abilities, and needs. Balancing between integrating Equity-Seeking persons as part the larger group, while also avoiding assimilation by maintaining individuality in groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about or attend seasonal or annual events important to Equity-Seeking Groups. Learn about different Equity-Seeking Groups and their specific needs and challenges. Use language and terms that are appropriate and correct for different groups.

3.3 REGISTRANT FIRMS

3.3.1 BYLAWS

Registrant Firms have an obligation as per the Bylaws to develop, maintain, and adhere to a set of policies and procedures, known as a professional practice management plan (a requirement for a Permit to Practice), which must include a code of conduct (per Bylaw 7.7.3).

The code of conduct must explain how the Registrant Firm and all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm will comply with:

- each principle of the Code of Ethics;
- ethical business practices addressing corruption, conflict of interest, and contractual matters; and
- any guidelines on human rights and EDI that have been approved by Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Council.

The specific code of conduct policies and procedures included in a Registrant Firm's professional practice management plan are at the discretion of the Registrant Firm, provided they comply with the elements listed above.

3.3.2 CODE OF ETHICS

As outlined in [Section 3.3.1](#), as per the Bylaws, Registrant Firms must establish a code of conduct that explains how the firm and all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm will comply with the ethical standards outlined by the Code of Ethics. Registrant Firms must understand and apply the principles of the Code of Ethics in their codes of conduct and in their business practices.

As explained in [Section 3.2.2](#) for Individual Registrants, there is a direct relationship between ethics and EDI. The relationship between EDI and ethics can be applied to all of the principles of the Code of Ethics; however, the connection is more direct in principles 1, 9, and 13, which are outlined below with further context to illustrate the link for Registrant Firms to EDI.

3.3.2.1 Principle 1 (Act in the Public Interest)

Registrant Firms must hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including promotion of health and safety in the workplace. In addition, Registrant Firms must clearly state employee obligations related to health and safety in the Registrant Firm's code of conduct, policies, and employment contracts. Extending beyond the typically associated physical aspects, there are also social and psychological elements of safety, health, and welfare that are directed related to EDI-related issues.

Registrant Firms must be familiar with applicable WorkSafeBC regulations and, at a minimum, have in place a health and safety program that complies with WorkSafeBC requirements, including specific requirements related to bullying and harassment.

3.3.2.2 Principle 9 (Duty to Report)

[Section 3.2.2.2](#) outlines the application of this principle to Individual Registrants. Building upon this, it is important to understand that Registrant Firms themselves have a duty to report and must also support Individual Registrants within the firm in fulfilling their Duty to Report. Registrant Firms have an obligation under the statutory Duty to Report pursuant to section 58 of the *Act*. Registrant Firms must understand the various circumstances in which the Registrant Firm or its Individual Registrants must report, including EDI-related issues, to the regulator and not impede the fulfillment of this duty. Statements in the Registrant Firm's code of conduct must support the duty to report.

In addition to the ethical duty to report, the statutory duty to report under section 58 of the *Act* requires Registrant Firms to report to Engineers and Geoscientists BC if they terminate an Individual Registrant's employment, revoke or suspend all or part of an Individual Registrant's privileges, or dissolve a partnership with a Registrant because they have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a Registrant is engaged in the regulated practice in a manner that may pose a risk of significant harm to the environment or to the public's health or safety, which can include EDI-related issues (per the Code of Ethics).

3.3.2.3 Principle 13 (Do Unto Others)

Registrant Firms must conduct their business with fairness, courtesy, and good faith, and must support similar conduct by Individual Registrants. This includes, through their codes of conduct and policies, and through setting the tone for a healthy, respectful workplace free of harassment, where all employees are respected, included, and valued for their contributions.

The principles of fairness, courtesy, and good faith must go beyond the workplace and into the business environment in which the Registrant Firm operates.

3.3.3 EDI CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGISTRANT FIRMS

Beyond the requirements outlined in the Bylaws and Code of Ethics, Registrant Firms have an important role to play in creating equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace and industry culture. The EDI considerations outlined in [Table 3](#) provide further detail on expectations for Registrant Firms to implement.

The information in this table is not intended to be an exhaustive list of actions, but rather serves to illustrate possibilities for how Registrant Firms can grow and develop their EDI practices. In some cases, the examples provided here and those outlined for Individual Registrants in [Section 3.2.3](#) overlap, which shows how much individuals and organizational EDI practices and actions are interconnected.

Table 3: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Registrant Firms

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR REGISTRANT FIRMS	EXAMPLES
Make proactive changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to address cultural and systemic EDI challenges, without the need for people from Equity-Seeking Groups to disclose their identities and/or come forward to itemize their challenges and barriers. • Engaging people in Equity-Seeking Groups for their needs and ideas but not being dependent on these individuals if they do not want to or are not able to participate. • Addressing challenges or barriers without waiting for or expecting individuals to raise concerns first. • Taking proactive rather than reactive action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not wait for an individual to raise a concern about the size of gloves being provided as part of their safety gear. Instead, consider proactively assessing and sourcing gear with adequate sizing for different body sizes in mind. • Update systems that ask for and collect gender data to include more diverse options, without waiting for an employee to express concern with options that do not fit their non-binary gender identity.
Arrange EDI education to support employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing employees with internal and/or external resources and educational opportunities so they can learn from past experience(s), both to decrease the likelihood EDI challenges will arise in the future and reduce their severity. • Depending on the structure and size of the Firm, providing education in different forms, including self-paced e-learning modules, recorded webinars, or live sessions with experienced facilitators. • Not expecting or enlisting Individual Registrants in Equity-Seeking Groups to provide education on EDI challenges. Instead, providing training and education by vendors that specialize in general EDI or specific issues of Equity-Seeking Groups. • Giving people from Equity-Seeking Groups the opportunity to share their stories, if they want to participate in education or share their experiences and perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about available training with staff (whether internal or external training). • Start by reviewing the range of continuing education resources offered by Engineers and Geoscientists BC. • Include EDI training as part of employees' training plans. • Arrange for town hall discussions or panel discussions where individuals can share experiences and perspectives if they are comfortable doing so.
Provide ongoing opportunities to discuss EDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding the process of thinking about and discussing EDI into regular workplace practices. • Making space to discuss and explore these topics, to provide opportunities for ongoing learning and improved understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss EDI challenges with each other as part of ongoing conversations, during formal meetings as well as informal gatherings.

Table 3: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Registrant Firms (continued)

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR REGISTRANT FIRMS	EXAMPLES
Measure and track Diversity data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting and reporting confidential or anonymous Diversity data, within the bounds of privacy legislation. Using these data to assist in determining what areas of the organization are over- or under-represented, with a goal to have employees reflect the communities they serve. Developing targets and plans to reach goals towards greater Diversity and Inclusion, and sharing results regularly with internal and external stakeholders, to demonstrate transparency and build trust. Understanding that self-reporting is key to collecting accurate Diversity data, and never assuming someone is part of an Equity-Seeking Group based on how they look, present themselves, or act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect Diversity data as part of the onboarding process, and track the data throughout the employee lifecycle, including retention, promotion, and pay levels for both leader and non-leader positions. Collect Diversity data as part of board and committee work to ensure representation of members. Generate reports annually with Diversity data that are posted on websites (while suppressing data in low-response categories to protect individual identities).
Introduce proactive programs to reduce inequities and promote Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making adjustments to physical spaces, procedures, and information systems, to create more inclusive Professional Environments and attract and retain more diverse people. Introducing procedures to encourage the selection of diverse project team members, to encourage different perspectives, especially in delivery and outcomes of projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide expanded options for washrooms for people with disabilities and transgender people. Revise or create more equitable procedures, including for hiring, onboarding, exit interviews, benefits, time off, parental leave, bereavement leave, and transition guidelines. Add chosen and legal first-name fields in human resources systems and use them in all staff- and client-facing systems such as email addresses and employee directories. Assemble diverse project teams, to ensure diverse perspectives and needs are considered in project delivery and design.
Consider accommodation versus universal design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the challenges and barriers of Equity-Seeking Groups through accommodation, which is a retroactive effort to fit individuals into existing organizational structures. This is the minimum standard for addressing EDI challenges. Taking the time to plan and adopt universal design principles (NDA 2021) to ensure that diverse needs and issues are considered from the outset, which reduces or eliminates the need for accommodation. This is the equitable standard for supporting Diversity and promoting Inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include universal design principles in washroom facility design and upgrades, if the building is owned. Discuss and promote universal design principles with the building manager, if the building is leased. Consider universal design principles if looking for new office spaces or work locations.
Provide time and space for different cultural customs and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating opportunities for employees to be aware of and understand varied cultural customs and practices. Supporting people from Equity-Seeking Groups by creating ways they can observe and participate in their own cultural customs and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a culturally-informed bereavement procedure that extends beyond the nuclear family within expanded timeframes to allow colleagues to fulfill their cultural responsibilities. Provide a quiet place for daily prayer and ablution.

Table 3: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Registrant Firms (continued)

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR REGISTRANT FIRMS	EXAMPLES
Celebrate and raise awareness of annual events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing that each year, Equity-Seeking Groups have important date(s) to commemorate, celebrate, and highlight issues. Organizing panel discussions, writing articles, and supporting social events, to engage and raise awareness among employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe annual dates such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Black History in February – Lunar New Year in February – International Women’s Day in March – Ramadan in April to May – National Indigenous Peoples Day in June – Pride Celebrations, usually in summer months in Canada – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in September – Yom Kippur in September – Disability Awareness in October – Diwali in November
Support the formation and efforts of EDI-related committee(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating internal committees to work on EDI issues, to provide important advice and clarity on experiences, issues, and needs of employees in Equity-Seeking Groups. Supporting these committees and recognizing the value of their contributions. Ensuring that the efforts of these committees are compensated appropriately, which may include, but does not necessarily mean monetarily. Ensuring committee members do not feel pressured to provide insights or to provide professional EDI expertise. Recognizing that the lived experience of employees is valuable, but not expecting solutions to be provided exclusively by Equity-Seeking Groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the contributions of committee members by offering time off for hours contributed. Recognize the contributions of committee members through a volunteer recognition program. Engage EDI specialist(s) to support committees when they are working on solutions or action plans.
Consider UNDRIP in project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering UNDRIP as it relates to the Registrant Firm as well as the projects the Registrant Firm leads or works on. Underscoring the importance of meaningful and adequate Indigenous consultation among their employees to encourage them to be sensitive and responsive to the key issues facing Indigenous groups, even when consultation efforts are led by specialists and, in some engineering and permitting processes, Indigenous consultation is required by provincial and/or federal regulators. Providing creative solutions to actively contribute to resolve issues raised by Indigenous communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve affected Indigenous nations in the decision-making process as early as possible, and consider socio-cultural factors important to affected groups as part of site selection. Attend (where possible) open houses or townhalls in affected Indigenous communities to hear about key issues firsthand. Review consultation reports to understand, consider, and address key issues of affected Indigenous communities. Read articles written by Indigenous people in affected communities to understand, consider, and address key issues. Review and incorporate Indigenous knowledge (where provided) into plans and designs, especially regarding climate change, and treat Indigenous knowledge as equal to scientific knowledge. Participate in cultural events (where invited) to get to know affected Indigenous groups and their values, needs, and issues. Be aware of and avoid hosting consultation sessions during cultural, spiritual, and harvesting timeframes.

Table 3: Examples of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Actions for Registrant Firms (continued)

ACTION	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR REGISTRANT FIRMS	EXAMPLES
<p>Use Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to identify ways to improve inclusivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering using the GBA+ process (or a similar intersectional analysis approach) to assess the organization’s systems and structures, and when creating or revising policies and programs, to better understand and address intersectional issues and needs within these organizational elements. • Using GBA+, which in some cases is required by clients, at all stages of professional activities or work, including projects, from planning through design, construction, and implementation. • Using GBA+ to identify and explore multiple identity-based variables, and to conduct an iterative process to identify opportunities to design systems, policies, programs, and projects that are more inclusive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply GBA+ when creating new or updating existing policies, such as working from home or flexible work hours, to consider the diverse perspectives and needs of different employees, instead of considering only the perspectives of the individual or group developing the policy. • Apply GBA+ during the different phases of projects to ensure project team composition, delivery methods, and project design consider the diverse needs and perspectives of those being consulted as well as the end users of the projects. • See Figure 5 for an overview of key questions used in the GBA+ process, and the GBA+ website for more information (Women and Gender Equality Canada 2021).



Figure 5: Key Steps and Questions in the Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) Process

NOTE: Adapted from Status of Women Canada 2021.

4.0 FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

4.1 OVERVIEW

Section 3 Roles and Responsibilities of Registrants provided many options for proactively addressing Harmful Situations, as well as guidance on informal actions that can be taken in response to Harmful Situations, such as interjecting in the moment. However, in some cases, these actions will not adequately address the Harmful Situation, so a formal complaint process should be considered.

This section outlines considerations for formal complaints and provides information on approaches available for making formal complaints. The information is provided to:

- ensure Registrants understand available options for formal complaints;
- emphasize that filing a formal complaint may be necessary as part of a Registrant's Duty to Report;
- explain that filing a formal complaint may be done by the person(s) impacted by the Harmful Situation or by a witness; and
- clarify that the responsibility for actively ensuring equitable treatment is not solely that of the person(s) impacted.

Many opportunities exist to respond to a Harmful Situation, no matter whether it is a stand-alone event or systemic issue. An important tool for ensuring equitable treatment is responding to a Harmful Situation by filing a formal complaint.

There are three types of formal complaints processes, including those made to:

- Firms;
- Engineers and Geoscientists BC; and
- the British Columbia (BC) Human Rights Tribunal.

In cases where Harmful Situations are minor concerns, submitting a formal complaint to a Firm may be appropriate and sufficient. However, if the Harmful Situation poses a significant risk to the public or to the environment, or constitutes illegal or unethical practice, the Duty to Report requires Registrants to submit a formal complaint to Engineers and Geoscientists BC. Depending on the nature of the Harmful Situation, one or more complaint processes may be undertaken simultaneously.

Registrants must use their professional judgment and discretion, and may also seek legal advice, when responding to Harmful Situations, to determine the most suitable formal complaint process for the particular circumstance.

4.2 DOCUMENTING HARMFUL SITUATIONS

Individual Registrants who experience or witness Harmful Situations should document these experiences and their concerns by keeping a written record of specific incidents, noting the dates, times, places, people involved, witnesses (where applicable), and any other pertinent information. Registrant Firms may also have specific requirements for documenting Harmful Situations in the workplace.

Having well-documented details of specific incidents is useful if the complaint related to the Harmful Situation needs to be escalated within the Registrant Firm and/or externally to Engineers and Geoscientists BC or the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

4.3 MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT WITHIN FIRMS

When informal approaches are not viable options or they have proven to be ineffective, a witness or the person impacted by the Harmful Situation should bring the issue to the attention of their Firm, starting with a supervisor, if applicable.

It is generally recommended to have a conversation with a supervisor before escalating a formal complaint to the human resources department or to Firm leadership, in order to gauge the situation and reaction and determine the appropriate next steps. However, Firm policy may identify a specific person or persons to whom such complaints must be made, and may dictate what steps, if any, must be taken before, during, and after making a complaint.

Employer policies and procedures will vary, depending on the size, structure, and organization of the Firm. As a more formal response to Harmful Situations, Registrants making a complaint to their human resources department or Firm leadership should be prepared to provide written documentation of specific incidents, noting the date, time, place, people involved, witnesses (where applicable), and any other pertinent information.

4.4 MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT TO ENGINEERS AND GEOSCIENTISTS BC

A Harmful Situation that appears to involve a breach of the *Act* or Bylaws by a Registrant in the form of Professional Misconduct, Conduct Unbecoming a Registrant, or a breach of the Code of Ethics, must be reported to Engineers and Geoscientists BC through the formal complaint process.

Registrants who are aware of a Harmful Situation that they believe is unethical or illegal, or poses a risk of significant harm, are required to report the Harmful Situation under their Duty to Report.

Complainants should note that the Engineers and Geoscientists BC complaints process is focused on discipline of Registrants and does not provide remedies to complainants. Furthermore, Engineers and Geoscientists BC only has the authority to investigate complaints that allege a breach of the *Act* or Bylaws by a Registrant in the form of Professional Misconduct, Conduct Unbecoming a Registrant, or a breach of the Code of Ethics.

If an issue is outside Engineers and Geoscientists BC's jurisdiction, the complainant may be referred to the appropriate regulator or authority.

4.4.1 SAFEGUARDS FOR COMPLAINANTS

The *Act* prohibits anyone from taking any form of reprisal against a Registrant who submitted a complaint to Engineers and Geoscientists BC (per Section 103 of the *Act*). Reprisal activity includes evicting, discharging, suspending, expelling, intimidating, coercing, imposing any pecuniary or other penalty on, or otherwise discriminating against a Registrant who has made complaint or a report under their Duty to Report.

Registrants making a complaint about a Harmful Situation should provide all relevant information, but they are not required to establish a provable case for the complaint. Once an issue has been reported to Engineers and Geoscientists BC, the complainant's role becomes that of a witness. It is then under the discretion and responsibility of Engineers and Geoscientists BC to investigate the complaint and, if the case is advanced to the discipline stage, to prove the case. Complainants are not obligated to gather evidence and present arguments, but they have a right to be kept informed about the reasons and outcome of cases.

When an investigation has resulted in disciplinary action that will be made public, any personal, identifying, or sensitive information about the complainant may be anonymized or redacted, if that is in the privacy interest of the complainant. The anonymization may include anonymizing the identity

of the Registrant subject to discipline, if such information would identify the complainant. Discipline hearings are normally open to the public; however, the public may be excluded from all or part of the hearing if the safety of a person may be jeopardized.

If an Individual Registrant is unsure about making a complaint or wants to better understand these safeguards and other measures that may be available, contact the following:

- Practice Advisor at practiceadvisor@egbc.ca; or
- Complaint Intake Officer at complaints@egbc.ca.

Bringing forward a formal complaint can be difficult, especially for people in Equity-Seeking Groups who have experienced Harmful Situations. While it is outside of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's regulatory scope to provide support, people affected by Harmful Situations may consult the resources listed in [Section 5.0 Additional Resources](#).

4.4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

After receiving a complaint, Engineers and Geoscientists BC follows certain steps in the formal complaint process:

1. Engineers and Geoscientists BC notifies the Registrant subject to the complaint, unless there is a risk of harm to the complainant.
2. The Registrant may provide a response to the allegations, which is then provided to the complainant for further comment.
3. Staff at Engineers and Geoscientists BC may gather additional information to assess the complaint.
4. Depending on the outcome of the initial investigation, the case may then either be:
 - a) closed if no further action is required;
 - b) referred to the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Audit and Practice Review Committee for a practice review; or
 - c) referred to the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Investigation Committee for an investigation.

Additional information on the complaint, investigation, and discipline process, as well as the Duty to Report, is available on the Engineers and Geoscientists BC website at egbc.ca/Complaints-Discipline/Complaints-Discipline/Submit-a-Complaint.

4.5 MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE BC HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL

There is a one-year time limit for filing a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal, which means that the complaint must allege that Discrimination occurred within one year of the time the complaint is submitted to the Tribunal. However, Discrimination that happened before the one-year time limit should still be included in the complaint, because it may be considered part of a “continuing contravention” by the Tribunal.

Registrants need to consider timing and may submit more than one complaint at one time.

When a complaint is accepted for processing, the Tribunal notifies the person or Firm named as a respondent to the complaint. Some complaints may be deferred if another proceeding can appropriately address the complaint (for example, if a related disciplinary proceeding or small claims action is in progress). A complaint to Engineers and Geoscientists BC does not defer Tribunal proceedings.

The Tribunal usually arranges for mediation between the parties to resolve the issue. If a complaint cannot be settled through mediation, the Tribunal can hold a hearing, which is usually open to the public. The process through the Tribunal is lengthy, and it can take several months before a hearing decision is issued.

Additional information about the *Human Rights Code* and the Human Rights Tribunal process is available at the following links:

- BC Human Rights Tribunal: bchrt.bc.ca
- British Columbia Office of the Human Rights Commissioner: bchumanrights.ca
- BC Human Rights Clinic: bchrc.net

5.0 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources provide additional information on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in engineering and geoscience.

- Engineers and Geoscientists BC, “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” webpage:
 - egbc.ca/About/Programs-Initiatives/Equity-Diversity-Inclusion
- Engineers and Geoscientists BC, Complaints and Discipline, “Investigation Process” webpage:
 - egbc.ca/Complaints-Discipline/Complaints-Discipline/Investigation-Process
- Engineers Canada, “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” webpage:
 - engineerscanada.ca/diversity/about-diversity-in-engineering
- Government of BC, Criminal Justice System Services and Resources, “Victim Help and Support” webpage:
 - gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bcs-criminal-justice-system/services-and-resources/important-phone-numbers/victim-help-and-support

6.0 REFERENCES

6.1 LEGISLATION

The following legislation is cited in these guidelines:

- Canadian Human Rights Act [RSC 1982], c. H-6.
- Constitution Act, 1982, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c. 11.
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act [SBC 2019], c. 44.
- Human Rights Code [RSBC 1996], c. 210.
- Professional Governance Act [SBC 2018], c. 47.
- Professional Governance Act, Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation [B.C. Reg 14/2021].
- United Nations Declaration for Indigenous Rights Act. Bill C-15. [Royal Assent, June 21, 2021].

6.2 REFERENCES

The following documents are cited in these guidelines:

- British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHR). 2020. Glossary. Microaggression. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://bchumanrights.ca/glossary/>.
- Crenshaw K. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, and Violence Against Women of Color. Stanford Law Review. 43(6), 1241-1299. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>.
- Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2021a. Guide to the Code of Ethics. Version 2.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www.egbc.ca/getmedia/33d03861-5d04-43e9-b76b-ff57ba8b9bdb/EGBC-Guide-to-the-Code-of-Ethics-V2-0.pdf.aspx>.
- Morin N. 2018. Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Actions – Actions for EGBC. Recommendations Report. Prepared for Engineers and Geoscientists BC by ArrowBlade Consulting Service. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www.egbc.ca/getmedia/b0955e55-d6a6-4026-9da1-38ec55131685/June-2018-5-11-Appendix-B-Recommended-EGBC-Actions.pdf.aspx>.
- National Disability Authority (NDA). 2021. What Is Universal Design. The Seven Principles. [website]. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/>.
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. 2019. Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The National Inquiry. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Calls to Action. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls-to-action-english2.pdf>.

Turpel-LaFond ME. 2020. In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care, Summary Report. November 2020. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>.

United Nations (UN) General Assembly. 2007. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): resolution / adopted by the General Assembly 02 October, A/RES/61/295. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>.

Women and Gender Equality Canada. 2021. Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+). [website]. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>.

6.3 RELATED INFORMATION

The following resources are provided for information:

Government of Ontario. 2021. Understand the Law on Workplace Violence and Harassment. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/understand-law-workplace-violence-and-harassment>.

WorkSafeBC. 2021. Bullying and Harassment. [accessed: 2021 Oct 20]. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment>.

