



GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

CODES OF CONDUCT

February 6, 2020

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

This guidance document explains the *Lobbyists Transparency Act* (LTA) reporting requirements for relevant codes of conduct.

Codes of conduct establish behavioural standards for a profession:

“Codes of conduct provide guidance to individuals on responsible and ethical professional practices. They define rules of behaviour based on core principles and ethical standards for members of the profession or occupation. They increase peer pressure on individuals to comply with certain generally accepted standards. They also enhance the reputations of individuals by publicizing the principles for which they stand, and provide a means of evaluating the ethics of individuals who practise in the field.”¹

CODES OF CONDUCT GUIDANCE

When does a lobbyist have to declare a code of conduct?

The LTA requires lobbyists declare in their Registration Return whether they are subject to a code of conduct that is relevant to lobbying.

The LTA does not make it mandatory that lobbyists adhere to a relevant code of conduct, but if they do, they are required to declare it in their Registration Return.

How does the LTA define “relevant code of conduct”?

The LTA and Lobbyists Transparency Regulation define a **"relevant code of conduct"** as a code of conduct that:

- governs the conduct of a lobbyist in relation to engaging in lobbying activities in British Columbia, whether or not it also governs other activities;
- is publicly available; and
- meets the “prescribed criteria” that there is an organization responsible for the administration of the code of conduct.

What has to be declared about a code of conduct?

Every lobbyist named in a registration return must declare the following:

- Whether they have entered into an undertaking to comply with a relevant code of conduct, and

¹ *Lobbying in British Columbia: The Way Forward, Report on Province-Wide Consultation and Recommendations for Reform*. Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists for British Columbia, January 2013.
www.lobbyistsregistrar.bc.ca/handlers/DocumentHandler.ashx?DocumentID=181

- If a relevant code of conduct is in place:
 - the name of the code of conduct,
 - where a copy of the code of conduct is publicly available, and
 - the name and business contact information of the organization that is responsible for the administration of the code of conduct (the “prescribed criteria”).

What if a lobbyist is subject to more than one code of conduct?

A lobbyist governed by multiple codes of conduct must provide the required information for each code of conduct. Many professions and associations have adopted a code of conduct. Examples of codes of conduct that may be relevant to lobbyists are the:

- Lobbyists’ Code of Conduct, developed and administered under the *Lobbying Act* of Canada.
- Government Relations Institute of Canada Code of Conduct; Public Affairs Association of Canada (PAAC) Statement of Principles.²
- Lawyers’ and other professional governing bodies’ codes of conduct.
- Codes or statements of principle adopted by lobbyists’ firms and professional associations and some corporate and union codes of conduct.

Does the Registrar of Lobbying enforce the codes of conduct declared in the Registry?

The Registrar does not administer or enforce any of the codes of conduct by which lobbyists may be governed. Lobbyists are required to declare and provide links to the agencies or organizations that administer or enforce the codes of conduct governing that lobbyist.

What if I have questions about codes of conduct?

After reading this guidance document, if you have questions, contact the Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists for BC for assistance at info@bcorl.ca

***Note:** This document is for information purposes only and does not constitute a decision or finding by the Registrar of Lobbyists for British Columbia or his or her delegates. This guidance does not affect the powers, duties or functions of the Registrar of Lobbyists, or his or her delegates, regarding any investigation or other matter under the Lobbyists Transparency Act, respecting which the Registrar and his or her delegates will keep an open mind. Responsibility for compliance with the Lobbyists Transparency Act remains with each client, lobbyist, and public office holder.*

² Government Relations Institute of Canada Code of Conduct www.gric-irgc.ca/code-of-professional-conduct/; Public Affairs Association of Canada (PAAC) Statement of Principles www.publicaffairs.ca/who-we-are/ethical-principles