



BUILDING A BETTER  
GTA TOGETHER

# **CODE OF ETHICS**

## **Companion Document**

Version 1.0



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## **BACKGROUND**

In 2022, the Building Industry and Land Development Association updated its membership Code of Ethics (Code). The need to refresh the Code emerged as part of the work undertaken by the People & Culture Committee around supporting members to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) throughout our industry.

The previous Code of Ethics had its origins in the 1970s and reflected the distinct cultural, economic, and societal perspectives of the time. We aimed to modernize the language of the Code as well as to reflect current fundamental requirements such as employee work environments, sustainability, customer experiences, competitive integrity, DE&I and the current regulatory climate.

As well, through the changes, it is important that members are able to see how following the Code will strengthen our reputation and effectiveness individually as well as collectively as an Industry. We also wanted it to provide a clear framework so that members can feel confident in their ability to align their business practices with its principles/requirements.

BILD's Board of Directors adopted the new Code in October 2022. The Code received ratification at the BILD Annual General Meeting on December 7, 2022.

From the 2024 membership year onwards, BILD and its members will be guided by this new Code of Ethics. Members will be asked to confirm their understanding and expectations of the requirements of the Code of Ethics during the annual BILD membership renewal process.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS**

The Code of Ethics is not just a document or a set of guidelines. It is the heart of our association, playing a pivotal role in defining who we are, what we stand for, and how we engage with the world around us. It's BILD's commitment to excellence, our promise to each other, and our pledge to our communities that we, as members of the association, will operate with integrity, professionalism, and respect. Every member is encouraged to internalize these values, ensuring we collectively uplift our association and the Industry at large.

The Code...

- clarifies what BILD and its members stand for, and what we strive for, in our business and operating practices. It defines what others in our community and industry can expect from the members of BILD.
- directs members towards continuous improvement in business practices, fostering alignment with societal expectations and supporting customer engagement as well as satisfaction with our conduct as an Industry.
- cements a collective set of ethical standards that all members can rally around, fostering a unified approach in conduct and building mutual trust amongst members guided by shared principles.
- safeguards the reputation of the Industry, the association and its members, ensuring external stakeholders — employees, customers, government, regulatory bodies, etc. — view us as trustworthy, ethical, reliable and responsible.
- offers a foundation that can evolve as the Industry's landscape changes and as societal expectations continue to evolve, ensuring that BILD and its members stay relevant and exemplary.
- acts as a tool to set the path of professionalism, fairness, and integrity. This code ensures that every member knows the right direction, adhering to standards that elevate our collective practice.

Beyond just doing what's right, there's a tangible benefit to upholding the ethical standards set out in the Code. A strong ethical stance enhances our relationship with customers. They appreciate knowing they're working with an organization that holds itself to the highest standards, leading to increased loyalty and retention. Safeguarding our individual and collective reputations enables members to continue to thrive and the association to influence government or regulatory decisions that might negatively impact our Industry.

# **BILD Code of Ethics**

## **COMPANION DOCUMENT**



By adhering to a shared set of ethical standards, we create an environment where members can trust one another. This mutual respect and trust create a positive atmosphere, encouraging collaboration and the free exchange of ideas that we all benefit from and that elevates our Industry as a whole.

## **THE BILD CODE OF ETHICS**

1. Members shall conduct all their business dealings with integrity, honesty and fairness and stand behind the quality of their work and service commitments. Members shall meet or exceed all requirements and bulletins of the Housing Construction Regulatory Authority (HCRA).
2. Members shall provide materials and services in a manner consistent with or exceeding the established and accepted standards of the construction industry (the 'industry') and with the laws and regulations that govern it, including the use of standard industry documents wherever feasible. Members shall perform their contracts with competence, reasonable care and diligence.
3. Members shall assure that the health and safety (physical and mental) of their employees, the employees of others on the job site, and the general public, is given the highest priority in all aspects of the members' activities. Members shall ensure they create a healthy and safe workplace, meeting or exceeding all applicable federal and provincial regulations and standards. Members shall strive to provide their employees with the proper training and education required to enable them to meet the stated goals of a healthy and safe (physical and mental) workplace.
4. Members shall provide environments that are free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals, whether customers, suppliers, employees, community members, and other stakeholders, are treated with respect, fairness, dignity and in an ethical manner. Members shall commit to complying with the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibiting discrimination based on age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, record of offences, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and/or sexual orientation. Members shall abstain from and actively discourage discrimination or harassment in any and all forms, including addressing inappropriate, offensive and unwelcome behaviours.
5. Members shall commit to continuous improvement through People & Culture policies and practices, including employment practices which recognize employees as important assets. Members shall comply with all federal, provincial and local employment laws.

6. Members shall actively work to create inclusive environments in their respective workplaces as well as within the industry by embracing the unique experiences, perspectives and cultural backgrounds of their employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Members shall aspire to ensure their workforce and work environment is reflective of the diverse communities BILD and its members serve.
7. Members shall actively work to conform to the principles of good community planning to ensure their projects empower and serve the best interests of the community. Members shall endeavour to promote and pursue continuous improvement in sustainable building practices and environmental considerations in all their operations as well as in the services they provide to their customers. Members shall endeavour to provide their employees with the proper training and education required to enable the company to strive towards a more sustainably built environment and more environmentally friendly business practices.
8. Members shall treat their competitors, including their property and ideas, with respect. Members shall compete fairly for contracts, ensuring all practices align with federal competition legislation. Members shall afford full respect to proprietary intellectual property and should refrain from using any ideas, products and goods without proper authorization.
9. Members shall comply with all the statutory rules, regulations, and applicable laws, including but not limited to Canadian building codes as a minimum standard for construction. They shall also promote improvements to such laws, regulations and other provisions.
10. Members shall not make a representation, either through lack of due diligence or intention that compromises the integrity of the industry. Members shall avoid any conduct or practice detrimental to the land development and building industry, to the association, to the good name or reputation of any of its members, or its customers. Members shall uphold the standards of the industry with honour and dignity.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CODE OF ETHICS

This Companion Document provides an understanding of our updated Code of Ethics and what it means in practice. It delves into every section of the code, clarifying its significance for both members and the industry. Additionally, it breaks down complex points into straightforward language to ensure clarity and to prevent confusion.

1. Members shall conduct all their business dealings with integrity, honesty and fairness and stand behind the quality of their work and service commitments.

Members shall meet or exceed all requirements and bulletins of the Housing Construction Regulatory Authority (HCRA).

### *Why is it important?*

The reputation of the entire industry is shaped by the actions and conduct of each individual member. How employees, customers, governing bodies, regulators, and our community as a whole perceive our Industry impacts our success.

### *What does it mean?*

Be honest and fair in your business practices. Deliver quality work in keeping with what you promised to your customers. Adhere to HCRA's requirements as a minimum practice and strive to exceed.

2. Members shall provide materials and services in a manner consistent with or exceeding the established and accepted standards of the construction industry (the 'industry') and with the laws and regulations that govern it, including the use of standard industry documents wherever feasible.

Members shall perform their contracts with competence, reasonable care and diligence.

### *Why is it important?*

When members consistently deliver high-quality work, they uphold the reputation and trustworthiness of the construction industry. By adhering to industry standards and executing contracts with skill and attention, members also demonstrate their professionalism and commitment to excellence.

### *What does it mean?*

Complete work for your customers well, with skill, care and effort. Follow industry standards, laws, and regulations at all times. Where available, use industry documents to engage with your customers.



3. Members shall assure that the health and safety (physical and mental) of their employees, the employees of others on the job site, and the general public, is given the highest priority in all aspects of the members' activities.

Members shall ensure they create a healthy and safe workplace, meeting or exceeding all applicable federal and provincial regulations and standards.

Members shall strive to provide their employees with the proper training and education required to enable them to meet the stated goals of a healthy and safe (physical and mental) workplace.

### *Why is it important?*

Prioritizing health and safety in members' activities ensures the well-being of everyone involved, from employees to the public. By adhering to regulations and offering proper training, members not only protect individuals but also elevate the industry's reputation as a responsible and caring sector.

### *What does it mean?*

Make sure everyone is safe and well at work or in the workplace, both physically and mentally. Prioritize health and safety of your people at all times. Put in place the health and safety programs and practices that are required, including proper training for your employees to stay safe at all times.

4. Members shall provide environments that are free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals, whether customers, suppliers, employees, community members, and other stakeholders, are treated with respect, fairness, dignity and in an ethical manner.

Members shall commit to complying with the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibiting discrimination based on age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, record of offences, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and/or sexual orientation.

Members shall abstain from and actively discourage discrimination or harassment in any and all forms, including addressing inappropriate, offensive and unwelcome behaviours.

### *Why is it important?*

Treating people with respect and fairness is not only a legal imperative but a social one. Customers and employees are more likely to engage with, and hold in high regard, companies that provide environments free from discrimination or harassment. Failing to adhere to this principle puts members at risk for legal and financial consequences as well.

### *What does it mean?*

Provide a workplace where discrimination and harassment are unacceptable from anyone at any time. Address inappropriate or offensive behaviour immediately. Treat all people with respect and fairness.

- Members shall commit to continuous improvement through People & Culture policies and practices, including employment practices which recognize employees as important assets.

Members shall comply with all federal, provincial and local employment laws.

### *Why is it important?*

People are essential to our success. As an Industry, our ability to attract, retain, and engage skilled talent is critical to sustaining and growing our businesses. Focusing on our People & Culture policies and practices, as well as ensuring that employees are valued, supports our ability to deliver to our customers. As expectations of employers as well as employment legislation continue to evolve, we need to commit to continuously assessing and improving our People and Culture practices.

### *What does it mean?*

Consider your employees as assets. Look for ways to strengthen their experiences at work and recognize their value to the business. Ensure that you have employment policies in place that comply with legislative requirements at all times. Recognize when your work environment needs improving to sustain your existing employees and to support your ability to attract and retain the people you need.

- Members shall actively work to create inclusive environments in their respective workplaces as well as within the industry by embracing the unique experiences, perspectives and cultural backgrounds of their employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

Members shall aspire to ensure their workforce and work environment is reflective of the diverse communities BILD and its members serve.

### *Why is it important?*

When companies create inclusive environments, they bring together a variety of ideas and viewpoints, foster a better understanding of the needs and preferences of their diverse customer base, and attract a broader base of talented individuals. As an Industry, it is essential to embrace the diversity of the communities in which we do business. It ensures compliance with legal requirements, and environments where everyone feels included and valued directly impact on results.

### *What does it mean?*

Make your workplace welcoming for everyone. Be open to different backgrounds and viewpoints. Seek out diversity through your hiring practices so your workforce represents the diversity of our community. Make sure your business and employment practices are inclusive towards all cultural backgrounds. Be aware of unconscious biases. To learn more, consult [BILD's DEI Playbook](#).

7. Members shall actively work to conform to the principles of good community planning to ensure their projects empower and serve the best interests of the community.

Members shall endeavour to promote and pursue continuous improvement in sustainable building practices and environmental considerations in all their operations as well as in the services they provide to their customers.

Members shall endeavour to provide their employees with the proper training and education required to enable the company to strive towards a more sustainably built environment and more environmentally friendly business practices.

### ***Why is it important?***

Projects aligned with community needs are more likely to be welcomed and supported. As concerns about environmental degradation and climate change increase, industries that prioritize sustainable and eco-friendly practices are seen in a more positive light. Companies that embrace these principles can differentiate themselves. If we do not demonstrate leadership and commitment as an Industry, we are at risk of having government and regulatory bodies impose rules without consultation.

### ***What does it mean?***

Work in good faith for the communities you service. Focus on the best interests of the community from a long-term sustainability perspective. Consider building practices, products and innovation that are environmentally sustainable. Teach your teams how to be sustainable from an environmental, social, and economic perspective.

8. Members shall treat their competitors, including their property and ideas, with respect.

Members shall compete fairly for contracts, ensuring all practices align with federal competition legislation.

Members shall afford full respect to proprietary intellectual property and should refrain from using any ideas, products and goods without proper authorization.

### ***Why is it important?***

Respecting competitors and their properties establishes a standard of professional conduct that enhances the credibility of the member and the industry as a whole. Respecting proprietary intellectual property not only avoids potential legal pitfalls but also fosters a culture of innovation and collaboration within the Industry.

### ***What does it mean?***

Treat your competitors as you would like to be treated. Compete fairly and ethically. Respect the ideas, products, and people of companies within our Industry. Seek permission to leverage the intellectual property or ideas of others. Remember that collaboration across the Industry supports each of us to be stronger and more successful.

10. Members shall comply with all the statutory rules, regulations, and applicable laws, including but not limited to Canadian building codes as a minimum standard for construction.

They shall also promote improvements to such laws, regulations and other provisions.

### *Why is it important?*

Members are required to obey the law. It is crucial for safety, legality, reputation and overall success. It shows commitment to doing the right thing. It prevents accidents or mistakes that have the potential to do harm or result in legal penalties that can damage a company's reputation as well as that of the industry.

### *What does it mean?*

Follow all the rules established for the Industry, without exception. Contribute to Industry and Association efforts to improve how the Industry is governed by getting involved.

9. Members shall not make a representation, either through lack of due diligence or intention, that compromises the integrity of the industry.

Members shall avoid any conduct or practice detrimental to the land development and building industry, to the association, to the good name or reputation of any of its members, or its customers.

Members shall uphold the standards of the industry with honour and dignity.

### *Why is it important?*

How the industry is viewed by employees, customers, government agencies, regulatory bodies, etc., has a direct impact on its success. By avoiding misleading actions and harmful practices, members not only protect the standing of the association and its members but also ensure that the industry is viewed with respect and trustworthiness by all stakeholders.

### *What does it mean?*

Do not take any action that harms, or has the potential to harm, the reputation of the Building Industry. Act in a manner, at all times, that garners and maintains respect for your work as well as towards the Association and the Building Industry. Take pride in being a member of the Industry and the Association.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS**

Starting in the 2024 renewal cycle, as part of the BILD commitment to upholding the highest standards of conduct, all members will be required to affirm their dedication to the Code of Ethics. This act not only serves as a reminder of our shared values but also as a testament to the importance the Association places on ethical behavior and practices.

BILD understands that achieving complete alignment with the Code of Ethics may require time for some members. As such, we urge every member to continuously strive for adherence, recognizing that this journey towards full compliance is a continuous one. Our collective aim should always be to uphold the principles outlined in the code, even if it demands consistent effort and self-reflection.

BILD anticipates that each member will put forth sincere efforts to align with the ethical guidelines. The strength of our association lies in the collective actions of its members, and by diligently working towards compliance, we not only strengthen our internal bonds but also present a united, ethical front to the outside world.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF ETHICS**

Each member will be responsible for monitoring their compliance with the Code of Ethics. The Association will only respond to complaints made about a member acting in a manner that is not in compliance.

Complaints received by BILD regarding a member's behaviour or activity that is non-compliant with the Code of Ethics will be submitted to the Director of Membership. While the complaints may not be anonymous, they will be treated confidentially throughout the process.

**BILD's Membership Department will undertake a preliminary investigation** to determine the basis and validity of the complaint. This process will include:

- Requesting additional information from the complainant and the member company as required;
- Providing an acknowledgement of the complaint in writing to the complainant;
- Providing written notification to the member company including details of the complaint and outlining the complaint process.

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## **COMPANION DOCUMENT**



Members shall provide additional information in support of or in defense of the claim as required unless:

- the information is confidential, privileged or subject to a non-disclosure agreement;
- the matter is or is likely to become subject to legal or criminal investigation or proceeding
- the matter is currently under investigation by the police, a regulatory, tribunal or other authority having jurisdiction;
- a decision is made by the members to decline to provide additional information.

If the matter is currently or likely to be subject to legal or criminal investigation or proceeding, or under investigation by the police, a regulatory, tribunal or authority having jurisdiction, the complaint will be sealed and held until the outcome of those actions, as the outcome of any member review could be prejudicial.

**If there is basis to proceed, the Membership Department will convene a Membership Review Panel** composed of 3 members of the BILD Board and chaired by the Secretary of the Board. If one of these members is not legal counsel, BILD will retain a lawyer to participate in the review. The Membership Review Panel will then:

- Consider the complaint against the Code of Ethics;
- Hear directly from the complainant and member company in person if warranted;
- Determine if a Code of Ethics violation has occurred;
- Recommend a course of action from the following options to the BILD Board of Directors based on the nature and extent of the violation for ratification by vote:
  - No action;
  - A written warning to the member;
  - A suspension of membership for a defined period of time;
  - Expulsion of the member from the Association.

**Upon completion of the process**, written notification of the completion of the process will be provided to the complainant. As well, the member will receive written notification of the completion of the process as well as the outcome / determination made as a result of the process.

# **BILD Code of Ethics**

## **COMPANION DOCUMENT**



## **TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

- BILD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Playbook:  
<https://www.bildgta.ca/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

## **APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL CODE OF ETHICS**

1. Members shall comply with applicable building codes of Canada as a minimum standard for construction and shall work toward its improvement in the interests of structural sufficiency, safety, and health.
2. Members shall plan their projects to conform to the principles of good community planning and support for the environment.
3. Members shall deal justly with their employees, subcontractors, and suppliers of all goods and services.
4. Members shall deal honestly and fairly with their customers and stand behind the quality of their work and service commitments.
5. Members shall exchange information and experience, and encourage research on materials, technical advancements and building techniques in order to provide the best value for their customers.
6. Members shall avoid all conduct or practice detrimental to the land development and building industry, to the Association, to the good name or reputation of any of its members, or its customers.
7. Members shall commit to continuing learning through human resource policies and practices, including employment practices which treat employees as assets.
8. Members shall actively promote health and safety principles.
9. Members shall treat their competitors, including their property and ideas, with respect.