# HRuprise Code of Conduct Guidelines

## About the Code of Conduct

*A code of conduct (CoC) establishes your company's norms for behavior and your expectations for employees and third parties with whom you interact. A well-written code of conduct explains your company's mission and values, and how they relate to behavioral expectations.*

### Use clear and concise language.

Don't use technical language or industry jargon. It should be clear to anyone working inside or outside of your organization what your expectations for behavior are.

### Make it highly visible, easily accessible, and public.

Share your CoC with employees, vendors, and customers. Include your CoC on your website so that your standards of behavior are clear. Having your code of conduct easily visible makes enforcement easier as well.

Don't assume that everyone will automatically understand your code of conduct. Provide training to employees so that standards are clear and questions can be answered.

### Specify a reporting process for complaints.

You should have a clear process for employees or third parties to report concerns. Communicate clearly what will happen after a report is made. Make sure your reporting process includes follow-up with the person who made the report.

One of the top reasons that people don't report misconduct is the fear of retaliation. This is especially true if the misconduct is happening with someone in a position of power or authority.

To combat this, your reporting process should include an option for people to report concerns anonymously and it should include an option for an independent party to conduct the investigation. Contact [HRuprise](HRuprise) if you need help setting this up for your company.

### Support from leadership should be clear.

Management should acknowledge and support the CoC. This will be shown in actions, not just words. Leadership must be bought in and support the enforcement of the CoC, especially for misconduct among employees in a position of power. A CoC without enforcement is useless.

## Your Code of Conduct should be written for more than just legal compliance.

Of course, you should not accept illegal behavior. But just setting the standard of behavior at the legal standard is not enough. The bar for the legal definitions of harassment and discrmination are incredibly high. There are many examples of behavior that are unacceptable but not necessarily illegal.

# Code of Conduct Recommendations

## Scope

Your CoC should apply to all employees, vendors, and customers while on company property, on company time, and at company-sponsored events.

Some interactions may not rise to the level of harassment, but still communicate bias, perpetuate stereo-types, or emphasize stereotypes. These issues can be just as problematic because they create awkwardness or may make an employee feel uncomfortable at work. Your code of conduct should address these issues and cover what happens outside the workplace.

Examples of situations that should be covered in the scope of your CoC include: employees interacting with each other, employees interacting with managers, employees interacting with customers, and customers interacting with each other.

## Values

The best CoC include a clear statement of the company's values. Your company values are the beliefs, philosophies, and principles that drive your business. They impact the employee experience you deliver as well as the relationship you develop with your customers, partners, and shareholders. Your company values should include a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

## Expected Behaviors

Be explicit about how you expect your employees to engage with each other and work together toward your goals.

For example: We are dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion. We do not tolerate harassment of employees, customers, or vendors in any form.

# Unacceptable Behaviors

A company's culture is defined by the worst behavior leadership is willing to tolerate. Just as you need to be clear about what you expect, you should be explicit about the behaviors you will not tolerate.

Some examples:

- Belittling, or subtle expressions of bias
- Verbal, physical, or written abuse or assault
- Bullying, intimidation, or victimization
- Discrimination
- Inappropriate use of company property or assets
- Failure to comply with company values
- Illegal activity
- Harassment including:

  ° Offensive comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, mental illness, neuro(a)typicality, physical appearance, body size, age, race, or religion.

  ° Unwelcome comments regarding a person's lifestyle choices and practices, including those related to food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment.

  ° Deliberate misgendering or use of 'dead' or rejected names.

  ° Gratuitous or off-topic sexual images or behavior in spaces where they're not appropriate.

  ° Physical contact and simulated physical contact (eg, textual descriptions like "*hug*" or "*backrub*") without consent or after a request to stop.

  ° Threats of violence.

  ° Incitement of violence towards any individual, including encouraging a person to commit suicide or to engage in self-harm.

  ° Deliberate intimidation.

  ° Stalking or following.

  ° Harassing photography or recording, including logging online activity for harassment purposes.

  ° Sustained disruption of discussion.

  ° Unwelcome sexual attention.

  ° Pattern of inappropriate social contact, such as requesting/assuming inappropriate levels of intimacy with others

  ° Continued one-on-one communication after requests to cease.

  ° Deliberate "outing" of any aspect of a person's identity without their consent except as necessary to protect vulnerable people from intentional abuse.

  ° Publication of non-harassing private communication.

## Power Dynamics

It's unrealistic to expect that people will not develop relationships at work, sometimes even intimate relationships. But these can also create specific issues at work.

Power dynamics, especially in boss/subordinate relationships, can have significant impacts on the work environment. An intimate relationship with power dynamics involved blurs the lines of consensuality. Creating the appearance of favoritism can also create a negative impact. Having clear expectations outlined in your code of conduct can help alleviate some of these negative impacts.

Examples: Some companies opt for a "no-dating" policy. Other companies choose to have a "one-shot" rule where an employee can ask out another employee once. If an employee says no, they are not allowed to ask again.

## Violations of Code of Conduct

It's important to be clear about the possible consequences that may result from violations. These can include a written warning, suspension, termination, or other consequences.

Example language: If you are approached as having (consciously or otherwise) acted in a way that might make your teammates feel unwelcome, listen with an open mind and avoid becoming defensive. Remember that if someone offers you feedback, it likely took a great deal of courage for them to do so. The best way to respect that courage is to acknowledge your mistake, apologize, and move on — with a renewed commitment to do better.

That said, repeated or severe violations of this code can and will be addressed by our leadership, and can lead to disciplinary actions, including termination.

## Reporting Violations of Code of Conduct

Be clear about how employees should report violations of the code of conduct, including an option for anonymous reporting and independent investigations.

Create transparency by posting flyers in your workplace, reminding employees in team meetings, and posting elsewhere to reinforce your support for your anonymous and independent process. Reach out to HRuprise if you need help setting up your reporting and investigation processes.

## Additional resources:

Protecting employees
- [This California restaurant uses a color-coded system to help their staff combat sexual harassment](#)

Protecting customers
- [Ask for Angela](#)
- [The Angel Shot Helps Guests Exit Unsafe Situations](#)