



Council report

Meeting date:	May 3, 2022
Title:	Right to Disconnect policy
Prepared by:	Laura Johnston, CAO

Recommendation

That report: Right to Disconnect policy be received for information; and

That the West Grey personnel policy be amended to include the Right to Disconnect policy in accordance with Bill 27: Working for Workers Act, 2021.

Executive summary

Bill 27: Working for Workers Act, 2021 requires employers with more than 25 employees to implement a Right to Disconnect policy by June 2, 2022. West Grey staff has drafted a policy based on best practices to disconnect and promote a healthy work-life balance, as presented by HR Downloads, a Human Resources organization that, since 2005, provides templates, training and resources for several sectors, including municipal governments. West Grey is a member of HR Downloads and frequently utilizes their resources.

Background and discussion

Effective June 2, 2022, the Corporation of the Municipality of West Grey, as an Ontario employer with 25 or more employees, must have a Right to Disconnect policy in accordance with Bill 27: Working for Workers Act, 2021. This requirement was added to the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA) on December 2, 2021.

The term “disconnecting from work” is defined in the ESA to mean “not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or sending or reviewing other messages, to be free from the performance of work”.

(<https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/written-policy-disconnecting-from-work>)



May 3, 2022 (2)

Bill 27 does not specify what the policy must say, rather, it creates an obligation for an employer to communicate when employees should expect to work. Bill 27 also does not prohibit employers from creating an employment relationship that would require employees to be on-call.

There are a number of positions in this corporation that work irregular hours, outside of traditional "office hours", or are expected to be available for emergency response or operational demands. This is addressed in the Right to Disconnect policy by stating such expectations will be clearly identified in the specific job description and on agreement between the employee and their supervisor. The spirit of the Right to Disconnect policy, however, is afforded to all municipal employees and when an employee is not working, their time away will be respected and not interrupted (other than in emergency situations).

Legal and legislated requirements

Bill 27: Working for Workers Act, 2021

Financial and resource implications

None

Staffing implications

The legislation requires all employers to provide a copy of the approved policy within 30 days of that approval. The copy can be provided via email or hard copy. Management will ensure all employees sign off on the policy and have the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification.

Consultation

H. Webb, Payroll Administrator

G. Scharback, Director of Legislated Services/Clerk

K. Mighton, Director of Finance/Treasurer

Alignment to strategic vision plan

Not applicable.



May 3, 2022 (3)

Attachments

Draft: Right to Disconnect Policy

Next steps

On approval, staff will update the Personnel Policy handbook and provide every employee with a copy of this new policy.

Respectfully submitted:
Laura Johnston, Chief Administrative Officer