

Rapid Fire Theatre

ABUSE AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Definitions:

Policy: The guiding principle which governs the actions of Rapid Fire Theatre (also known as “RFT” or “Rapid Fire”).

Procedure: The method by which the principle is carried out.

Policy Revisions: Wording changes can be made at board meetings. Major changes should be addressed at the Annual General Meeting.

Rapid Fire Theatre is committed to a healthy, abuse-free and harassment-free work and educational environment for all our employees, performers, volunteers, and workshop/camp participants. RFT has developed an organization-wide policy intended to prevent abuse and harassment of any type, including sexual abuse, of its performers/employees/volunteers/ workshop or camp participants and to deal quickly and effectively with any incident that might occur.

Abuse and harassment are violations of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Alberta Bill of Rights.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment occurs when an employee/performer/volunteer/workshop or summer camp participant is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, religious beliefs, colour, place of origin, gender, mental or physical disability, ancestry, marital status, family status, source of income, or sexual orientation. Alberta human rights laws prohibit harassment in the workplace on these grounds.

Examples of harassment which will not be tolerated by RFT are: verbal or physical abuse, threats, coercive or intimidating behavior, hostile or derogatory remarks, innuendo or taunts about any employee's/performer's/volunteer's/workshop or summer camp participant's appearance, religious beliefs, colour, place of origin, mental or physical disabilities, ancestry, ethnic group, marital status, family status, source of income, sexual orientation or gender. RFT also will not tolerate the display of pornographic, racist or offensive signs or images, unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a violation of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act. Unwanted sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favours, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- *Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of, or condition of, an individual's employment/performance/volunteerism/workshop or camp participation; or
- *Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual affects that individual's employment/volunteerism/workshop or camp participation.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to: pinching, patting, rubbing an individual's body or clothing; dirty jokes, pictures or pornographic materials; comments, suggestions, innuendoes; requests or demands of a sexual nature; sexual flirtations or propositions; leering, sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse; derogatory or sexually degrading comments or graphic verbal comments about an individual's body; unwelcome overly personal conversation; suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, gestures, drawings/cartoons; spreading of sexual rumours; continued expression of sexual interest after being informed that such interest is unwelcome; any implicit or explicit behaviour that is used to control, influence, or affect the educational opportunities and/or learning or professional environment of others; any act of retaliation against an individual who reports a violation of the harassment policy or who participates in the investigation of a harassment complaint. Furthermore, the behaviour need not be intentional in order to be considered sexual harassment.

All such harassment is offensive and in many cases it intimidates others. It will not be tolerated within our organization.

RFT performers, staff and volunteers are expected to maintain a professional relationship and professional distance from clients, students and fans.

PROCEDURE:

RFT will ensure that all of its staff and volunteers are duly informed of its harassment policy as precursor to any term of employment.

All administrative, instructional, and supervisory staff review RFT's abuse and harassment policy prior to program start:

If you are being harassed:

Tell the harasser his/her behaviour is unwelcome and ask him/her to stop.

Keep a record of the incidents (dates, times, locations, possible witnesses, what happened, your response).

You do not have to have a record of events in order to file a complaint but a record can strengthen your case and help you remember the details over time.

File a complaint. If, after asking the harasser to stop his/her behaviour, the harassment continues, report the problem to one of the following individuals:

- a. Artistic Director (ad@rapidfiretheatre.com) or Player Liaison
- b. General Manager (gm@rapidfiretheatre.com)
- c. Member of the board of directors

You also have the right to contact the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission to file a complaint of sexual harassment and, if circumstances warrant, a charge of sexual assault may be filed with the police.

4. RFT seeks to provide a safe, healthy and rewarding work and educational environment for its employees, volunteers and workshop/camp participants. Harassment will not be tolerated within this organization! If you feel you are being harassed, talk to us. We want to hear from you.

All participants of RFT's workshop/camp programs will be assured that they need not endure any form of harassment or sexual harassment, including abuse or harassment because of sexual orientation. They will further be assured that they need not endure, for any reason, any abuse or harassment that impairs the educational environment or their emotional well-being at RFT's workshops/camps, and performances.

RFT program supervisors and instructors are oriented prior to the programs on expected and appropriate behaviours with students, as well as on how to deal with students who disclose personal problems regarding abuse or inappropriate sexual behaviour, either at RFT programs or at their home or school. Any disclosures are forwarded to the Artistic Director immediately. This information is then communicated to the General Manager of RFT. Individual instructors and supervisors are required to forward any concerns they may have regarding students to the Artistic Director for immediate follow-up.

Dealing with a Complaint

Any individual who feels s/he is being harassed or abused, or any staff member who observes such harassment/abuse, should immediately contact a supervisor, who should subsequently immediately document the incident in writing and inform the Artistic Director.

If an oral or written complaint of harassment or sexual harassment is made, it shall be reported to the Artistic Director who will:
inform the individual's parent(s), if the complainant is under 18 years of age;
inform the General Manager for any further appropriate action.

Once a complaint is received, it will be kept confidential. An investigation will be undertaken immediately and all necessary steps taken to resolve the problem. If appropriate, action taken may include conciliation. The supervisory staff and Artistic Director will address the effects on the individual subjected to the harassment, and prevent any further instances of harassment.

Both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be interviewed, as will any individuals who may be able to provide relevant information. All information will be kept in confidence.

When confidentiality cannot be assured, the complainant will be apprised of this fact before additional proceedings commence. Maintaining absolute confidentiality may serve to make the investigation and/or resolution difficult or impossible, and should be carefully considered before complete confidentiality is assured.

If the investigation reveals evidence to support the complaint of harassment, the harasser will be disciplined appropriately. Discipline may include suspension or dismissal, and the incident will be documented. No documentation will be placed on the complainant's file where the complaint is filed in good faith, whether the complaint is upheld or not.

Criminal and/or civil charges may be brought against the alleged abuser or harasser; sexual abuse and sexual harassment may also be considered a violation of laws relating to child abuse.

If the investigation fails to find evidence to support the complaint, there will be no documentation filed recording the occurrence.

Regardless of the outcome of a harassment complaint made in good faith, the individual lodging the complaint, as well as anyone providing information, will be protected from any form of retaliation by either co-workers, superiors, co-participants. This includes dismissal, demotion, and denial of opportunities within the organization or harassment of an individual as a result of her/his having made a complaint or having provided evidence regarding the complaint.

Responsibility of Directors

It is the responsibility of the artistic staff, General Manager or any person within the organization supervising one or more employees/ volunteers/participants to take immediate and appropriate action to report or deal with incidents of harassment of any type whether brought to their attention or personally observed. Under no circumstances should a legitimate complaint be dismissed or downplayed nor should the complainant be told to deal with it personally.