DISCONNECTING FROM WORK POLICY

[Organization Name] is committed to taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the health and safety of workers.

[Organization Name] is also committed to the following:

* providing a supportive workplace that promotes and supports stress-reduction and mental health; and
* ensuring that its employees are able to maintain an appropriate work/life balance and fulfil their personal responsibilities.

[Organization Name] has the following policy in place regarding an employee’s right to disconnect from work outside of their standard working hours.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of [Organization Name] whether their primary location of work is in the workplace, at home, on the road, or a combination of any or all of the above.

DEFINITIONS

“Disconnecting from Work” means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

POLICY

In order to allow employees to decompress at the end of each work day, [Organization Name] has implemented this Right to Disconnect Policy. This means employees are not expected to perform work during the following times:

* Outside of their hours of work or during eating periods
* During vacation with pay
* During public holidays (unless the employee has agreed to work on the day of a public holiday)

**Connection and Disconnection Expectations**

**Email**

Employees are expected to follow the below guidelines regarding the use of [Organization Name]’s email systems. These guidelines also apply if an employee needs to use their personal email in the event of an emergency or an unforeseen circumstance.

Employees are expected to respond to emails during their designated working hours only. [Organization Name] does not have an expectation that employees will respond to emails during their off-work time and employees will not be penalized in any way for responding to emails only during their working time.

To ensure that these guidelines are not compromised, [Organization Name] needs to be aware of when employees are on work time and when they are not. This means that employees need to (Insert method, e.g., update Google calendar, email their supervisor, put on an out-office on their email) when they will not be working during [Organization Name]’s core hours of (Insert core hours).

*Response Time for Emails (these are suggested guidelines and may be amended for your organization)*

* E.g., Employees are expected to respond to emails received during the workday, up to 30 minutes prior to the end of the workday, on the same day whenever possible.
* E.g., Emails received during after-hours Monday through Thursday are expected to be replied to within 24 hours of their receipt.
* E.g., Emails received after-hours on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday are expected to be replied to on the Monday following, unless the employee is not working, in which case they may be replied to on the next working day.

In the event that an employee is unable to reply within these guidelines, they are expected to speak with their supervisor to discuss their workload and set updated expectations.

*Out of Office*

Employees are expected to regularly update their out-of-office automatic emails so that the most up-to-date information will be communicated to those who are emailing them outside of their work hours.

**Phone (Personal and Business)**

Employees are expected to follow the below guidelines regarding the use of phones for the completion of their job duties.

Employees are expected to respond to phone calls or text messages during their designated working hours only. [Organization Name] does not have an expectation that employees will respond to phone calls or text messages during their off-work time and employees will not be penalized in any way for responding to phone calls and text messages during their working time only.

*Response Time for Phone Calls, Voicemails, and Text Messages (these are suggested guidelines and may be amended for your organization)*

* E.g., Employees are expected to respond to phone calls, voicemails, and text messages received during the workday, up to 30 minutes prior to the end of the workday, on the same day whenever possible.
* E.g., Phone calls, voicemails, and text messages received Monday through Thursday after-hours are expected to be replied to within 24 hours of their receipt.

* E.g., Phone calls, voicemails, and text messages received after-hours on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday are expected to be replied to on the Monday following, unless the employee is not working, in which case they may be replied to on the next working day.

In the event that an employee is unable to reply within these guidelines, they are expected to speak with their supervisor to discuss their workload and set updated expectations.

*Out of Office*

Employees are expected to regularly update their email and voicemail with their expected schedule so that the most up-to-date information will be communicated to those who are reaching out outside of their work hours.

*Personal Cell Phones*

[Organization Name] recognizes that personal cell phones can be valuable tools for our employees.

If a client or colleague communicates with an employee on their personal cellular phone during their off-work hours, employees are not obligated to answer or reply until they are within their working hours the following business day.

Employees are encouraged to turn off cell phone notifications when they’re away from the office.

**Other Communication Channels**

Employees may use various other means of communication for work such as Slack, GoogleChat, Social Media platforms, Zoom etc. Employees are only expected to respond to work related messages on these platforms during their designated working hours. [Organization Name] does not have an expectation that employees will respond to messages, comments, meeting invitations etc. during their off-work time and employees will not be penalized in any way for only replying to them during their working time.

**Responsibilities**

Employees are expected to:

* Follow the guidelines outlined within this policy, such as notifying management and using applicable technologies to notify internal and external parties when they are off duty
  + Otherwise be working during the times set out in their employment contract, taking breaks as outlined in their employment contract and/or their core policies
* Not pressure fellow employees for taking the down time afforded to them by this policy
* Speak to their leader/manager if they have any concerns about their mental health and their right to disconnect from work

Supervisors/managers are expected to:

* Respect an employee’s off-duty time and not expect that an employee will respond to a request on their off-duty hours
* Compensate employees for any work completed outside of their on-duty hours, as outlined by the hours of work legislation in BC’s *Employment Standards Act*
* Provide support as needed to employees who come forward with concerns regarding their mental health and right to disconnect

**Complaints**

Employees who have concerns about disconnecting during their time away from work should first speak with their supervisor/manager to resolve the issue. In the event the issue is not able to be resolved at this level, employees are directed to bring the issue forward to (Insert Position/Person).

**Mental Health in the Workplace**

[Organization Name] is vitally concerned with the health and wellbeing of our employees’ health, both physical and mental. The organization strongly encourages our employees, especially those who are participating in remote work arrangements to adapt and maintain a good work/life balance.

[Organization Name] wishes to encourage employees to come forward if they are experiencing any health issues, especially issues related to mental well-being. If an employee feels comfortable doing so, they should talk to their manager/management team and/or take steps to seek professional help.