

November 2017

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Employee Handbook

Vancouver Island
Community
Connections Inc.

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About This Handbook

This handbook is designed to contain useful information about working for Vancouver Island Community Connections Inc. (VICC). It provides a summary of important policies and procedures that you will need to know and understand. *It is your responsibility to read and follow the policies.*

The information included in this handbook constitutes guidelines only and is subject to change as the organization deems appropriate and necessary. From time to time you may receive notice of new or modified policies, procedures, benefits or programs. Full Policy and Procedure Manuals are also available at each worksite, and electronically, for your reference.

It is important to note that certain rights and responsibilities are imposed on VICC as an organization by provincial and federal legislation and court decisions. Many of these have implications for policies and procedures regarding employment. For this reason, VICC reserves any and all management rights regarding employees' employment status. These rights and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- To manage and direct the organization's employees, including hiring, promotion, scheduling, transfers, assignments or retention of employees in positions within the organization and to establish work rules.
- To lay off employees.
- To discharge or take other appropriate disciplinary action when necessary.
- To schedule overtime work as required, consistent with the requirements of the organization.
- To develop job descriptions, bearing in mind that such descriptions are usually guidelines and not rigid limitations and that employees shall perform any reasonable assigned duties.
- To introduce new or improved methods or facilities or to change existing methods or facilities.
- To fulfil its obligations in contracting out for matters relating to the operation of the organization.
- To discontinue certain operations; and to direct all questions of the organization.

Some policies in this manual include the statement '*Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment*'. This may seem harsh, but it is important that each employee clearly understands the potential consequences of failing to follow these policies and procedures. While this statement is included in some policies and not others its absence does not exclude disciplinary consequences. Violation of any policy or procedure may result in discipline or dismissal depending on circumstances.

This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, nor does it guarantee employment for any specific length of time. Although we hope our employment relationship will be long term, either the company or you can end the relationship at any time, with or without cause, to the extent allowed by the law.

When you have read and understood the Employee Handbook, sign the final page, and return the signed page to the Directors to keep in your employee file.

Our Organization

Message from the Directors – Welcome Aboard

Vancouver Island Community Connections Inc. (VICC) was formed out of a shared vision, values and belief system, for providing person-centered support to individuals requiring disability related services. Owners/Directors, Lesley Gibson and Carol Gjesdal, are long term residents of the Comox Valley, and active community citizens.

We exist to provide a quality service to those we serve, and you as an employee are a key part of that vision and that service.

We would like to welcome you wholeheartedly to the team!

Carol Gjesdal and Lesley Gibson
Directors

Background

Vancouver Island Community Connections Inc. (VICC) is a non-union, public corporation. It was started as a partnership in 2005 and became an incorporated company in 2007.

VICC is a community-based service delivery business, providing support to people requiring disability support and service.

VICC receives funding through Community Living BC (CLBC) to provide services for adults living with a developmental disability, as well as adults living with FASD and/or Autism (Personalized Supports Initiative). VICC receives funding through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) for summer work experience. VICC also provides support services on a fee-for-service basis for individuals who are not eligible for CLBC services or for individuals wanting to increase their support hours.

VICC works with two Microboards to provide community inclusion and residential services. In this relationship, Directors works with the individuals, family and Microboard members to coordinate services, monitor outcomes and effectiveness of services according to the individuals' support plans.

VICC currently has a three-year accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF accreditation signals a service provider's commitment to continually improving services, encouraging feedback, and serving the community. For more information about CARF, including a copy of the CARF information booklet, please contact one of VICC's Directors or team leaders. You can also find information at each worksite and on CARF's website at <http://www.carf.org/home/>

In the pursuit of greater quality of life and citizenship for people with Diverseabilities, VICC adopts an '*Employment First*' approach to all VICC services. Employment First services have become a 'best practice' in the community support field. Service delivery is designed to support the belief that every working-age individual has abilities, skills and talents to enrich the community and people around us, and every individual has the opportunity to explore their career options and seek jobs that fit their skills and interests. Every individual accessing VICC services will have at least one employment goal in their individual service plan. VICC staff will diligently support the goal in the same manner as other goals within the ISP, using the S.M.A.R.T. goal approach. VICC staff will also keep current of best practices by educating themselves on employment first initiatives and regularly checking the website www.employmentforall.ca as well as the Community Living BC website for information relevant to the community support field.

Administrative office, WAVE Program, Individualized Support Services:

#4 – 1351 McPhee Ave,
Courtenay, BC V9N 3A3
250-338-7201

Office hours are 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, weekdays, excluding statutory holidays.

BEST Employment Services, Self Advocate Liaison Project, Personalized Supports Initiative, Skill Development, and Summer Work Experience.

100B – 2270 Cliffe Ave,
Courtenay BC V9N 2L2
250-871-7201

Staff are in and out of office, and office is locked when staff are out of office.

Our Programs

SELF ADVOCATE LIAISON PROJECT

An innovative project funded through Community Living BC, the self advocate liaison project provides information of self advocacy services and resources for individuals and families. Services are also available for community members and groups, businesses, unions, educational institutions and organizations for the promotion of hiring and including people with DiverseAbilities.

The goal of this service is to assist people with DiverseAbilities to have a voice.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Twenty-four hour residential services are provided at two residences in the Comox Valley. Staff working in these homes provide assistance to the residents with activities of daily living and community inclusion, such as bathing, cooking, cleaning, community outings, shopping, doctor's appointments and other activities.

The goal of these homes is to enable the residents to live as independently as possible, while ensuring each individual's health and safety.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE – *BEST Employment*

VICC provides opportunities for people served to take part in community employment. This is a community inclusion service that utilizes a variety of tools to ensure that individuals achieve paid work, and in some cases self-employment. The employment placement is based on the individual's employment choices and the vocational skills that they possess.

The goal of this service is to provide people with opportunities and support to work as independently as possible, at a competitive job placement in the community.

WAVE PROGRAM

WAVE stands for Working – Adventuring – Visioning – Exploring. WAVE is a program for young adults who are transitioning from high school into the adult world. WAVE incorporates self-discovery with community engagement, employment and life skill enhancement.

The goal of this service is to provide supports for people to become independent in their community. Services are goal oriented and time-limited.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES

This community integration service provides many opportunities for community participation. This program is based on the individual's identified skills, interests, needs and desires. People may take part in a variety of community life experiences, with a focus on health and wellness promotion.

The goal of this service is to provide supports and services for individuals to be involved in meaningful community integration and recreational activities.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT (often referred to as SEMI-INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES)

VICC provides skill development services for people that own or rent their homes so that they can live as independently as possible. This community inclusion service provides individuals with support to develop skills that are required for healthy, independent living. Support may be provided on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting. People accessing this service decide on the type of service that best meets their needs.

The goal of this service is to provide supports and services for individuals to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to live independently. Services are goal oriented and time-limited.

PERSONALIZED SUPPORTS INITIATIVE

The Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI) is funded through Community Living BC (CLBC), and supports adults who have both significant limitation in adaptive functioning and either a diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD is also known as Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD).

The PSI service provides an individualized and personalized approach to meeting the needs of eligible adults. PSI service provides supports for supported living, employment support, skill development, outreach and development of support networks. Service focuses on enhancing existing community supports to help people maintain or increase their independence. PSI augments, rather than replaces, existing support.

The goal of this service is to provide support for individuals to increase their independence and community connections.

REGISTERED SOCIAL WORK SERVICES (RSW)

VICC has the ability to offer registered social work services on a fee-for-service basis. RSW services include assistance with completing applications for various government benefits and services. For example, a registered social worker can assist individuals and families with their *Person With Disability* designation application form for persons who need assistance under the BCEA Program through the Ministry of Social Development. A registered social worker can also complete section three of the application, the Assessor Report. Other social work services include planning, budget development, resource development, and service delivery consultation.

Mission, Philosophy & Values

OUR VISION:

Social Worth for All

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide service guided by a holistic vision of the person, with respect for informed self-directed choice and connection to community.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

V – Versatility: adaptable, competent and capable in many areas of service.

I – Involvement: involved in our community.

C – Community: interconnected as “We” more than “I”. Making choices that reinforce the experience of relatedness and foster the sense of belonging and interdependence.

C – Connections: Your connections and associations open doors.

OUR VALUES:

Equality - Each individual has intrinsic worth.

Human Potential - Each individuals’ capability can be realized.

Integrity - To conduct oneself with honesty, trustworthiness and incorruptibility.

Personal Growth - Everyone has the potential to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, creatively and spiritually.

Advocacy - To represent the rights or needs of self or others, for, or with them.

Responsiveness to Persons Served Needs - Our resources and actions are directed to the individuals we support.

Self-Determination - An individual makes life choices, free from the influence of others.

Family-Involved - Decisions regarding service for, to, or with an individual invite the family’s support.

Inclusion - We foster opportunities for the people we service to actively participate in their community.

Innovators - We actively envision, anticipate and create.

Community Partnerships & Involvement - We collaborate with others to help further our mission.

Conflict Resolution - We use open and joint processes to resolve problems and/or issues following established policies and procedures.

Economic Objectives

Marketing: VICC communicates through the web site, email, brochures, social networking sites, handbooks, public presentations, funding agencies' reports, proposals to funding agencies, and public media. VICC is committed to transparency and honesty about our structure, mission, policies, and activities. Marketing and promotional activities are employed with integrity and are a true representation of the services that VICC delivers.

Financial Practices: All financial practices of VICC are handled in accordance with the applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws. VICC employs commonly accepted and sound financial management practices. Financial transactions adhere to auditing procedures including a trail of evidence for all expenditures. VICC monitors financial transactions and prepares financial information to meet funding and CARF requirements.

Purchasing: VICC purchases a significant amount of goods and services each year. Suppliers are reviewed for:

- best value for money (price, quality, availability, functionality, ongoing service)
- environmental aspects over the life cycle of the product or service
- social aspects (eg. ethical source, supports people with disabilities, local jobs)

Reporting: VICC complies with relevant governance (e.g. WorkSafe BC), financial accounting, and program reporting requirements.

Service Delivery: In the delivery of services, VICC is guided by funding body policies, applicable laws and regulations and VICC policies and procedures. VICC strives to ensure that staff, operations, and service delivery are aligned to provide an individualized person-centered response to individuals, families, and businesses involved with VICC.

When contracts are available, VICC management discuss these opportunities to assess the viability of providing additional service. As VICC operates as a social business, effectiveness and efficiency of operations are higher priority than monetary growth.

Social Objectives

VICC operates with a social mission to promote the social worth of people living with a DiverseAbility. Language and attitude is of the utmost importance in supporting this mission. Advocacy is consistent with our mission, grounded in our work, and advances the interest of our persons served (see PSA 6.02). VICC seeks to address ableism in all forms and advocates for change on a local, regional, provincial and national level by providing support to, or direct involvement with, campaigns that seek to address ableism.

VICC encourages positive interaction with its surrounding community in a way that fosters good, reciprocal relations. For instance, volunteering and in-kind support for non-profit groups and organizations is promoted and supported throughout the organization. VICC also strives to maintain a positive presence in the residential neighborhoods by friendly interactions with neighbors, maintaining low noise levels and keeping the residences' exterior and yard neat and tidy.

VICC supports local businesses that hire employees living with a disability. VICC will continue its involvement with local, regional, and provincial initiatives that support and encourage diversity hiring practices.

Environmental Objectives

VICC wants to promote 'green issues' wherever possible and take a responsible approach as world citizens. Green issues relate to discussions and actions in sustainability, pollution and the environment in general. We encourage thinking about green issues, and want to find ways to become a 'greener' organization.

Recycling (Also see FR 3.03 Recycling)

- At all worksites, use of recycling bins for collection by the city curbside recycling program is mandatory.
- Each workplace has a recycling area for storing papers, cardboard, plastics, glass, metals with other recyclables where possible (e.g. electronics and compostable items).
- VICC has a confidential shredding service at the office for papers. Shredded paper is then recycled.
- Any items not permitted in the city curbside recycling bins (e.g. glass) should be taken to the recycling facilities in town.
- Each team has an agreement, written in team files, about where money from returnable items goes (those with a deposit being paid on purchase) when they are cashed in.
- No electronics should be sent for recycling without the item being taken off the inventory, and without the prior knowledge of a Director.
- Safety for recycling must be considered and any risks reduced. For example, glass, heavy objects, or dirty materials could cause a hazard and may need alternative planning.
- Recycling must be taken to the relevant facility or disposed of on a regular basis so that it does not pile up and cause a hazard or look unsightly.

Energy Conservation (Also see FR 3.01 Green Issues)

- Lights must be turned off in vacant rooms to conserve energy.
- Heating and cooling systems should be used at a level appropriate to the service area. Heating should be no higher than 20 degrees Celsius, and cooling should be no lower than 16 degrees Celsius.
- Where possible, vehicle trips should be planned and made in a circular direction to reduce mileage.
- Public transportation should be used where possible for person served and situation.

Environmental buying policy and waste reduction (Also see FR 3.02 Buying practices, including environmental and purposeful considerations)

- Green or earth friendly cleaning products should be used where appropriate.
- To reduce waste, purchasers are encouraged to buy appropriate quantities. Bulk buying of items is encouraged, along with appropriate coordination of menus. Bulk items are to be shared by service areas where appropriate.
- We encourage buying of local produce is encouraged if cost effective during the growing seasons.
- VICC promotes 'purposeful purchasing', which encourages the buyer to think local. Not only is this a green issue, it also aims to promote local businesses that support or are involved with VICC and the Community Employment Services.
- We aim to balance financial responsibility and green issues.

Business Operations

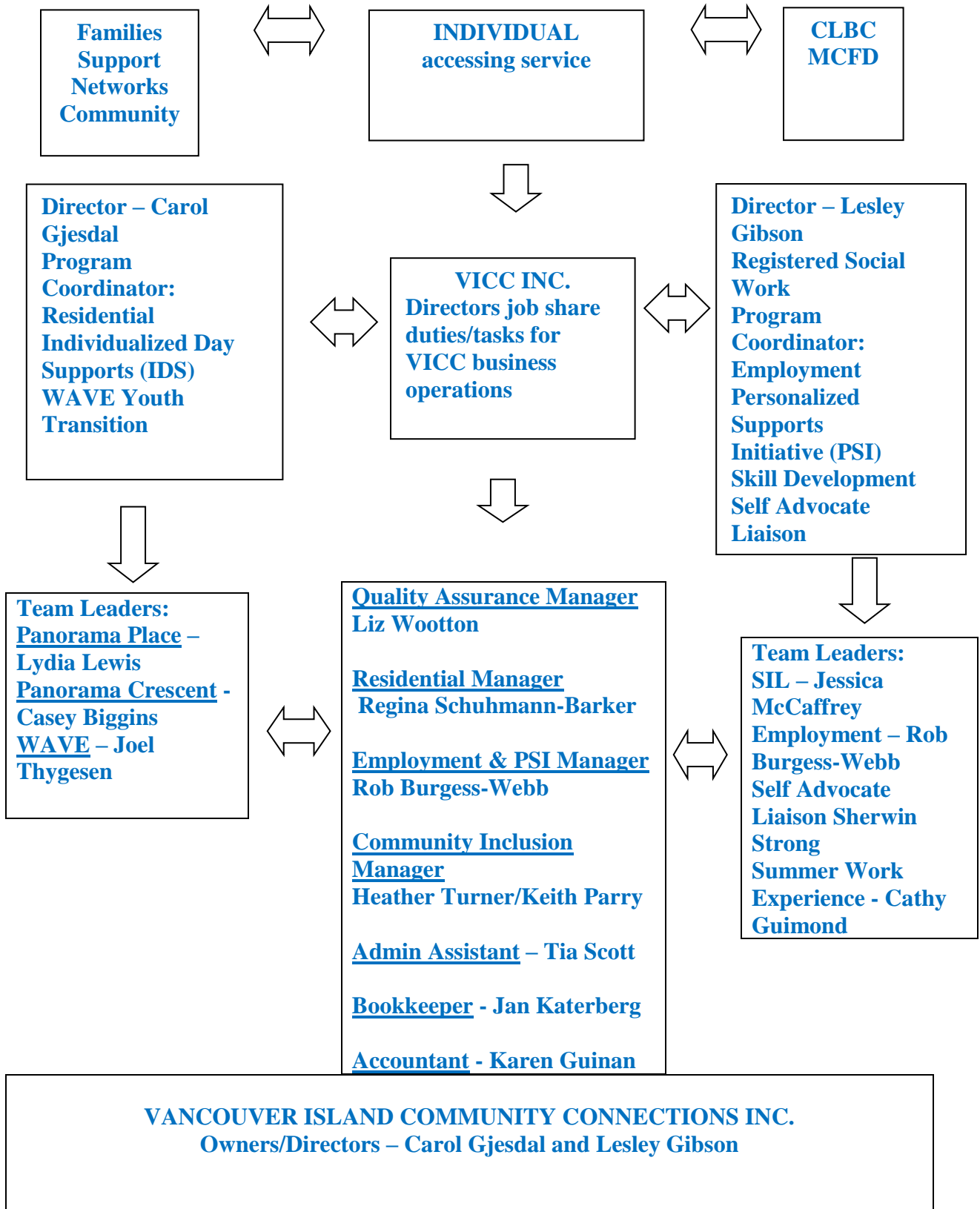
Vancouver Island Community Connections Inc.'s administration office is located at #4 – 1351 McPhee Ave., Courtenay, BC. This location is home to the WAVE program and Individualized Support Services. Generally, the office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays. To reach this office phone 250-338-7201 or email at vanislcc@yahoo.ca

Vancouver Island Community Connections Inc.'s has a secondary service location at 100B 2270 Cliffe Ave., Courtenay, BC. This location holds Self-Advocate Liaison Project, BEST Employment Services (formerly the Community Employment Service), Personalized Supports Initiative, Skill Development, and Summer Work Experience. As staff are in and out of this location, and services are offered when people served require the services, there are no set regular office hours. People need to phone 250-871-7201 or email viccemployment@gmail.com to make an appointment to meet staff working from the Cliffe location.

The following organizational chart shows VICC's leadership structure. The roles and responsibilities for each level of leadership is outlined in corresponding job descriptions and employee contracts.

VICC Directors have formed a business partnership where they job share the responsibility of owning and operating a business. However, each Director brings to the partnership specific skills and interests that have influenced their decision to work and manage in specific areas of the service. In addition, each Director is a program manager for specific services.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – VANCOUVER ISLAND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS INC.



Conditions of Employment

All employees must continuously and according to the timelines established provide current documentation of any licenses, certificates, registrations and VICC documents required of them as a condition of employment. A complete list of the documents required is in the Personnel File Checklist (SP 1.17B) and in the job description for the position you have been hired for. VICC will also organize specialized training for employees at certain worksites, which you are required to complete before beginning work or working alone with person served.

Personnel Records

VICC collects and maintains complete files for each of its present and former employees. The files are kept up to date and current at all times. Files are stored securely in a location that denies unauthorized access at all times and will not be removed from the office in which they are stored, to ensure your details are kept safe. Personnel files are kept for seven (7) years after you leave employment at VICC. The content of all files is confidential and only the following persons are authorized to examine them:

- The employee has access to his / her own file.
- Designated management, accounting and clerical staff.

Employees are responsible for submitting in writing to a Director any changes in their status including name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents and education credits earned outside of VICC training. Employees are also responsible to inform a Director of any changes that affect their criminal record, driving status or driver's abstract.

Staff Contact Information

All VICC staff will keep up to date and provide VICC management with a telephone number, cell number, e-mail address and mailing address where you can be contacted as needed to meet operational requirements for quality service delivery (SP 1.17C)

You will be asked for this contact information at the time of hire, and must notify your supervisor of any change to your contact information.

This will ensure that VICC can get a response from the employee with 24 hours of contact unless otherwise notified that the employee is unavailable for work.

Recruitment and Hiring

Directors receive input from Managers on an on-going basis when reviewing and determining staffing requirements. When hiring for a position, VICC will use a standardized scoring system (SP 1.05A). Requirements for positions are outlined on the job descriptions (SP 1.03A-P) and are also based on ‘the right fit’ with the person served. Verification of credentials and reference checks (SP 1.06) will be completed. Employees will be paid for orientation; the appropriate orientation checklist (SP 1.15A-C) will be used and the duration determined by the supervisor or his/her designate. New employees will also be assessed for any conflict of interest, and a conflict of interest form (SP 1.18A) is completed. For existing staff, when a conflict of interest arises, this form is updated.

Job Postings and Promotions

When a position becomes available, VICC will advertise for the position and survey existing staff if they are interested in additional hours or know of a suitable candidate for the position. As mentioned above, selections for positions are based on the right fit for the person served.

When a promotional opportunity becomes available, VICC will advertise the position as well as inform VICC management for surveying existing staff for possible candidates. Selection decisions are based on the requirements of the position, and candidates are assessed on qualifications, ability to do the job and other factors deemed relevant. Upon acceptance of the position, the name of the successful candidate is communicated to staff and, if applicable, to the unsuccessful internal candidates.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions describe the essential functions of the position and include such information as: reporting relationships, education and experience requirements, specific and personal qualifications required and key duties and responsibilities. You will receive a copy of your job description at the time of hire.

The job description is reviewed annually with the employee and the immediate supervisor at the time of the performance review.

Exit Interviews

Employees leaving VICC will be interviewed (SP 5.01) by VICC management before leaving our employment. This information will be used to help guide VICC’s hiring and retention practices and assist the organization to develop policies and practices that meet our objectives.

Hours of Work

Schedule

You should submit your availability for shifts to your team leader by the 15th of each month (on form 2.06A). Schedules will be available by the 25th of the month.

Employees have a duty to the persons served with a level of continuity. For that reason, staff members who request shift changes to accommodate other employment opportunities will be considered less favourably than other types of request.

Giving up, Swapping or Changing of Shifts

You may exchange shifts if necessary but need to be aware that these changes could have an effect on the person served. *All shift changes must be approved by a VICC Director before the changed shift is worked* and at least 24 hours before the start of the changed shift.

It is your responsibility to contact the Director to inform them of your intent to swap a shift, and to contact other colleagues to cover your shift, bearing in mind:

- a. The shift must be offered to a regular member of staff
- b. The shift offered will be presented to cover the regular activities
- c. The swap or exchange will not result in overtime.

If you cannot organize the swap yourself, you must contact your team leader or director at the earliest opportunity. Please note that the more notice you give of the need to swap, the greater the chances of finding alternative cover for the shift.

Where shifts have been swapped, reference must be made on the schedule and in the communication books, as wages are based on this information.

Abuse of this flexibility may result in the removal of this privilege.

Also see SP 2.06 Shifts-Booking, Swapping, changing or giving up shifts

Casual Employment

The use of casual employees is vital to the success of VICC and its programs. Casual staff will be hired to provide coverage for regular staff when they are unavailable for their regular shift or to contribute to the organization for other reasons approved by the employer. Casual staff will meet the requirements of the employer with regards to availability, assignments, orientation and scheduling, and will agree to be available for a minimum amount of shifts each pay period.

Casual Call In Procedure

All casual employees must submit availability for shifts to their team leader or the VICC office by the 15th of each month (on form SP 2.06A) for the following month. VICC recognizes that you may have other employers who offer you shifts which could result in a change to your availability – *any changes to the availability you stated on your form 2.06A must be reported to the VICC office for the scheduler so that your availability can be kept current.*

First calls of work will go to part-time employees who:

- a. Have requested in writing to be on the casual list
- b. Possess the necessary qualifications for that shift
- c. As they fit in a continuous manner with their permanent hours, to the maximum allowable hours.

Subsequent calls will go to casual employees with the organization who are listed by:

- a. Areas of training completed
- b. Worksites
- c. Best fit for supported individuals
- d. Qualifications

Refusals/Unavailability

- You must keep VICC management informed of when you are working outside of the organization as stated above – if you have not informed management of unavailability and you are called in to work, this will be considered a refusal.
- Casual employees who refuse offers of work on three (3) consecutive occasions will be moved to the bottom of the call-in list.
- When the call-in scheduler texts or calls and there is no answer/response, or an answering machine picks up, this will not immediately constitute a refusal, however, the call-in scheduler will continue working through the list until the shift is filled. It is to your advantage to use a cell phone to increase the likelihood of you being reached first time.
- You are expected to respond to call-in requests, even if you are unable to take the shift. You should call or text back as soon as you pick up a message, to acknowledge the message.
- Turning down work due to illness will not constitute a refusal. However, you are encouraged to inform management if you anticipate being unavailable for work due to illness. A doctor's note is required for illnesses of more than 3 days.

Shift Cancellations

- When you are scheduled to work and then circumstances dictate that you are no longer required, notice of cancellation will be given at the earliest possible time, and as per labour standards.

Absence

If you are unable to attend work for a valid reason (e.g. sickness), you must give as much notice as possible to your supervisor or a Director, so that coverage can be arranged.

It is important that you consider yourself as a positive role model in sickness management for people served, and behave accordingly. It is important to recognize when a temporary sickness could have a detrimental and contagious effect on others, especially to those who are susceptible to illness.

If you need to take time off for sickness, you should check in with your supervisor or a Director on a daily basis to confirm your absence. For three or more days of sickness absence, you must provide a doctor's note.

If you fail to report for two consecutive days without notifying your supervisor, and cannot give an acceptable reason for the absence, you will be considered as having abandoned your employment.

Sickness pay is not offered unless expressly stated in your contract.

Also see SP 2.04 Leave of Absence, Vacation, Jury Duty and Return to Work

Lateness

You are expected to be punctual, and to work your identified shift as scheduled from the start to the finish times.

If you are going to be late for a shift, you should call your supervisor immediately, and out of consideration also call your colleague to let them know.

Some contracts have a fifteen minute handover time built into the schedule so that person served information can be transferred. This handover time must be worked by both members of staff in its entirety. Any late arrival or early finish could be considered as late or absent.

Special notes for Residential Services: You must not leave a person served alone in the house if a colleague is late for work, unless this is part of their care plan. This is for the continued care and safety of the people we provide care for. If you are late for work and your colleague has left from a house where it is part of a care plan that a person served can be left alone, you must record the late start and inform your supervisor.

Also see SP 2.08 Lateness and Absenteeism

Breaks

Breaks are given according to BC Employment Standards. Employees will not be required to work more than 5 hours in a row without a 30 minute meal break; exception to this is one-to-one and residential workers where persons served cannot be left alone. Employees can eat their meals with the person served. Meal breaks are not paid unless you are required to work or be available for work during this break.

Overtime

Overtime is time over and above regular full-time shifts. Full time is generally considered to be 40 hours worked within a week (Sunday to Saturday). However, VICC has an Averaging Agreement in place, which means that hours are averaged over two, three or four weeks (as detailed in your agreement). This means that during some weeks, you may work more than 40 hours, but in a subsequent week may work fewer than 40 hours, giving an average that does not result in overtime being paid.

- If shifts are available and can only be carried out by a member of staff who is at full time within a schedule then they will be asked to work and then take time off at a later date.
- Overtime payment or paid time plus time in lieu may be authorized by a Director under some circumstances to fulfil the needs of the service, but with budgetary considerations. Team leaders may only authorize overtime with permission from a Director.
- Residential services will have longer shifts, such as a live-in home support shift, which meets labour standards and does not qualify for overtime pay.
- Overtime will not be paid if it is a result of a switched shift that has not been approved by a Director.

Also see SP 2.07 Overtime

Time/attendance records

Attendance records are kept by team leaders and managers to track attendance, lateness and absences.

Attendance, tardiness and absenteeism are considered as criteria in staff appraisals. Continued tardiness and absenteeism could result in disciplinary measures being taken.

Probationary period

Each newly appointed member of staff will be expected to complete a probationary period at the start of their employment. A probationary period is 450 regular hours for a full time position and 450 regular hours (or less as deemed appropriate by a Director) for a part time position.

A review will be conducted at the end of this probationary period. A successful probation is deemed as one where the candidate has proven their suitability for the position and fit with the organization including the following:

- 450 regular hours (does not include overnight hours, overtime hours, statutory hours)
- all paperwork for personnel file is complete and handed into the office
- an “Intro Day” has been completed
- staff development training is up-to-date
- monthly drills are up-to-date
- staff probation review completed

In some cases, a probationary period may be extended. In the event of an extension of probation the letter SP 1.10B will be issued explaining reasons for extension, conditions and the support areas needed.

A probation period can be curtailed, and job offer revoked, at any time at the discretion of the Directors if it is felt that the 'fit' is not right for the service or there has been a serious breach of policies. If employment is terminated, you will be provided reasons for the termination with relevant backup information.

Also see SP 1.10 Probation period

Training and Professional Development

VICC provides training and professional development opportunities to all employees in a variety of formats both in-house and externally, which include:

- certificate programs
- workshops
- conferences
- presentations
- videos
- written material

Directors review and update a training plan on a regular basis which addresses VICC's training needs. This plan includes but is not limited to health and safety, planning, documentation, medication administration, and sensitivity to cultural diversity. The training plan reflects input from performance reviews, the staff satisfaction survey and from VICC management.

Employees will submit verification of external training completed for their personnel files. All internal training is recorded.

If VICC Directors request an employee to take professional development training at a *designated date, time and place* (excludes First Aid, Food Safe, and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention as these are a requirement of employment; see below), the cost of the training, travel, and time to attend training is paid by VICC.

Employees are required to maintain their First Aid, Food Safe, and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention certificates and training at their own cost.

As in most professions, there is an expectation that employees keep up-to-date with best practice. At each worksite, you will find the materials and information that employees need to review as a requirement of continued employment with VICC and for eligibility for any advancement within VICC. The information available for review can be completed in short timeframes (5 to 15 minutes) to maximize opportunities for you to complete this training while at work. Time spent reviewing information while not on the job is not paid for.

Performance Reviews

Formal Employee Performance Evaluations will take place at the end of the Probationary Period, and then annually, beginning 12 months after employment first began at VICC.

In addition, staff development sessions may take place at any time, as needed. You may request a staff development session at any time during your employment, and you are encouraged to communicate regularly with your supervisor throughout the year.

Evaluations are a two-way process, including feedback from your supervisor and with input from you. They are an important part of your development as a member of the team at VICC.

The evaluation will be based on how you perform your job duties, assessed through observation and documentation. You will have an opportunity to discuss goals you would like to achieve, and address any areas for improvement, as well as identify strengths and areas of excellence.

Also See SP 2.01 Staff Development

Corrective Counselling or Instruction

Corrective counselling provides an opportunity to review the performance standards, job description and/or policy of the organization to ensure that you understand and are aware of the expectations, and are provided with the necessary support and/or information to achieve the required standards. It is intended to offer you an opportunity to correct the behaviour.

When VICC management is concerned that an employee does not understand or is not aware of the standards of the organization the supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss their concerns and determine a plan of action that will support the employee to make the necessary improvements. A letter outlining the appropriate standards, policies and expectations will follow the meeting.

Also see SP 4.06 Disciplinary Proceedings

Severance & Notification of Termination

VICC works in accordance with the BC Employment Standards Act. The Act does not remove our right to terminate an employee but requires adherence to the Act by giving working notice or compensation according to length of service.

No notice or compensation is required if:

- The employee has not completed three consecutive months of employment
- The employee quits or retires
- The employee is dismissed for Just Cause (see below)
- The employee works on an on-call basis doing temporary assignments which he or she can accept or reject
- The employee is employed for a definite term
- The employee is hired for specific work to be completed in 12 months or less
- It is impossible to perform the work because of some unforeseeable event or circumstance (other than bankruptcy, receivership or insolvency)
- The employee refuses reasonable alternative employment

Compensation Eligibility: An employee who is terminated may be eligible for compensation based on the following formula:

- After 3 consecutive months of employment – one week's pay.
- After 12 consecutive months of employment – two weeks' pay.
- After 3 consecutive years – three weeks' pay, plus one week's pay for each additional year of employment to a maximum of eight weeks.

No compensation is required if an employee is given advance written notice of termination equal to the number of weeks for which the employee is eligible. This notice will be given in writing.

An employee can also be given a combination of written notice and compensation equal to the number of week of pay for which the employee is eligible.

An employee who voluntarily quits his or her employment is not entitled to written notice of termination or compensation for length of service. If an employee does give notice, the employer may accept or refuse the notice. If the employer refuses the notice, or terminates the employee during the notice period, the employer must pay compensation equal to the lesser of:

- The remaining amount of notice the employee has given; or
- The employee's statutory entitlement under the Act.

Temporary Layoff

A layoff constitutes termination of employment unless the possibility of temporary layoff:

- Is expressly provided for in the contract of employment
- Is implied by well-known industry-wide practice
- Is agreed to by the employee.

Where temporary layoff is part of your terms and conditions of employment, the Act limits it to:

- A layoff of up to 13 weeks in a period of 20 weeks, or
- A period of time in which an employee covered by a collective agreement has the right to be recalled.

Just Cause

An employer does not have to give written notice or compensation for length of service to an employee who is dismissed for Just Cause.

Serious infractions such as theft, fraud, dishonesty, assault or harassment of co-workers or persons served, breach of company rules or practices, conflict of interest or willful misconduct may require only one provable incident to justify dismissal without written notice or compensation for length of service.

Whether a single act of misconduct constitutes just cause is considered on a case-by-case basis. One consideration may be whether it can be said that the employee behaved in a manner inconsistent with the continuation of employment.

Disciplinary Action

Progressive discipline

Progressive discipline is a gradual increase of responses to unacceptable staff behaviour. VICC uses a system of progressive discipline with the goal of correcting unacceptable behaviour by working with the employee to resolve the problem.

The circumstances surrounding the incident or problem will determine where the process begins. In cases of serious misconduct, VICC may bypass the usual steps of progressive discipline. For example, in cases such as person served abuse or theft, the action taken will be termination. Any staff that has knowledge of an incident of suspected abuse has the responsibility to report such an incident immediately to their team leader and a Director, and failure to report this will result in disciplinary action.

There are five steps to progressive discipline:

1. **Verbal Warning** – a verbal warning will be given in private to avoid public humiliation for the employee, unless giving the verbal warning in public is unavoidable if the situation requires immediate attention to safeguard the employee, other employees, the person served or property. A verbal warning includes documentation detailing the incident and timelines for improvement, and this is held on the employee file. A copy is given to the employee.
2. **Written Warning** – When the misconduct is of a more serious nature, or if a verbal warning has been ineffective, a written reprimand will be given.
3. **Probation** – An employee may be placed on probation, only working with direct supervision.
4. **Suspension** – An employee may be suspended, without prejudice, for a number of hours or days either for misconduct or pending the outcome of an investigation.
5. **Termination** – An employee may be fired either for repeated misconduct or for a serious offence such as person served abuse or theft.

Serious misconduct (e.g. person served abuse, endangerment, and theft) will result in termination and may also include police involvement and possible criminal charges. VICC employees can contact BC Labour Standards if they think that termination is unjust.

Recording disciplinary action

All disciplinary action will be documented, and copies kept on the employee's file.

Also see SP 4.06 Disciplinary Proceedings

Compensation

Rate of Pay

Hourly rates of pay are determined through contracts with CLBC. Each service area has different rates of pay as outlined in the funding guide template for a particular service area. Overnight hours, including time-frames, are also determined by CLBC and the hourly rate of pay for overnight hours is at least minimum wage. VICC has a rate scale within each contract area and new employees will have their pay rate identified in their hiring letter and in their probationary letter.

Raises are determined by the provincial government and CLBC will inform contractors of any pay increases. If a rate of pay increase is available, VICC will increase staff wages when VICC receives the funding increase from CLBC. The waiting period for CLBC increases has been up to six months; however, staff will receive retroactive pay from time the increase was to take place until the time that VICC actually receives the funds.

Pay Procedures

- VICC has a biweekly pay period.
- Each pay period, you will receive a cheque and a paystub. It is your responsibility to review your paystub when you receive it. Any discrepancies should be reported to a team leader, manager or director as soon as possible. If pay is owed, it will be paid at the following pay period, unless the error is the fault of VICC.
- You will be paid for the hours worked in the previous schedule. Pay period schedules and pay period dates for cheque issue can be requested from your team leader.
- Hourly staff record their hours on a timesheet.
- You are responsible for your own timesheet. You should complete and check your timesheet, including the name of the worksite, as well as printing and signing your name in the designated area on the timesheet. Timesheets must be ready for delivery to the office by the Monday following the last day in a pay period.
- Failure to complete timesheets properly or on time is cause for disciplinary action.
- Minimum hours: If you are scheduled for eight hours of work or less and you report for work (arrive at the physical place of work), and work stops for a reason beyond VICC's control, you will be paid for two hours of work. If scheduled for more than eight hours, you will be paid for four hours. Work can be cancelled any time up until the scheduled start time without being paid the two or four hours.
- Where you report for work but are unfit for work (e.g. you are sick and at the Director's discretion is sent home), or you are not in compliance with WorkSafe BC health and safety regulations, you will be sent home and will not receive pay for any hours missed, only for time actually worked.
- Your Year to Date (YTD) amounts will be available on your paystub.
- Mileage/travel claims are recorded on your timesheet and will be processed at the end of each month and paid on a separate cheque.

Also see SP 2.03 Salaries and wages

Deductions

To calculate your gross pay, your hourly rate (as per your employment contract) is multiplied by the number of hours you have worked (or declared, or agreed); this is your 'regular pay'. Gross pay will include all paid hours including regular, overtime, statutory holiday, sick pay, and training.

- *Mandatory deductions EI, CPP, Income Tax:* Deductions for CPP (Canada Pension Plan), EI (Employment Insurance) and Income Tax are calculated on your gross pay. Income tax is also calculated according to your claims on the TD1 and TD1 BC.
- Mileage/travel claims are not taxed.
- Employee portion of benefits will be deducted from gross pay, the portion paid by VICC is a taxable benefit.

Benefits

VICC provides a benefits program for full-time employees (32.5 hrs per week) through the Chamber of Commerce Group Insurance Plan, which includes basic dental and extended health. After three months of full-time employment, employees are required to apply for benefits, or bring in a letter stating that they are covered under a similar plan. VICC pays 75% of the monthly cost for benefits through the Chamber plan. VICC will keep on hand the information and forms necessary to ensure that employees are able to access their benefits package. Where required employees must submit their receipts according to the requirements of the insurer.

All employees can access counselling services through the Upper Island Counselling Services. VICC pays the monthly fee and counselling is free to employees. This benefit is completely confidential as VICC does not receive any notification of employee involvement. Information for accessing this benefit is posted at each worksite, and can also be found at www.uics.ca

Vacation & Leave

VICC recognizes the importance of vacation time for rest, recreation and personal activities. You are encouraged to plan your vacation with your manager well in advance of the time you wish to take off, and you must ensure you follow the Vacation Approval Process.

Also see SP 2.04 Leave of Absence, Vacation, Jury Duty and Return to Work

Annual vacation allowance

Entitlement to annual vacation:

- 2 weeks after 12 *consecutive* months of employment
- 3 weeks after 5 *consecutive* years of employment

An employee who is entitled to annual vacation can take it in periods of one or more weeks. An annual vacation is exclusive of statutory holidays that an employee is entitled to.

Vacation pay accrues at the rate of 4% during the first five years of employment, and at 6% after 5 years. Vacation pay will be paid out on each paycheque, unless you request to have it 'banked' and paid out when you take vacation leave.

Vacation Approval Process

Vacation requests (form SP 2.04A) must be received by VICC management by March 31st each year for the following period April 1st to March 31st. The sooner the vacation request is in, the more likely the request will be approved.

Approval for all vacations are contingent upon operational requirements. For example, only one full-time staff in each service area can be on vacation at a time. Operational requirements must be met to ensure the health and well-being of the individuals that we serve.

Approval for all vacations will be made in accordance with the Employment Standards Act of B.C., and WorkSafe BC. For example, new staff must work twelve *consecutive* months before taking vacation time, and all employees must take their allowed vacation time.

Statutory Holidays

VICC will identify Statutory Holidays at the beginning of a new year, or earlier, so that staff members are aware of these.

Employees will be paid 1.5 times their hourly rate if they are required to work on a Stat day.

Employees who work fifteen out of thirty days previous to the Stat day will be entitled to an average day's pay for stat pay, paid at their normal rate. Staff members who work on a stat day and are also entitled to stat pay can be compensated by pay or have another day off with pay.

Most stat days will be worked as the regular schedule dictates. Leave and swapping of shifts is permitted if authorized by supervisor or a Director.

Also see SP 2.05 Statutory Holiday

Paid Sick leave

Full time, permanent employees, are eligible for up to three paid sick days per calendar year. These days accrue during the year – first paid sick day available after four consecutive months of work, second sick day after eight, and third by the end of the twelve month period. Unused days cannot be 'rolled over' into the following year.

To claim pay for sick leave, reporting procedures must be correctly followed, checking in each day with your supervisor or a Director to report your absence.

Leave Without Pay

All requests must be in writing, on form SP 2.04A VICC Leave & Vacation Request (SP 2.04A), and submitted to the Directors' office. VICC management review all leave of absence requests and approves or denies the request based on operational requirements and according to B.C. Labour Standards.

All leaves must meet operational requirements. A replacement staff must be available for the dates requested. If a replacement is not available and the application is otherwise approved, the applicant may be requested to alter the dates to a more convenient period or might be called to return to work.

Also see SP 2.04 Leave of Absence, Vacation, Jury Duty and Return to Work

Note: Please refer to Appendix 1 of this handbook for more information on the types of leaves of absence allowed by BC Labour Standards.

Return to Work Procedures

VICC is a compassionate employer and the welfare of staff members is of paramount importance. After a lengthy absence, it is considered good practice for an employee to meet with a Director or supervisor before they return to work or on their first day back, to discuss their health and welfare and update them on any work related issues. The necessity of a Return-to-Work meeting will depend upon the circumstances specific to the employee, time of absence, and work areas and will be at the Directors' discretion.

The employee may be asked to provide a medical note to support their claim of good health for a return to work; the intended return to work may be suspended if more time is needed to verify the medical note.

The employee will be asked if VICC can enhance the return to work for them with any aids, adaptations or considerations. The Directors will consider, though may not be able to honour, requests.

Also see SP 2.04 Leave of Absence, Vacation, Jury Duty and Return to Work

New Worker Safety Orientation (WCB)

If this is your first ever job, you will need to complete a New Worker Safety Orientation upon hire.

What to do in case of an accident

In case of an accident, ensure that sufficient first aid is administered by the person injured or by a first aider.

If medical attention is required at a walk-in clinic, doctor or hospital emergency, contact a Director to arrange cover, care for the person served, and transportation.

WorkSafeBC reporting process

It is important that the correct procedure is followed for WorkSafeBC reporting.

If you have attended a healthcare facility such as walk-in clinic, doctor or hospital, they will ask if this was an accident at work, and they will start the appropriate paperwork (*WorkSafeBC Form 6a Worker's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to Employer*). You should ask for a copy of this information to submit to a Director, so they can complete their necessary paperwork.

If you did not attend a healthcare facility, you will complete a *WorkSafeBC Form 6a Worker's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to Employer* yourself. Make a copy for yourself and give a copy to a Director.

Directors will then complete and file *WorkSafeBC Form 7 Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease*. They file a copy in your employee file and the VICC Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OH&S) files.

The report will be reviewed by the VICC OH&S Committee and they will discuss any concerns that need addressing.

Also see ESR 1.04

Health and Safety Committee ESR1.02

The Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee was set up to promote health and safety within the service, through conversation, discussion, and action that will improve healthy and safe living and working environments.

The committee is made up of at least one representative from each service area, and is coordinated by one of the Directors. If you are interested to join the committee, you should contact a Director.

The committee meets once a month and makes recommendations on health and safety policies and practices. Each member is delegated an area of responsibility. The committee will also conduct inspections at places of employment, and identify potential dangers, and then make recommendations to control hazards.

The committee is responsible for dealing with any complaints regarding health and safety, and maintaining records of those complaints and the resolutions reached.

The committee is also responsible for keeping up to date with WorkSafeBC information, and liaising with WorkSafeBC where necessary.

Personal Conduct

Dress Code

Your appearance should be clean, appropriate, safe, and reflect appropriate standards of decency, utility, health and safety.

- The dress code is casual, but all staff should wear clean and safe clothes (e.g. WorkSafeBC appropriate shoes, with closed toes), suitable for the performed work and which is non-offensive to others on the grounds of being revealing or containing potentially offensive slogans or images.
- Footwear must meet WorkSafeBC standards. This includes in a residential setting. If the person served requests that outdoor footwear should not be worn inside their home by staff, then a safe and practical alternative should be sought (e.g. runners worn only indoors).
- If you choose not to wear safe shoes, or to wear no shoes at all, then you do so at their own risk and VICC accepts no responsibility for injuries incurred.
- Secure long hair off the shoulders:
 - when preparing food or serving meals
 - when providing direct care
 - when handling machinery with moving parts
 - where a person served has a history of grabbing long hair
- Rings with stones or crevices, bracelets, and wrist watches must be removed when providing direct care or handling food.
- Large loop or dangling earrings may not be worn. Earlobe stretches and face jewellery are not recommended in some worksites. Please ask Directors for clarification on this point if required.
- Dangling and long chains, necklaces and other neckwear that could be grabbed by a person served or trapped in machinery should not be worn, or at least not on display.
- Employees providing direct care or handling food must keep fingernails short and clean, and must adhere to hand washing policy ESR 2.01 as well as wearing gloves.
- In some cases, when VICC is working or dealing with an outside agency, the outside agency's dress code policy may take precedence over VICC's policy. For example, some places of employment where persons served are job supported do not allow visual body piercings. Where this is the case, you will be expected to adhere to the outside agency's dress code policy.

- Violations of the dress code policy may be raised during a staff development session or could be cause for disciplinary proceedings.
- VICC accepts no blame for the loss of personal effects, including jewellery.

Also See ESR 2.08 Work Apparel and clothes

Customer Relations

All employees are expected to carry out their duties with integrity, impartiality and equality of service. The use of abusive language, showing disrespect, physical aggression or engaging in sexual or other forms of personal harassment will not be permitted. All persons served, family, stakeholders and colleagues are acknowledged and greeted in a friendly manner.

Staff are expected to ‘work’ when they are being paid and to set an example for persons served of workplace expectations. This means cell phone and computer use is only for work related tasks. Visiting among staff is kept to a minimum so as not to distract from the attention to persons served. Staff will keep their worksite clean and can support persons served to assist.

Also see SP 1.01 VICC Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Values and Ethics, SP 1.16 Staff Conduct, Behaviour, and Ethics, SP 4.03 Harassment

Personal Visits and Communication

Family and friends of persons served are encouraged and supported to visit. Each service area will have procedure for visits and communication.

Smoking

VICC promotes a smoke-free environment. All VICC premises and vehicles are non-smoking areas.

Smoking may only take place outside the buildings and at least 3 metres from a doorway. Additional breaks are not given for smoking, and time spent smoking must not diminish the time spent with a person served or for the service. This matter may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

When in the community and accompanying people served, staff will promote a smoke-free environment. Staff will select non-smoking areas when supporting individuals who are unable to communicate their preference.

Smoking is not permitted in any vehicles when transporting person served. This includes personal vehicles used for work purposes. If a personal vehicle has been used for smoking off duty or before a shift, a person served has the right to refuse entry to that

particular vehicle at any time. The supporting member of staff should be respectful of this request and seek alternatives.

In accordance with WorkSafeBC, staff members have the right to refuse to enter a building where smoking is taking place. If you refuse to enter, you must immediately notify your supervisor or a Director of your inability to perform your duties.

People who receive support have the right to smoke. It would be beneficial for them to receive education on this matter. If they still express their right and interest in smoking then they should be encouraged to go out of the building or vehicle and abide by the same conditions as staff members.

Cigarettes should be extinguished fully after use and disposed of in an appropriate container. Smoking areas must be kept clean and tidy by the smokers who use them. This is not the responsibility of non-smokers.

Also see SP 2.26 Smoking

Use of Drugs and Alcohol

VICC employees will not work under the influence of alcohol or substances, or when their ability to work is affected by alcohol, drugs or other substances including prescription drugs. Generally, if you would be considered impaired for driving by RCMP, you would also be considered impaired for work. If your condition is sufficient to place the person served or other staff at risk, you may be subject to immediate dismissal. Staff members should not smell of alcohol or drugs during work time. Any employee reporting for duty under the influence of alcohol, drugs, prohibited substances or prescription drugs will not be permitted to remain on the premises.

Alcohol or prohibited drugs are not to be consumed on, or brought onto, VICC managed premises. Storage, possession or consumption of alcohol or other drugs on the premises for personal use is prohibited.

Substandard performance due to alcohol or drug use will not be tolerated. The view of VICC on alcoholism and drug dependency is that problem drinking, alcoholism, drug misuse or abuse requires treatment. Referrals will be given to employees to appropriate treatment resources. The employee is responsible to seek treatment at the earliest possible stage. When the employee does not voluntarily seek treatment VICC Directors may require a physician's letter before the employee can return to work, stating that the employee has sought substance misuse treatment.

Also see SP 2.22 Alcohol and substance use and mis-use

Confidentiality/Privacy

All matters and information related to a person served, co-workers, the Directors and all business practices of VICC must be treated as confidential. This information may be stored in many formats including, but not limited to, files, communication books, logs, diaries, photographs, videography, medical information, reports, financial material and within a staff member's knowledge of an individual.

You must take care in the holding, and passing on, of personal information. This vigilance must be executed in and out of work situations, including social settings and networks. This also includes gossip.

Before sharing or divulging information to a third party, you should consult with your supervisor. You should be able to explain that you are not at liberty to divulge personal information in situations where confidentiality could be compromised, or where you feel uncomfortable, without rebuke from a third party.

If you feel that confidentiality has been compromised at any time, you should contact a team leader or director at the earliest opportunity, to minimize the spread of this information.

Do not talk to media without express authorization from a Director. Media is defined as a person or an organization, whose role is to broadcast information to the general public by electronic, paper, audio or other methods. (see below – Media and Social Networks).

A breach of confidentiality, intentional or not, could be reason for disciplinary proceedings, up to and including dismissal.

Also see SP 1.14 Confidentiality

Media and Social Networks

For the purposes of this policy, media or social media includes, but is not limited to, online (e.g. blogs, Craigslist), social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and others), TV, radio, newspaper, journalists, reporters and investigators and can be local, national or international.

It is important to realize that once comments have been made or information has been divulged online, it cannot be retrieved.

A VICC Director will review and approve all media releases before staff can contact the media or release information to the media, including posting information on social networks, as part of VICC's risk management plan.

Media and media coverage can be viewed as a positive or a negative experience, depending on the circumstances. VICC expects its staff members to have a basic understanding of the terms of media and the potential of its involvement with the business of VICC.

- The Directors or approved delegates will seek media involvement to promote the business of VICC.
- The Directors will seek a low profile or no comment stance if being pursued by the media and may seek legal representation before engaging with the media.
- Individual employees of VICC are not approved to engage with, or give comment to, the media about persons served, VICC and its business, without express approval of a Director.
- The Directors, or delegate, can issue a press release and this will positively reflect the work of VICC.
- Through employment conditions, VICC employees have already given their consent to appear in Director-approved media material, unless they have requested otherwise. However, before any appearance, Directors will endeavour to ask the staff member if they agree to be included.
- The approval and permission of a person served must be obtained before releasing material containing their image. For some people, permission must be obtained from their legal representative.
- If it comes to the attention of a Director that an employee has used a social network to publicly identify, libel, embarrass, threaten, or jeopardize a person served, their family, legal representation or the Service of VICC (including individual staff members), disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination of employment and legal action.
- Comments, or perceived connection to material linked to negative stories or images regarding the business of VICC will be investigated by the Directors and could result in disciplinary proceedings and legal action.

Also See SP 4.18 Media and Social Networks

Code of Ethics

VICC staff members will exhibit ethical conduct by adhering to VICC’s Staff Code of Ethical Conduct (see below) SP 1.16. Staff behaviour is not limited to work time, and it is important to remember that because the Comox Valley is a ‘small community’ other community members expect a high standard of professionalism “off-the-clock”. Even though a member of staff is not at a work base they still can be observed representing VICC, with or without a person served.

Ethical Code of Conduct

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of Vancouver Island Community Connections, Inc (VICC) that all management, full and part-time employees, contractors, students, volunteers (collectively referred to as “staff”) are expected to perform their designated functions in a manner that reflects the highest standards of ethical behavior. The ethical standards contained in this policy shape the culture and norms of VICC’s administrative operations and service delivery, and staff will be held fully accountable to these standards. In addition to the specific guidelines contained in the policy, professionals are expected to follow the ethical standards required by their specific licensing and certification boards. The Ethical Code of Conduct Policy is to ensure that all employees’ actions reflect a competent, respectful, and professional approach when working with persons served, their families and/or representatives, other providers of services, businesses and interacting within the communities we serve. It is expected that staff will perform their duties in compliance with all federal, provincial, and local regulations in accordance with guidelines set forth in this policy. Violation of guidelines within the Ethical Code of Conduct Policy can lead to disciplinary actions, including termination of employment.

II. PROCEDURES:

A. Professional Conduct:

Staff will respect the rights of our consumers by demonstrating full integration of the guidelines contained in **PSA 1.03 Rights of a Person Served**.

- 1) This includes the right of people served to make autonomous decisions and fully participate in every aspect of the service delivery process.
- 2) VICC employees will provide services in a manner that fully respects the confidentiality of people served, by demonstrating a functional knowledge of confidentiality policies and guidelines.
- 3) VICC employees will be fair and honest in their work. They will not exploit or mislead, and will be faithful to their contractual obligations and their word.
- 4) To prevent and avoid unethical conduct, VICC employees will consult with, refer to, and cooperate with other professionals. VICC employees will clarify their professional roles and obligations and be accountable for upholding professional standards of practice.

B. Personal/Professional Conduct:

- 1) All prior personal relationships between staff and persons entering the organization’s service shall be disclosed by the staff member and subject to review by the appropriate supervisor.

- 2) Staff will limit relationships with persons served to their defined professional roles.
- 3) Staff will not establish ongoing personal or business relationships with people receiving services.
- 4) Staff will conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and moral manner. Staff behaviour is not limited to work time. Even though staff members are not at a work base they may still be observed representing VICC, with or without a person served. Staff members should be aware that because the Comox Valley is a 'small community', other community members expect a high level of professionalism "off-the-clock".
- 5) Sexual relationships between staff and person's served are never appropriate. Sexual relationships include, but are not limited to the following: engaging in any type of sexual activity, flirting, advances and/or propositions of a sexual nature, comments of a sexual nature about an individual's body, clothing, or lewd sexually suggestive comments.
- 6) Staff will not accept gifts of value from a person served, family member, or stakeholder, and cannot accept personal favors or benefits that may reasonably be construed as influencing their conduct.
- 7) Staff will not take, borrow or remove VICC property or personal property not belonging to them from the VICC owned, rented, or leased properties without permission from a Director.
- 8) Staff will not solicit persons served for personal causes including but not limited to; soliciting funds for a personal or community cause, political fundraising, selling candy and cookies for their children, friend's children or other such fundraising item's for the staff's children.
- 9) Staff involved with a persons served clinical care will not serve as a witness of any document for that person.
- 10) Staff shall carry out their duties with integrity, impartiality, and equality of service. The conduct and language of employees in the workplace are to meet acceptable social standards.
- 11) The use of abusive language, showing disrespect, physical aggression or engaging in sexual or other forms of personal harassment will not be permitted.
- 12) Weapons, or implements that are considered as such, are not permitted to be brought into a VICC work site or vehicle by a person served or member of staff.
- 13) Insubordination (the refusal to obey a clearly understood order from someone in authority, whether by verbal refusal or failure to carry out the order, insolent or uncooperative behaviour) is unacceptable employee conduct and will result in disciplinary action.

Also see SP 1.16 Staff Conduct, Behaviour and Ethics

C. Business Practices:

- 1) VICC Directors will ensure that VICC conducts business in an ethical manner and ensure that any business practices that are questionable are thoroughly investigated using the ethical investigation procedures that follow in this policy.
- 2) All financial, purchasing, personnel, facility development and information technology practices shall comply with local, provincial, and federal law and guidelines.
- 3) All employees shall adhere to VICC's Policies and Procedures.

D. Marketing Practices:

- 1) VICC will conduct marketing practices in an honest and factual manner. Marketing materials and practices will in no way mislead the public or misrepresent VICC's abilities to provide services. VICC will not claim any service outcomes unless represented by valid and reliable outcome data and/or research studies.
- 2) VICC will utilize clear and consistent methods of communicating information to person's served, family members, third-party entities, referral sources, funding sources, and community members, and will exhibit sensitivity to the educational and reading levels of all persons when distributing information.
- 3) VICC will not utilize monetary rewards or gifts to any potential individual and/or family member in an attempt to entice them to enter VICC service.

E. Professional Practices:

- 1) Staff will adhere to all professional codes of conduct and ethical standards for his/her specified professional discipline.
- 2) As part of new employee orientation, staff will read the organization's Ethical Code of Conduct and demonstrate knowledge of the guidelines.

F. Potential Conflicts of Interest:

- 1) Person's served and/or their family members working for VICC are to be treated the same as any other employee with VICC.
- 2) Friends or relatives of persons served will not work with the person served while employed with VICC.
- 3) Any programming that involves a work task, and remuneration for the task, will be in accordance with persons served goals.

- 4) Private practice and outside business interests must be done on the staff's own time and outside the organization, as long as such activities are not adverse to the interests and goals of VICC.
- 5) Staff will not recruit persons served or their family members for their private practice within their professional roles as VICC staff members.
- 6) No staff shall engage in any other employment or activity on the organization's premises or to an extent that affects, or is likely to affect, his or her usefulness as an employee of the organization.

Also See SP 1.18 Conflict of Interest

G. Quality of Service:

- 1) VICC will provide quality service in a manner that is appropriate, determined to be necessary, efficient, and effective.
- 2) Staff will follow current ethical standards regarding communication with persons served and their representatives regarding services provided.
- 3) VICC recognizes the right of people served to make choices about their own service/care, including the right to do without recommended service/care or to refuse service/care.

H. Necessity of Care:

- 1) VICC shall submit claims for payment to governmental, private, or individual payers for those services or items that are clinically necessary and appropriate.
- 2) When providing services, VICC employees shall only provide those services that are consistent with CLBC service guidelines and/or are determined by a health care practitioner to be clinically necessary and appropriate. Services will be outlined in a health and/or behaviour care plan.
- 3) Documentation will be consistent with the standards and practices defined by the organization in its policy, procedures, and guidelines.

I. Coding, Billing, and Accounting:

- 1) VICC employees involved in coding, billing, documentation and accounting for person served care services for the purpose of governmental, private or individual payers will comply with all applicable provincial and federal regulations and organizational policies and procedures.
- 2) VICC will only bill for services rendered and shall seek the amount to which it is entitled.

- 3) Supporting documentation will be prepared for all services rendered. If the appropriate and required documentation has not been provided, then the service has not been rendered.
- 4) All services must be accurately and completely recorded and submitted to the appropriate payer in accordance with applicable regulations, laws, contracts, and organizational policies and procedures. Federal and provincial regulations take precedence, and organizational policies and procedures must reflect those regulations.
- 5) People accessing service on a fee-for-service basis shall be consistently and uniformly charged.
- 6) Government payers shall not be charged in excess of the provider's usual charges.
- 7) Billing and collections will be recorded in the appropriated accounts.
- 8) An accurate and timely billing structure and service record system will ensure that VICC effectively implements and complies with required policies and procedures.

J. Cost/Hourly Reports:

- 1) VICC will ensure that all preparation of cost/hourly reports submitted to governmental and private organizations are properly prepared and documented according to all applicable federal and provincial laws.
- 2) All cost reports will be submitted and prepared with all costs/hours properly classified, allocated to the correct service, and supported by verifiable and auditable cost data.
- 3) All cost/hourly report preparation or submission errors and mistakes will be corrected in a timely manner and, if necessary, clarify procedures and educate employees to prevent or minimize recurrence of those errors.

K. Personal and Confidential Information:

- 1) VICC will protect personal and confidential information concerning the organization's system, employees, and persons served.
- 2) VICC personnel shall not disclose confidential information unless at the request of the persons served and/or when authorized by law. Appropriate use of consumer information for research purposes must be obtained with the full informed consent of participants in the research.
- 3) Confidential information will only be discussed with or disclosed to a person served and to entities outside the organization through the request of person served. Persons outside the organization include the family, business, or social acquaintances of the person served.

- 4) Persons served can request to review their file, and are entitled to receive copies or summaries of their records.
- 5) VICC personnel will be familiar with all organizational policy and procedures regarding confidentiality.
- 6)

Also See SP 1.14 Confidentiality

L. Creation and Retention of Person Served and Organizational Records:

- 1) Records are the property of the organization. Personnel responsible for the preparation and retention of records shall ensure that those records are accurately prepared and maintained in a manner and location as prescribed by law and organizational policy.
- 2) Employees will not knowingly create records that contain any false, fraudulent, fictitious, deceptive, or misleading information.
- 3) Employees will not delete any entry from a record. Records can be amended and material added to ensure the accuracy of a record in accordance with policy and procedures. If a record is amended, it must indicate that the notation is an addition or correction and record the actual date that the additional entry was made.
- 4) Employees will not sign someone else's signature or initials on a record.
- 5) Records shall be maintained according to specific organizational policy and procedure, e.g. objective rather than subjective documentation.
- 6) Employees shall not destroy or remove any record from the organization's premises.
- 7) The organization will maintain record retention and record destruction policies and procedures consistent with federal and provincial requirements regarding the appropriate time periods for maintenance and location of records. Premature destruction of records could be misinterpreted as an effort to destroy evidence or hide information.

M. Funder/Government Investigation:

- 1) VICC employees shall cooperate fully with appropriately authorized funder and governmental investigations and audits.
- 2) VICC will respond in an orderly fashion to the funder and/or government's request for information through employee interviews and documentation review.
- 3) The organization will respond to the funder and/or government's request for information in a manner that enables the organization to protect both the

organization and person served interests, while cooperating fully with the investigation.

- 4) When a representative from a federal or provincial agency contacts a VICC employee at home or at a VICC location for information regarding the organization or any other entity with which the organization does business, the individual will contact a Director immediately.
- 5) VICC employees will ask to see the government representative's identification and business card, if the government representative presents in person. Otherwise, the employee should ask for the person's name, office, address, phone number, and identification number and then contact the person's office to confirm his/her identity.

N. Prevention of Improper Referrals or Payments:

- 1) VICC employees will not accept, for themselves or for the organization, anything of value in exchange for referrals of business or the referral of possible people that can access service.
- 2) Employees must not offer or receive any item or service of value as an inducement for the referral of business or people served.
- 3) The organization shall establish procedures for the review of all pricing and discounting decisions to ensure that appropriate factors have been considered and that the basis for such arrangements are documented.
- 4) Development or initiation of joint ventures, partnerships, and corporations within the organization must be reviewed and approved by VICC Directors to ensure compliance with organizational policy and federal regulations.

O. Competition/Antitrust Regulations:

- 1) VICC will comply with all applicable federal and provincial competition/antitrust laws.
- 2) Employees should not agree or attempt to agree with a competitor to artificially set prices or salaries, divide markets, restrict output, or block new competitors from the market, share pricing information that is not normally available to the public, deny staff privileges to qualified practitioners, or agree to or participate with competitors in a boycott of government programs.

P. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest:

- 1) All VICC employees shall conduct VICC and personal business in a manner that avoids potential or actual conflicts of interests.
- 2) Employees shall not use their official positions to influence an organizational decision in which they know, or have reason to know, that they have a financial interest.

- 3) Employees must be knowledgeable about activities that may be an actual or potential conflict of interest. Examples of such activities may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Giving or receiving gifts, gratuities, loans, or other special treatment of value from third parties doing business with or wishing to do business with the organization. Third parties may include, but are not limited to, persons served, vendors, suppliers, competitors, payers, carriers, and fiscal intermediaries.
 - b. Using VICC facilities or resources for other than organization sanctioned activities.
 - c. Using VICC's name to promote or sell products or personal services.
 - d. Contracting for goods or services with family members of the organization directly involved in the purchasing decision.

Q. External Relations:

- 1) VICC employees shall adhere to fair business practices and accurately and honestly represent themselves and the organization's services.
- 2) VICC employees will be honest and truthful in all marketing and advertising practices pertaining to the business practices of the organizations service delivery system.
- 3) Vendors who contract to provide goods and services to the organization will be selected on the basis of quality, cost-effectiveness and appropriateness for the identified task or need, in accordance with organization policy.

R. Human Resources:

- 1) VICC prohibits harassment or discrimination in any work related decision on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or financial status. The organization is committed to providing equal employment opportunity in a work environment where each employee is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- 2) VICC will make reasonable accommodations to the known physical and mental limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.
- 3) VICC does not tolerate harassment or discrimination by anyone based on the diverse characteristics or cultural backgrounds of those who access service and/or work for VICC.
- 4) Any form of sexual harassment is prohibited.
- 5) Any form of workplace violence is prohibited.

S. Code of Conduct Procedures:

- 1) All employees, students, and volunteers, as part of the organization's initial orientation, will review the Ethical Code of Conduct, including the procedures for investigating and acting on conduct violations.
- 2) All staff will receive a copy of the Ethical Code of Conduct, sign a form acknowledging their review and full understanding of the code, and return the form to be filed in the employee's personnel file.
- 3) To assure an awareness of ethical practices, reviews of the Ethical Code of Conduct and continued training will be conducted on an annual basis.

T. Procedures for Investigating and Acting on Violations of The Code of Conduct:

- 1) When any person served, family member, stakeholder, advocate or other person believes that an ethical violation has occurred within the operations of the organization, they may report such suspicion directly to any employee, or management staff.
- 2) When employees believe a violation of the Ethical Code of Conduct has occurred they are obligated to report the violation in one of the following ways:
 - a. Immediate notification of the incident or violation to VICC management.
 - b. Immediate reporting to a Director if the suspected violation involves their supervisor.
- 3) Supervisors who have been informed of a suspected violation are required to immediately inform a Director of the suspected violation.
- 4) If the violation involves a direct and immediate threat to the safety of a person served, staff member, or visitor, employees are obligated to report the alleged violation immediately to their supervisor.
- 5) Staff is required to report any suspected violation of the Ethical Code of Conduct; however, they are not required to investigate or know for certain that a violation has occurred.
- 6) Once the questionable behavior has been brought to the attention of the supervisor or reported to a Director, staff reporting the situation will no longer have a responsibility for being involved with the investigation other than providing additional information through a requested interview by the investigator.
- 7) Staff must report each suspected violation of the Ethical Code of Conduct separately, should a violation that has been reported occur again.

- 8) When any suspected violation of the Ethical Code of Conduct is reported, an investigation of the matter will begin immediately. While investigating the complaint, the following issues should be considered and action taken depending on the situation:
 - a. Is any person served in any harm or potential harm because of this behavior?
 - b. Does the complaint require immediate action to remove the employee from contact with a client?
 - c. Does the complaint put VICC or its employee in a potentially liable situation that needs legal consultation?
- 9) Ethical Code of Conduct investigations will follow the guidelines outlined in the VICC Corporate Compliance Policy and Procedure.

U. General Ethical Guidelines and Considerations:

- 1) The Ethical Code of Conduct is shared with persons served during orientation and is posted throughout public areas in all owned, leased, or rented facilities.
- 2) VICC believes in the importance of ethical practices within the organization. Any employee who reports waste, fraud, abuse or any other questionable practices will not be subject to reprisal by management of the organization. Directors are to ensure that there are no adverse actions toward the employee.
- 3) The following violations of the Ethical Code of Conduct will result in termination of employment: Theft of funds, and/or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a person served or employee.

Work Areas

Personal Property

Personal property means property or possessions that are owned by, belong to, or are managed by a member of staff of VICC. They do not belong to, or have not been paid for, by VICC.

Personal property is brought to the workplace at the owner's risk. Staff members should take responsibility for their own possessions and where possible avoid bringing them to the worksite.

If you have to bring personal possessions to the workplace that will *not* be used for work purposes, you should keep the time this is at the worksite to a minimum, keeping it secure and out of the way. Personal property brought into the workplace is at your own risk.

If you have to bring personal possessions into the workplace that *will* be used for work, you should ensure this is at the workplace for the minimum amount of time. Ensure that you instruct colleagues on correct use of the property. Personal property brought into the workplace is at the owner's risk.

If personal possessions are brought into the workplace for the direct or indirect benefit of a person served this should be with the agreement of a team leader or Director. This may include a written agreement for the use, terms, and any connected issues and will indicate the risk for the owner.

If a property is donated to the service by a staff member, documentation is required so ownership is clear. This property must then be entered into the workplace inventory.

VICC management and staff will take responsibility for informing you of any known issues that may result in loss of personal property.

Also See SP 4.20 Personal Property of Personnel

Parking

Parking at each location varies. You are expected to use common sense when parking, to avoid risk to vehicles and avoid parking violations, and with consideration for other residents or businesses. At the McPhee location, the parking lot is gated and locked after 5 pm.

Please note: Spaces closest to the buildings are normally reserved for person served vehicles to ensure good accessibility.

Driving & Vehicle/Driving Violations

VICC promotes safety and responsibility while driving, for employees, persons served, and other road users. You are expected to comply with all federal and provincial driving laws, both for safety and bearing in mind that your conduct reflects on the image of VICC as an organization.

All vehicle violations committed while operating a VICC, personal, or any other vehicle in which persons served are passengers, must be reported to the team leader and Directors as soon as possible, and at the very least within 24 hours of the violation.

You will be required to provide a Driver's Abstract upon hire, and annually thereafter. The Directors may request an updated Driver's Abstract at any time. All vehicle or driving violations which would appear on your Driver's Abstract must be reported to the Directors as soon as it has been incurred. If it is deemed that the safety of a person served has been put at risk, or the actions of an employee have been detrimental to the image of VICC, then the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Any fines resulting from violations, including parking violations, will be the responsibility of the employee operating the vehicle at the time of the violation.

VICC requires employees to take responsibility for challenging and/or paying fines issued to a vehicle in their charge.

If you incur an impound order on a vehicle whilst working, a team leader or Director must be informed immediately to arrange transportation of persons served. If you incur an impound order on your own vehicle in your own time it would be prudent to inform a team leader or Director especially if shifts are to be worked in the duration of the order.

It is the responsibility of the driver to abide by laws for use of a Disability Parking placard (blue badge) available for drivers or passengers with disabilities. This includes clear display, and with dates that are current.

It is the responsibility of team members to give adequate time to Directors for obtaining a new Disability Parking placard to avoid charges being incurred.

Also see SP 3.03 Driving Traffic Violations

Security

VICC management and staff are required to do regular checks on building security to reduce the risk of burglary and waste of resources, and to promote the safety of building users, and protect the integrity of the building.

Where they are in place, security systems must be used.

Residential security systems consist of pendant alarms, which link staff to emergency services through a security provider. These pendant alarms are to be worn by residential staff in the locations they are present and should remain at the location. If a pendant is taken home at shift end it must be returned immediately.

A security alarm and fire monitoring system are in place at the McPhee and Cliffe locations; this system must be used daily.

Each building that VICC uses or provides support in has its own security checklist, to be used by the last person to leave, the janitor, or the night shift worker. The list is the responsibility of the team leader or Director and should be checked for completion and amended as necessary.

Consider safety (windows locked, doors locked, medicine and financial cabinets locked, plus other inspections as necessary) and resources (electricians, heating, lighting turned down or off).

Any security concerns should be brought to your team leader or a Director as soon as possible.

Also see ESR 1.05 Security of Buildings

Travel & Expenses

If you are required to drive a vehicle for work, you will be asked to supply a copy of your valid BC Drivers License, a Driver's Abstract, and confirmation of adequate insurance coverage (\$3million liability including business use). This information must be supplied annually.

Also see ESR 3.01 Vehicle Safety

Use of Employee Vehicle

Employer requested use

If you are required to use your personal vehicle for work, you must ensure that your vehicle has adequate auto insurance to cover the business purpose for which it is used (\$3million liability including business use). It is your responsibility to keep this up to date.

Your vehicle must be roadworthy and safe for use of a person served, with the appropriate seatbelts and emergency supplies. A first aid kit will be provided by VICC. You are required to check your vehicle before each use with a person served to ensure that it is in safe working order.

Mileage will be reimbursed at a rate of \$0.44 per kilometer to a variable maximum, depending on team. For trips outside of the Comox Valley, mileage will be paid at a lower rate, \$0.30 per km. Mileage claims are made on corresponding time sheets with details of the journey, a person served, date, and destination. Mileage cheques are issued at the end of each month.

Also see SP 3.01 Staff Driving, Vehicle Requirements and Accident Response, SP 3.02 Staff vehicle travel claim

Use of Company Vehicle

VICC has a number of wheelchair accessible vehicles that are used to provide transportation for persons served through day supports and residentially. The vehicles owned by VICC are maintained and insured by VICC. The vehicles co-owned by persons served and their family members are maintained and annual insurance paid by VICC. Each service area has a vehicle checklist that is completed daily.

Also See FR 2.07 Service Vehicles

Allowable Expenses

There are minimal funds allotted for each type of service and/or for each individual accessing service to pay for expenses such as recreation and community inclusion expenses incurred by staff. As part of orientation, staff will be informed of what expenses are allowable and how these expenses are reported and reimbursed.

Also see FR 1.01 Finances, Person served, FR 1.02 Petty cash, FR 1.04 Budgets

When you have read and understood the policies in this handbook:

- 1. Complete this page, including your signature and the date of completion.**
- 2. Hand in the completed form/page to the Directors to be filed in your employee file**

NAME: _____ (Print name)

I confirm that I have read and understood the policies contained in the Employee Handbook. I understand that policies are subject to change as the organization deems appropriate and necessary, and that from time to time I may receive notice of new or modified policies, procedures, benefits or programs.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix 1

VICC adheres to the Employment Standards Act which requires employers to grant employees the following periods of unpaid leave:

Bereavement Leave: Employees are entitled to up to three days of unpaid leave on the death of a members of the employee's immediate family. These days do not have to be consecutive, or start on the date of death.

Immediate family means the spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandchild or grandparent of an employee; and any person who lives with the employee as a member of the employee's family.

Pregnancy Leave: up to 17 consecutive weeks (unpaid). This may start no earlier than 11 weeks before the expected birth date, and end no earlier than 6 weeks after the birth date unless employee requests a shorter period.

Parental Leave for birth and adopting parents: A birth mother who takes pregnancy leave is entitled to 35 consecutive weeks of unpaid parental leave. A birth mother must begin her parental leave immediately after her pregnancy leave ends, unless she and the employer agree otherwise. A birth mother who does not take pregnancy leave, a birth father, or an adopting parent is entitled to 37 consecutive weeks unpaid parental leave. This may begin any time within 52 weeks of the birth or placement of the child.

Requests for pregnancy or parental leave should preferably be made in writing 4 weeks before the proposed leave start date.

Family responsibility leave: up to 5 days unpaid leave per year to meet responsibilities related to the care, health or education of any member of the employee's immediate family.

Compassionate Care leave: up to 8 weeks unpaid leave within a 26 weeks period to care for a gravely ill family member*. The employee must obtain a medical certificate which states that the family member is gravely ill with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

Reservists leave: an employee who is a reservist is entitled to unpaid leave if deployed to a Canadian Forces operation, including pre-deployment and post-deployment activities, or while deployed to assist with an emergency.

Jury Duty

An employee who is required to attend court as a juror is considered to be on unpaid leave for the period of the jury duty.

Election Leave

If an employee is scheduled for a shift on an election day, and the shift does not allow four consecutive hours in which to vote, they should make use of election processes to

cast a vote by alternative means ahead of voting day, or they should apply in writing to the Directors no less than seven days ahead of the scheduled shift to make arrangements for cover.

Also see SP 2.04 Leave of Absence, Vacation, Jury Duty and Return to Work