

Ontario Soil Network



Values and Codes of Conduct

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1. Purpose of this Document

These values are a compass to guide Ontario Soil Network (OSN) staff, volunteers, and participants in everything they do. These Codes of conduct are important sources of guidance. Those involved in activities with the OSN are expected to take steps to integrate these values into their decisions, actions, processes, and systems. Similarly, OSN staff, volunteers and participants can expect to be treated in accordance with these values by their peers.

2. Let’s Talk Soil, Not Smack

Treating all people with respect, dignity and fairness is fundamental to our relationship with each other, with the public and to achieving our goal of broadening and strengthening the network. Committing to non-judgement contributes to a safe and healthy environment that promotes engagement, openness, and transparency. Worms don't judge. Neither do we.

3. Diversity is the Network

The network is and aims to be inherently diverse and the diversity of our people and the ideas they generate are the source of our innovation. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, farm type, farm size, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Welcoming and encouraging a diversity of stakeholders engaged with the OSN gives us the capacity to better connect farmers.

4. Home-grown Inclusivity

Comfortable and welcoming environments are necessary for enabling an engaging environment. Actively listening to OSN stakeholders about what makes them open to conversation is of vital importance to creating the accessible, neighbourly atmosphere that will continually draw in new participants and audience members. Understanding signals for inclusivity that are natural to our participants and audience is important for developing a home-grown rather than institutional sense of inclusivity.

5. Integrity

Integrity is the cornerstone of good governance. By upholding the highest ethical standards, we conserve and enhance public confidence in the honesty, fairness, and good intentions of the OSN. Furthermore, integrity of the information shared and promoted is the highest importance to equipping OSN stakeholders with appropriate tools with which to implement soil best management practices.

6. Real Accessibility

Personality, authenticity, and vulnerability are particularly important aspects to include in our conduct and tone when representing the OSN in the interest of building and strengthening community connections. “Irreverent but pithy” is often the adjectives used to characterize the OSN brand. This ability for personal connection, spontaneity and individualism is attractive and important to our stakeholders, but it must be balanced with the structure, vision and persistence that allows us to be continually accessible to all.

7. Excellent Connectors

The OSN is first and foremost a network and it is important that this identity be prevalent throughout our policies, programs, practices, and projects. Partnership is our key to success.

Excellence in the design and delivery of policy, programs and projects is beneficial to OSN stakeholders, participants, audience members and all Ontario farmers. Engagement, collaboration, effective teamwork, and professional development are all essential to a high-performing organization.

Excellence in engaging OSN stakeholders in our governance and strategic vision is of vital importance as is our role in the landscape as a network. If we are to connect a diverse network of farmers, we must engage a diverse network of other organizations that serve those farmers.

Excellence in cultivating discussion-focused environments for our staff, stakeholders, participants, and audience is of vital importance to embodying our proposed value of knowledge transfer through networks. Maintaining equality amongst conversation participants and ensuring conversation group demographics that enable 2-way dialogue are the ways we build communities of trust.

8. Employee and Stakeholder Privacy

This policy is important for our organization's legality and reputation. We may discipline any intentional or unintentional breach of this policy depending on its frequency and seriousness. We will terminate employees who repeatedly disregard this policy, even when they do so unintentionally. For the security of our employees, we will maintain the security and confidentiality of Employee records. For the security of our organization, we will maintain the security and confidentiality of unpublished financial information, stakeholder lists (existing and prospective), and unpublished goals, forecasts and initiatives marked as confidential. For the security of our stakeholders, we will by default maintain the security and confidentiality of data pertaining to our stakeholders and will use or share this data strictly under informed consent.

9. Environmental Values

Part of the mission of the OSN is to secure an environmentally and financially sound future. Our vision of environmental values is one that inherently linked with all the pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, and economic). Soil best management practices, promoted by OMAFRA and Ag Canada are therefore the practices that we promote and while innovation as it pertains to soil management is encouraged and well-supported, it is not our primary goal.

10. Security and Safety

To build happy and productive environments, we need everyone to treat others well and help

them feel safe. Each of us should do our part to prevent harassment and violence.

Harassment

Harassment is a broad term and may include seemingly harmless actions, like gossip. We cannot create an exhaustive list, but here are some instances that we consider harassment:

- [*Sabotaging someone's work on purpose.*]
- [*Engaging in frequent or unwanted advances of any nature.*]
- [*Commenting derogatorily on a person's ethnic heritage or religious beliefs.*]
- [*Starting or spreading rumors about a person's personal life.*]
- [*Ridiculing someone in front of others or singling them out to perform tasks unrelated to their job (e.g. bringing coffee) against their will.*]

Sexual harassment is illegal, and we will seriously investigate relevant reports. If an employee is found guilty of sexual harassment, they will be terminated.

Violence

Violence in our workplace is a serious form of harassment. It includes physical and sexual assault, destruction of property, threats to harm a person or property and verbal and psychological abuse. We want to avoid those incidents altogether, but we also want to be ready to respond if needed.

We will treat those involved with the OSN who engage in workplace harassment or violence as high risk, and they will receive an appropriate penalty.

11. Code of Conduct

OSN staff, volunteers and participants are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the values of the OSN and these expected behaviours.

1. Let's Talk Soil, Not Smack

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall respect human dignity and the value of every person by:

- 1.1 Treating every person with respect and fairness.
- 1.2 Valuing diversity and the benefit of combining the unique qualities and strengths inherent in a diverse workforce.
- 1.3 Helping to create and maintain safe and healthy spaces that are free from harassment and

discrimination.

1.4 Working together in a spirit of openness, honesty and transparency that encourages engagement, collaboration, and respectful communication.

2. Diversity

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall enable diversity by:

- 2.1 Actively inviting participation from a diversity of farmers.
- 2.2 Develop policies and programming with diversity in mind.
- 2.3 Maintain environments that invite diversity.

3. Home-grown Inclusivity

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall ensure inclusivity by:

- 3.1 Making an effort to invite people from outside the network.
- 3.2 Making it clear that everyone is invited by making invitations as broad-reaching as possible and by communicating appropriately.
- 3.3 Cultivating intimate and casual environments that deliberately break the ice and connect people.

4. Integrity

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall serve the interest of OSN stakeholders by:

- 4.1 Acting at all times with integrity, an obligation that may not be fully satisfied by simply acting within the law.
- 4.2 Never using their official roles to inappropriately obtain an advantage for themselves or to advantage or disadvantage others.
- 4.3 Taking all possible steps to prevent and resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest between their official responsibilities and their private affairs in favour of the public interest.
- 4.4 Acting in such a way as to maintain the board's trust.

5. Real Accessibility

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall ensure real accessibility by:

- 5.1 Maintain a tone and user experience that is personable, embraces spontaneity and welcomes individuality.
- 5.2 Balances and finds that tone and experience on deliberate the structure, vision and persistence that allows us to be continually accessible to all.

6. Excellent Connectors

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall demonstrate professional excellence by:

- 6.1 Providing fair, timely, efficient, and effective services.
- 6.2 Continually improving the quality of policies, programs, and services we provide.
- 6.3 Fostering a work environment that promotes teamwork, learning and innovation.
- 6.4 Engaging external stakeholders in our decision-making.
- 6.5 Seeking excellence and innovation in the methodology we use to build community, connect farmers, and transfer knowledge.

7. Employee and Stakeholder Privacy

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall ensure employee and stakeholder privacy by:

7.1 Those involved with the OSN must:

- Lock or secure confidential information at all times.
- Shred confidential documents when they are no longer needed.
- Make sure you view confidential information on secure devices only.
- Only disclose information to other employees when it is necessary and authorized.
- Keep confidential documents inside our company's premises unless it is absolutely necessary to move them.

7.2 Those involved with the OSN must not:

- Use confidential information for your personal benefit or profit.
- Disclose confidential information to anyone outside of our company.
- Replicate confidential documents and files and store them on insecure devices.

8. Environmental Values

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall demonstrate environmental values by:

- 8.1 Promoting soil best management practices, promoted by OMAFRA and Ag Canada
- 8.2 Support innovation as it pertains to soil management but maintains the primary goal.
- 8.3 Support a balance of environmental and economic sustainability through building social capital.

9. Security and Safety

Those involved in activities with the OSN shall uphold security and safety while engaged with the OSN by:

- 9.1 Not engaging in harassment or violence in OSN environments.

9.2 Acting to prevent harassment and violence in OSN environments by enforcing cultural expectations of conduct or intervening or reporting undesirable behaviour when appropriate.

9.3 Reporting harassment or violence as it occurs.

12. Final Considerations

The expected behaviours are not intended to respond to every possible ethical issue that might arise. When ethical issues arise, those involved in activities with the OSN are encouraged to discuss and resolve these matters with their immediate supervisor. They can also seek advice and support from other appropriate sources within the OSN.

Those involved in activities with the OSN at all levels are expected to resolve issues in a fair and respectful manner and consider informal processes such as dialogue or mediation.

Members of the public who have reason to believe that a person involved in activities with the OSN has not acted in accordance with this Code can bring the matter to an organizational point of contact that has been designated for the handling of such concerns.