

## Appendix B: HR-05-22

### Right to Disconnect Policy Toolkit

The following will assist people leaders understand the Right to Disconnect.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we implementing this policy?	The Right to Disconnect policy is a legislated requirement based on Bill 27, but we also know that we need to live our values and support staff in protecting their personal time away from work.
Does this mean I can't work outside of my normal hours?	No, employees are still able to work outside of work hours should they choose. This should be captured as Flex Time as per our policy, if applicable. This policy emphasizes that there is no expectation that employees respond outside their normal working hours.
What do I do if someone is not complying with the policy consistently?	Follow the guidelines outlined in the policy regarding non-compliance.
Does the policy only apply to emails?	No, the Right to Disconnect (by definition in the legislation) includes all forms of communication, including email, phone calls, texts, video calls or sending and reviewing messages.
What if I need to be on-call/standby?	On-Call/Standby hours are exempt from the policy, if they have been communicated to the employee as part of their employment expectations as per the collective agreement or Policy 6-30 Overtime Standby Call back policy.
Can I contact my staff in an emergency?	Yes, if unforeseeable circumstances or an emergency arises you can reach out to staff. Directors are responsible for defining "unforeseeable circumstances or emergencies" based on their operational requirements. <b>REMINDER</b> – the intention of this policy is to protect a worker's right to disconnect outside of their normal work hours.
Could this policy change?	This policy will be reviewed regularly and may shift or change as we receive feedback from staff and people leaders.
How does this impact staff who are on a flexible work arrangement?	Hours of work may vary across the organization; the employee has the right to disconnect outside <b>their normal hours of work</b> . If an employee is working on a flexible arrangement or outside of traditional work hours, they are required to include the Right to Disconnect email signature (Found on the Customer service standards page).

#### Tips for people leaders to support an employee's right to disconnect

- **Lead by example** – as a people leader, reaching out to staff outside of work hours can make staff feel like they need to respond. While this might not have been your intention, be aware of the impact that your actions might have.
  - Consider using delayed send in outlook
  - Be sure to include the "Flexible work" – signature line addition

- Let staff know if you are emailing them outside of work hours and be sure you are clear with your expectations of response.
- **Support the Flex Time Policy** – If you have staff who qualify for Flex Time be sure to encourage them to track their time appropriately. Not only does this give you a clear picture of the amount of working time spent in each role, if staff are consistently losing time this can be an important indicator of either a workload issue or a time management issue that requires further investigation or discussion.
- **Discuss the policy with your staff** - clear and open communication with staff is critical to creating a culture where staff feel free to disconnect from work. Use staff meetings to discuss how to disconnect and be open to feedback regarding the current culture of disconnection from work in your area.
- **Be sure not to reward unwanted behavior** – Changing behavior is difficult, but what gets rewarded gets repeated. Be sure not to unintentionally reward those who do not disconnect, or who consistently work outside of their workday. We want you to encourage disconnection to ensure a healthy balance of work and personal time for staff, which promotes wellness and engagement. Examples of what not to do – assigning based on the first to respond, giving stretch assignments to those who work the most hours, positively recognizing staff who consistently work extra hours.
- **Encourage staff to breaks/vacation** – time away from work is important to maintaining an engaged workforce. Break requirements are established through ESA, and ensuring staff are taking these breaks is enforceable by the Ministry of Labour. Ensuring staff are capturing their time accurately in Emp Centre will allow the organization to ensure compliance with these standards. Taking prolonged breaks from work (i.e. vacation) supports healthy work/life balance, and helps to promote employee wellness, while combating burnout. On our values is “We take Care of Each Other” – be sure to reference this when speaking to staff about their wellbeing and supporting their right to disconnect.
- **Hours of work vary across the organization** – We are a 24/7 365 day a year operation. Hours of work vary across different departments and employee groups. Please remember individual employees may have various hours of work based on our Flex Time Policy. It is not the intent of this policy to limit the work being done by staff during **THEIR** hours of work. The intention is to protect each individual's right to disconnect outside of **THEIR** specific hours of work.
- **Update your email signature** - Be sure to add the Right to Disconnect signature line and encourage your staff to do the same.

Reach out to your HR Representative if you have any questions or require support in implementing/interpreting this policy.