

Section 6. Council Code of Conduct

The City Council finds that Councilmembers should seek to continually improve the quality of public service and ensure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective, transparent, and equitable operation.

Councilmembers have a public stage and privileged platform to show how individuals with contrasting points of view can find common ground, demonstrate problem-solving approaches, and achieve solutions that benefit the community as a whole.

Central to these principles is that civility and decorum shall apply to all Councilmember conduct in relation to city business.

To this end, the following Code of Conduct for members of the Edmonds City Council is established:

6.1 General Conduct

A. Councilmembers shall focus discussions and debates on vision, policies, and their implementation.

B. No Councilmember shall dominate proceedings during Council or other public meetings.

C. Personal, insulting, or intimidating language, body language and actions, are not allowed. Councilmembers may raise a point of order for ruling by the Chair or by the Body to address inappropriate remarks.

D. Ensuring that all meeting participants feel welcome is a vital part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice, or disrespect should be evident on the part of Councilmembers toward any individual participating in a public meeting. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to Council, staff and public testimony and discussions.

E. Technology allows words written or said to be distributed far and wide. Councilmember written notes, voicemail messages, texts, email, or other electronic communications, are public records and shall follow this code.

6.2 Conduct with City Staff, the City Attorney, and the Council Legislative Assistant

A. The community is best served when the abilities, experience, and knowledge of staff and contract employees work alongside councilmembers, and councilmembers will value these resources and relationships by:

1. Using respectful language and tones;
2. Whenever possible, provide questions ahead of public meetings and otherwise avoid surprises;
3. Recognize that calls and emails may not be returned outside of business hours;
4. Expressing concerns about performance only to the Mayor, in the case of staff, and the Council President, in the case of Council legislative aide and City Attorney;
5. Understanding that Council, as a legislative body, directs City business via policy change initiated by majority Council vote only; councilmembers acting individually shall refrain from directing staff or otherwise intruding on the City's administrative functions.

6.3 Conduct with Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Outside Agencies

A. The City maintains several boards and commissions as a means of encouraging and gathering community input. Residents who serve on boards and commissions are a valuable resource to the City's leadership and shall be treated with appreciation and respect.

B. Councilmembers are appointed as non-voting members to serve as the primary two-way communication liaison between the Council and boards, commissions, and committees. Councilmembers are not to direct the activities or work of the board, commission, or committee.

C. Councilmembers may attend any board or commission meeting to which they are not appointed but shall do so as a member of the public. Personal comments or positions, if given, will be identified as such and shall not be represented as the position of the City or Council.

D. Councilmembers shall not contact a board or commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or organization. It is acceptable for Councilmembers to contact the board, committee, or commission members in order to clarify or contextualize a position taken by the body. When making contact the relevant Council liaison should be included in such communication.

E. When attending a non-city sponsored event, meeting, conference, or other activity, a Councilmember may be authorized to represent the Council only upon a majority vote of the Council. Likewise, a Councilmember may be authorized to represent the City only upon the express permission of the Mayor.

6.4 Implementation, Compliance, and Enforcement

As an expression of the standards of conduct that best serve the City, the Code of Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing and is most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions.

A. This Council Code of Conduct shall be included in the regular orientations for newly seated Councilmembers. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they read and understood the City of Edmonds Council Code of Conduct.

B. The Code of Conduct shall be reviewed and reaffirmed annually by the City Council.

C. When a breach of this code occurs, Councilmembers are encouraged to remind one another of the Code of Conduct terms. These communications may be documented with the subject line, "Code of Conduct Reminder."

D. Repeated breaches, or egregious instances, may be dealt with according to the terms set out in the Council's adopted Rules or other applicable laws and regulations.