

COPE Local 343  
Policy on Discrimination and Harassment  
Adopted by the Membership on June 5, 2016

**Preamble**

COPE Local 343 is absolutely opposed to any form of discrimination or harassment based on race, colour, sex, religious or political affiliation, national or ethnic origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, creed, record of offenses, marital or family status or other grounds prohibited by applicable human rights law.

Discrimination and harassment are expressions of power or perceived power and superiority. Union solidarity is based on the principle that we are Sisters and Brothers and that we are all equal. Discrimination and harassment erode that principle because it assumes that some union members are inferior and not entitled to being treated respectfully.

Harassment is defined as any unwelcome action(s), whether verbal or physical, that occurs once or repeatedly and its effect is to humiliate, insult and degrade an individual or a group. Unwelcome means any action(s) that the harasser knows or ought to reasonably know, that would not be desired by or would offend the person to whom the action or conduct is directed.

Harassment is no joke. The actions may be subtle or overt, but they are always offensive and demeaning. To ignore discrimination and harassment is to condone the acts of the harasser and further victimizes the member who has been subjected to the discrimination and/or harassment.

The intent of this policy is to send a clear message to would be harassers that their actions will not be tolerated at COPE Local 343 functions and sponsored events. It is also intended to assure participants at COPE Local 343 functions and sponsored events that if they experience discrimination and/or harassment, they will be supported when reporting it. Confidentiality will be respected throughout the process.

**Procedure**

At the commencement of every COPE Local 343 sponsored event and function, the highest union official or representative must bring the COPE Local 343 policy on discrimination and harassment to the attention of every participant. Where possible, copies of the COPE Local 343 discrimination and harassment policy will be distributed.

COPE Local 343 Sponsored Event

If at a COPE Local 343 sponsored event, such as a meeting of bargaining unit members, a participant believes they are being discriminated against and/or feels harassed:

- The participant, accompanied by a supportive Sister or Brother (if the participant chooses), shall approach the Chair, the Chief steward, or a steward to report the harasser. If the staff representative is present, the participant can also report the incident to them.

- The union representative receiving the report shall take action necessary to stop the discrimination or harassment, up to and including removing the harasser from the sponsored event. At a minimum, the harasser will be notified that their conduct or actions were unwelcome and have made a participant feel devalued.

### COPE Local 343 Function

A COPE Local 343 function is defined as a Convention, the Annual General Meeting, the Executive Board meeting, an Educational or a Social.

At the commencement of every COPE Local 343 function, the Members of the COPE Local 343 Executive Board in attendance will be identified.

If at a COPE Local 343 function, a participant believes they are being discriminated against and/or feels harassed:

- The participant, accompanied by a supportive Sister or Brother (if the participant chooses), shall approach a COPE Local 343 Executive Board Member to report the harasser.

If a Sister or Brother witnesses a participant being discriminated against and/or harassed:

- The Sister or Brother can approach the participant to offer support and to accompany them in reporting the matter to a COPE Local 343 Executive Board Member.

In both instances (experiencing or witnessing), the COPE Local 343 Executive Board Member shall take action necessary to stop the discrimination or harassment, up to and including removing the harasser from the function. At a minimum, the harasser will be notified that their conduct or actions are unwelcome and have made a participant feel devalued.

### COPE Internal Discipline Procedure

Should the participant who has been subjected to the discrimination and/or harassment at a COPE Local 343 function or sponsored event want to pursue the matter further, they can consider filing a complaint pursuant to the COPE Internal Discipline Procedure. They can speak to a COPE Local 343 Executive Board Member about this.

They can also consider filing a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.