



# Remote Workforce Lodgings

Industry – Community  
Commitment Toolkit



The Energy Behind the Energy

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**Cover Photo:** *Right Choice Camps & Catering*

## Vision

**Remote Workforce Lodgings are valued partners in the economic and social fabric of communities.**

## Background

Remote Workforce Lodgings (RWL) play an important role in Canada’s economy. They offer a solution to the logistical challenges associated with the remote location of our many natural resources and the housing of the workforce required to responsibly develop them.

With the support of Enserva, RWL companies convened an Executive Council and Steering Committee when concerns about the potential impact of remote lodgings on nearby communities was identified in the *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)* and *Indigenous Communities and Industrial Camps: Promoting Healthy Communities in Settings of Industry Change* reports. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of how the RWL sector is doing and get honest feedback on what we can do better to ensure workforce lodgings operate safely.

After nearly two years of listening and learning with persons of lived experience and Indigenous elders and leaders, we are hearing that there are both short-term and long-term opportunities to do more. The RWL industry needs to do more in the areas of policy enforcement, and training and programming to deepen our understanding of the Missing, Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples (MMEIP), to honour Treaty, the land, and the peoples connected to it and to reconcile past wrongs.

More importantly, we have learned that our journey of listening, learning, and co-creating meaningful solutions is ongoing. Our path to reconciliation requires deep and trusting relationships with Indigenous communities and leaders to co-design a meaningful industry-wide program to ensure RWL are valued partners in the economic and social fabric in the communities we operate.

To guide our next steps, the *Remote Workforce Lodgings Industry Community Commitment Roadmap* was developed as our pledge. The Roadmap is an ever-evolving document that initially focuses on developing tools, resources, and learning opportunities for the RWL industry to increase our own capacity to take more mindful actions and embed reconciliation into how we establish and operate remote workforce lodgings.



Photo Credit: Horizon North as part of Dexterra Group

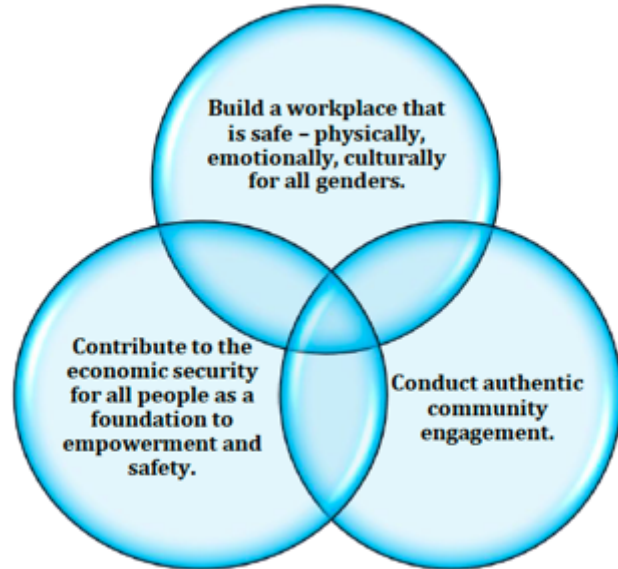


## Strategic Commitments

The Roadmap includes three overlapping strategic commitments.

Each commitment is informed by important work that came before us and requires a series of actions to move it forward. This leads us to this toolkit and our first commitment to action.

This is a toolkit that outlines the foundational policies, protocols, and programs required to create workplace and community environments that are physically, emotionally, and culturally safe for all.



*The Strategic Commitments*

The objectives of the toolkit are to:

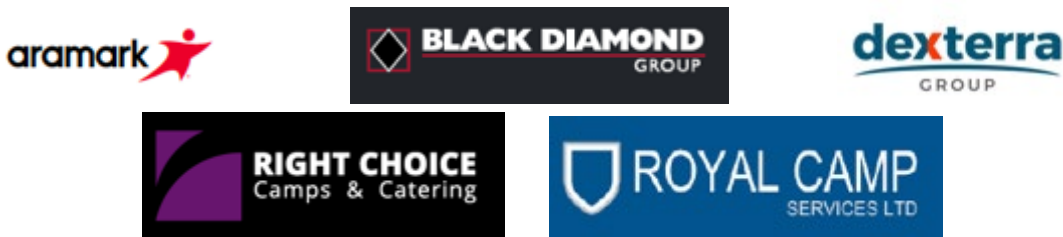
- Offer guidance to remote workforce lodging owners and operators to develop and/or audit foundational policies, protocols, and programs.
- Assist newly established remote workforce lodgings to set the foundation for success.

The toolkit is formatted to offer an introduction to each of the Strategic Commitments, key considerations for progressing the Commitment within an RWL environment, and wise practices and resources for companies to consider for implementation.

It is likely not feasible to incorporate everything all at once. Companies will want to build on existing strengths and commitments, and address gaps that are mostly like to benefit from additional attention. To help prioritize where to start, a proven practices is to ask Indigenous employees what they need to continue to succeed in the organization.

**The toolkit is a “living document” that will evolve as we learn. We look forward to developing a *Community of Practice* and inviting others to share best and wise practices and enhance industry’s knowledge and capacity to create remote workforce lodging settings that are safe for all.**

### Founding Members of the Remote Workforce Lodging Council



# 1.0 Creating a Workplace that is Physically, Emotionally and Culturally Safe

## Introduction

**Creating an environment that is physically, emotionally, and culturally safe for all RWL workers and clients, regardless of gender, is multi-dimensional and includes elements of:**

- **Individual employee** commitment to a respectful and inclusive workplace culture
- **Physical conditions**, including the tangible attributes of the workforce lodging facility and surroundings (focus of the following checklist)
- **Organizational culture** including:
  - Zero tolerance policies
  - Support mechanisms in place to ensure policies are adhered to
  - Programs that build cultural sensitivity
  - Capacity of leaders and workforce to follow policies
- **Personal supports**, including programming to support the health and wellness of employees and guests as a means to preventing destructive behaviour.

## Individual Employee and Client/Guest Commitment to a Respectful and Inclusive Workplace Culture

### Employee Code of Conduct

An Employee Code of Conduct serves as a critical tool for shaping organizational culture, aligning employee behavior with the organization's values, and supporting the overall success of the organization. This is especially true in a RWL environment where employees may not only be working together but also living together.

Harassment and discrimination in any form is not acceptable in the workplace. Every employee has the right to a respectful workplace, free of harassment and discrimination. Therefore, it is expected that all employees sign and adhere to the Code of Conduct, ensuring that all company values, laws, and regulations are upheld, and a positive, inclusive, and healthy workplace is provided.



*Photo Credit: Black Diamond Group*

As a Code of Conduct creates an environment that encourages a standard of behavior, supports cultural commitments, lessens confusion, and promotes equality and respect within the workplace, and condemns any harassment and discrimination of any level, it needs to extend to all employees and all guests of the RWL to be effective. RWL owner/operators need to engage with their client companies to ensure support in upholding expectations regarding standard of behaviour expected while staying in the RWL as well as in nearby communities.



Desired outcomes associated with the implementation of Code of Conduct include:

- *Establishing expectations regarding behaviours at work and in nearby communities*
- *Ethical framework*
- *Employee guidance and support*
- *Ensuring a positive and safe work environment*
- *Consistency and fairness*
- *Risk mitigation*
- *Establishing the commitment to ESG*
- *Legal and regulatory compliance*
- *Protecting the company's reputation*
- *Clarity regarding disciplinary actions that non-compliance may result in*

### *Foundational Components for an Employee Code of Conduct*

The following outlines foundational components to consider for an RWL Employee Code of Conduct. Expanding the reach of this toolkit to include other Enserva members and industries that use RWL will offer the opportunity to discuss how to extend the expectations laid out in the employee code of conduct to clients and guests who stay at RWL.

### Values

Clearly listing key values that the company adheres to and expects the same of its employees not only promotes a culture surrounding those values but also allows the company to hold its employees accountable. It builds the groundwork for the employee code of conduct and provides a guideline on how to conduct oneself outside of what will be listed in the code of conduct.

*Integrity*

*Health & Safety*

*Teamwork*

*Individual Worth*

*Guests*

*Excellence*

*People*

*Accountability*

*Respectful and Inclusive Workplace*

### Compliance with Laws, Rules, and Regulations

- *Obey the law in letter and spirit*
- *Employees are expected to have resources for local, Provincial, and Federal law*
- *Respect for nearby Indigenous traditional lands and resources*

### Cultural Inclusion

Maintaining an inclusive and safe environment is essential in conducting business in today's climate. This is amplified for RWL's due to their diverse workforce and residents, and often operating at close vicinity to Indigenous communities. Ensuring that persons of all cultures and

ethnicities feel included, respected, and protected in their environment is in the company's best interest regarding community engagement, ESG, and general business.

- *Diversity of individuals, both guests and staff, is an asset to the company.*
- *The company is firmly committed to providing an equal and inclusive environment for both employees and guests.*
- *Any discrimination, cultural harassment, or prejudice actions will not be tolerated.*
- *Any discrimination, cultural harassment, or prejudice actions witnessed by an employee should be reported immediately.*

### Sexual Harassment, Workplace Harassment, Discrimination & Violence

This section is important for creating a safe and respectful workplace, preventing incidents, protecting employee well-being, promoting diversity and inclusion, and upholding the organization's reputation. It is also important to review the consequences for non-compliance of this section of the code of conduct to ensure employees understand the company's commitment to a safe work environment.

- *Any sexual harassment, workplace harassment, acts of discrimination, or acts of violence will not be tolerated.*
- *Any sexual harassment, workplace harassment, acts of discrimination, or acts of violence witnessed by an employee should be reported immediately.*
- *Any sexual harassment, workplace harassment, acts of discrimination, or acts of violence reported to a supervisor should be addressed swiftly, by taking any or all the following actions:*
  - I. *Documentation of the incident*
  - II. *Verbal reprimand*
  - III. *Written reprimand*
  - IV. *Termination of employee(s)*
  - V. *Removal of guest(s) from premises*
  - VI. *Local police authorities contacted*

### Health and Safety

Employees have the right to a safe and healthy workspace, in all aspects including physical, mental, cultural, gender and emotional. This section should outline the commitment to health and safety the company upholds, an employee's rights and responsibilities to work in and maintain a safe work environment, aspects that make for a safe and healthy workspace, and steps to take if those aspects are not present.

- *The company is firmly committed to providing all employees and guests with a safe and healthy environment.*
- *Employees also have a responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace by:*
  - *Following safety and health rules and practices.*





- *Reporting incidents, accidents, injuries, unsafe equipment, and unsafe practices or conditions to a supervisor.*
- *Report fit for work, free from the influence of drugs or alcohol.*
- *Employees also have the right to work with co-workers that are fit for work.*

### Confidentiality

Maintaining the privacy of sensitive information of not only the company but also guests and staff is integral to the safety of everyone involved in an RWL. Private information, especially of members of vulnerable communities, can lead to inappropriate actions if in the wrong hands, such as bullying, discrimination, harassment, or acts of violence. This section of the code of conduct should outline what confidentiality looks like, what a breach of confidentiality is, and the steps to take in those cases.

- *Employees must maintain the confidentiality of confidential information entrusted to them by the company and/or persons with whom the company does business, including, but not limited to, guests, other employees, vendors, sponsors, investors, and business partners.*
- *If an employee has access to confidential information, they are not permitted to use or share that information for any purpose except the conduct of business.*

### Personal Conduct Outside the Workplace

In the realm of remote workforce lodging, where the company is essentially engrained in the community, it is imperative that employees conduct themselves appropriately outside of the workplace. Addressing how an employee should represent the company while not on duty minimizes the damage that can be done by inappropriate behaviour and fosters a healthier relationship between the company and the community.

- *Employees should not take a secondary position outside of the company without prior written approval from the company.*
- *Employees should understand that they are a representative of the company outside the workplace and conduct themselves accordingly.*
- *Employees should understand that their social media activities can have an impact on the organization, especially activities pertaining to the company, and should avoid posts or comments that may be offensive, discriminatory, defamatory, or otherwise damaging to the company's interest.*
- *Employees should understand that engaging in criminal activities, unethical behavior, or behavior that could harm their ability to perform their job effectively or damage the company and/or company's image can and will be met with disciplinary actions, up to and including termination and legal action.*

### Environmental Compliance

Environmental compliance is vital in today's social climate and is a large part of a company's ESG efforts. As RWLs are often situated in Indigenous communities, where the health of the land and nature are of the utmost importance, committing to maintaining the land the RWL is on is vital to a

healthy relationship with the community. This section reflects positively on the company's commitment to environmental responsibility, will hold employees to the same standard, and as well as have a positive impact on the relationship in the community.

- *The company is committed to minimizing and, if possible, eliminating the use of substances or materials that may cause environmental damage.*
- *The company is committed to reducing waste generation in any way possible.*
- *Employees have a responsibility, within reason, to utilize recycling bins, waste as little disposable product as possible, and ensure as little energy or power is used as possible.*
- *Respect for traditional use of land in and around RWL and no hunting, fishing, or gathering policies by employees will be enforced.*

### Community Engagement

Similar to the “Environmental Compliance” section, maintaining a healthy and co-beneficial relationship between the RWL and the community is extremely important to the RWL's success, the company's reputation, and the community's betterment. Emphasizing the organization's commitment to making a positive impact on the community and encouraging employees to contribute to the community actively is vital to a co-beneficial relationship with the community.

- *The company is committed to having a positive and constructive relationship with the community the remote workforce lodge is in/adjacent to. Inclusion of personal conduct outside the workplace clause.*
- *The company acknowledges the potential effect the business can have on the surrounding community and is committed to avoiding any negative impacts.*
- *Employees should recognize their role in the community as employees and/or members and commit to contributing positively and constructively both on and off duty.*

### Anti-Bribery / Anti-Corruption Laws

Including an anti-bribery section is essential for legal compliance, upholding ethical standards, protecting the organization's reputation, mitigating risks, and fostering a culture of integrity. In the RWL setting it is important to proactively mitigate any situation where monetary compensation, gift or special privilege is offered to allow for inappropriate or unethical behaviour that goes against the employee or guest code of conduct.

- *Employees are prohibited from participating in acts that could be considered “bribery” and/or improper payments.*
- *“Bribery” refers to directly or indirectly offering, promising, giving, OR receiving any financial or other advantage or anything of value to any person to influence them to behave improperly or reward them for behaving improperly, in connection with company business or employment activities.*
- *Avoid situations that might be, or might perceived to be, offering or receiving compensation for improper behaviour.*



- *Employees should report any situations or interactions that involve bribery, whether accepted or not, including those involving other staff, guests, or officials.*
- *Gifts may form the basis of an offence when these courtesies compromise the recipient's ability to make fair and objective business decisions.*

### Conflicts of Interest

RWLs are often situated in or by small, tight-knit communities. Having the potential of several pre-existing relationships, positive or negative, can disrupt an employee's ability to make objective and fair decisions. Including this section in a code of conduct promotes fair decision-making and a culture of integrity and mitigates legal and reputational risks.

- *A 'conflict of interest' exists when an employee's private interests interfere in any way with the interests of the company. It is generally defined as a business activity or relationship with another company or individual that may result in questionable business ethics or a compromise in an employee's ability to make fair and objective business decisions.*

### Protection and Proper Use of Company Assets

This section is essential for safeguarding resources, including currency, physical property and items, data, as well as personnel and guests. Including this section ensures safety and security for company property, and all persons involved in the business.

- *Employees should protect the company's assets and ensure their efficient use.*
- *Employees have a responsibility to care for and protect property, data, other personnel, and guests.*
- *Theft and waste will not be tolerated.*

### Use of Electronic Systems

As online and virtual communication are key to maintaining family and social connections while at a RWL, a clause that sets expectations for responsible and ethical use of technology, ensuring the protection of sensitive information, maintaining productivity, and mitigating potential risks associated with electronic systems is important. This section should review data security, confidentiality, compliance with policies and laws, productivity, professionalism, prevention of misconduct, and risk management.

- *Employees must only access electronic systems, documents, or messages using their assigned username and password.*
- *Personal use is permitted to help maintain family and social connections while working and living away from home.*
- *Improper personal use, whether using company or personal devices, is prohibited, including but not limited to:*
  - Use that puts the business' electronic systems at risk such as:*
    - *Downloading non-business-related applications*
    - *Playing video games*

- ii. *Viewing sexually explicit content*
- iii. *Engaging in illegal or unethical activity*
- *Electronic documents and messages sent, received, created, or modified by employees on a company electronic system is company property.*

### *Reporting Illegal or Unethical Behaviour*

Employees understand the steps they need to take to report illegal or unethical behaviour and have confidence in how their reports will be handled:

- **Clear reporting channels:** This section should specify who to report to, different options available for reporting. This may include a supervisor, manager, Human Resources department, or an anonymous hotline.
- **Confidentiality and non-retaliation:** This should assure employees their reports will be handled confidentially, and they will be protected from retaliation regardless of who or what the complaint is regarding.
- **Detailed reporting procedures:** This should outline specific steps employees should follow when filing a report against illegal or unethical behaviours. This should include a clear description of the information that should be included, and how the documentation should be filed.
- **Timely response and investigation:** This should communicate the company's commitment to prompt and thorough investigation of concerns, and the timeline an employee can expect for acknowledgement and updates as appropriate.
- **Follow-up and resolution:** This should outline the level of communication the employee can expect regarding investigations and actions taken because of the investigations. It should be emphasized that the confidentiality of all parties is considered, including actions taken towards disciplinary action, remediation, and ongoing monitoring.
- **Escalated and external reporting options:** In addition to internal reporting channels, employees should be made aware of additional options, including senior management, regulatory authorities, or law enforcement agencies in cases where internal reporting is not sufficient or has not led to appropriate resolution.

### *Disciplinary Actions*

Clearly listing the disciplinary process and actions for any violations of the employee code of conduct emphasizes the company's commitment to upholding the policies and conveys the seriousness of an employee's responsibilities. It should be noted that these actions should be consistent with applicable laws and the severity of the misconduct.

- *Verbal warning*
- *Written warning*
- *Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)*
- *Training and counselling*
- *Loss of Privileges*



- *Suspension*
- *Financial penalties*
- *Probationary period*
- *Demotion*
- *Termination*
- *Legal actions*

### *Zero Tolerance Policy*

Maintaining a workplace that respects the dignity and well-being of every employee, guest, and community is of the utmost importance for an RWL. A Zero Tolerance Policy underscores an unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards of conduct and ethics within an organization. Any violations of this policy should be met with swift and appropriate action, up to and including disciplinary measures, and ultimately result in immediate termination of employment under extreme circumstances.

### **Resources:**

Sample Codes of Conduct:

- [HRH Group of Hotels](#)
- [Ramada Plaza by Wyndham - Prince George](#)
- [Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts](#)
- [Resources for Employers - Employee Code of Conduct](#)

### Physical Conditions to Enhance RWL Safety

Ensuring a RWL environment that is physically, emotionally, and culturally safe extends to designing the layout of the RWL that considers internal and exterior factors that can prevent, or at least minimize safety incidents.

### **Remote Workforce Lodgings Safety Checklist**

Provincial Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Acts indicate that employers must develop and implement violence and harassment prevention plans, policies and procedures.<sup>1</sup>

There are several resources available to assist employers with the development of violence and harassment prevention policies and procedures including the training of staff in:

- The recognition of violence and harassment,



*Photo Credit: Black Diamond Group*

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 27 Sections 389 – 392.

- The policies, procedures, and workforce arrangements in place to eliminate or control the hazards of violence and harassment,
- The appropriate response to violence and harassment including how and where to obtain assistance, and
- Procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidence of violence and harassment.

Furthermore, Part II of the Canada Labour Code requires the health and safety committee/representative to carry out monthly inspections in the workplace in whole or in part. This checklist offers RWL owners and operators a tool that can be incorporated into activities that fulfill regular OHS and labour code requirements to:

- Assess the physical conditions in and around the facility for potential violence or harassment risks and
- Identify measures to prevent violence against remote workforce lodging employees and clients.

The assessment and mitigation of potential risk of violence and harassment for lodging employees and guests/clients needs to be proactive and regular<sup>2</sup> with an opportunity for employees or guests/clients to report potential hazards on an ongoing basis.

- **Proactively** walk through the facility with health & safety committee, female, and Indigenous employees on a regular basis to identify potential hazards and gather input into how to make it safer.
- **Ongoing** - a way for employees to report a potential hazard. *i.e. form; submit a photo; app*

### **If an incident occurs<sup>3</sup>:**

The Canada Labour Code acknowledges that incident investigations and reporting play a key role in preventing recurrence. Conducting a detailed hazard assessment of a specific incident, including an analysis of contributing factors such as the location, personnel involved, availability and use of mitigation and control measures, and institutional response and outcomes, is important.

Furthermore, the Code dictates that federally-regulated employers must submit three annual reports to the Labour Program: Employers Annual Hazardous Occurrence Report, Employer Annual Harassment and Violence Occurrence Report and the Work Place Committee Report. Non-federally regulated industry is governed by the employment standards for your province or territory of work.

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<sup>2</sup> Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* requires the health and safety committee/representative to carry out monthly inspections in the workplace in whole or in part.

<sup>3</sup> As per Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*, in the event that a hazard is identified, and the committee/representative is not authorized to remove it, recommendations must be forwarded to the employer. The employer is required to provide a written response to the committee/representative within 30 days on how the issue will be resolved.



Remote Workforce Lodgings Physical Environment Safety Checklist

<i>Section</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Immediate Attention</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Specific Action Required</i>	<i>Deadline for Addressing</i>
<b>Building Perimeter</b>	Are parking lot entrances and exits clearly marked?						
	Is site access monitored (guardhouse, gate)?						
	Is there a check-in procedure?						
	Is the site enclosed/fenced?						
	Is the lot well-lit?						
	Is the area heavily travelled by the public?						
	Are there high-risk businesses nearby that could result in unwanted visitors? (bars, liquor stores, etc.)						
	Are there buildings isolated from the main building?						
	Are entrances well-lit?						
	Is building entry controlled by key or access card?						
	Are smoking areas in high-traffic, well-lit areas?						
	Are security cameras present and visible?						
	Are emergency exits clearly marked?						
	Are emergency exits alarmed?						
	Is foliage trimmed to eliminate blind spots?						
	Is staff parking separate from visitor/client parking?						
	Can employees or guests request an escort to their vehicle from security to enhance their sense of well-being?						
<b>Security Systems</b>	Is there 24-hour on-site security?						
	Is there a security system?						
	Is the system tested regularly?						
	Is there signage stating the site is monitored by on-site security and/or security systems?						
	Does security utilize local radios?						
	Is camera coverage free of blind spots?						
<b>Reception Area</b>	Is the reception area visible and easily accessible?						
	Is reception staffed at all times?						
	Is building access controlled by key or card?						
	Does reception ever work alone?						
	Is there a way to identify visitors? (sign in)						

<i>Section</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Immediate Attention</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Specific Action Required</i>	<i>Deadline for Addressing</i>
	Can visitors enter the building only when someone is present at reception to let them in?						
	Are security cameras present?						
	Are there emergency buttons present?						
	Is the area well-lit?						
	Does reception have a designated radio?						
<b>Washrooms</b>	Do employees, clients/guests and the public use the same washrooms?						
	Is there key or card access to the washrooms?						
	Are washrooms well lit?						
	Can the lights be turned off?						
	Are washrooms individual stalls?						
	Are emergency/panic buttons present?						
	Is there safe syringe disposal?						
<b>On-site facilities (gym, recreational rooms, dining hall, etc.)</b>	Do the rooms have good visibility from other areas?						
	Is there more than one entrance?						
	Is furniture arranged to allow for a quick exit?						
	Are phones easily accessible?						
	Are there emergency buttons present?						
	Are security cameras present?						
	Are the rooms well lit?						
	Is there safe syringe disposal?						
	Is kitchen access controlled by key or card?						
	Are there designated women-only times in the gym?						
<b>Rooms</b>	Do rooms have private ensuite washrooms?						
	Do the windows lock?						
	Are windows in good repair?						
	Do windows allow for emergency exit?						
	Do doors lock?						
	Are doors and locks in good repair?						
	Is there a phone with direct calling to reception?						
	Is there a peep hole or means of seeing who is outside the door?						
	Is there an emergency contact list posted in a visible place or places? (i.e.: near the phone; in the washroom)						
	Is there a secure, separate wing for women?						





<i>Section</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Immediate Attention</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Specific Action Required</i>	<i>Deadline for Addressing</i>
<b>General Considerations</b>	Is there a strong cellphone signal or wifi available?						
	Is there a medical facility and staff on site?						
	Are medical staff trained to deal with sexual assaults including proper medical examinations?						
	Are there AEDs present in visible and accessible areas?						
	Is there an orientation for guests upon arrival that includes signing a code of conduct and review of violence/harassment policies?						
	Is there an orientation for staff that includes signing a code of conduct and review of violence/harassment prevention policies?						
	Are employee code of conduct and violence/harassment prevention policies reviewed annually or more often if an incident occurs?						
	Are there resources identifying security contacts and wellness supports for guests?						
	Are there mental health support workers on site?						
	Are there Indigenous support workers on site?						
	Are clients/guests from at-risk/vulnerable groups lodged in areas that are more easily monitored by security?						
	Does the company use a employee buddy system or a lone worker app to enhance physical and psychological well-being?						
<b>Hallways &amp; Stairwells</b>	Are there emergency buttons to call for help?						
	Are they well lit?						
	Can lights be turned off in the hallway/stairwell?						
	Are emergency exits clearly marked?						
	Are emergency exits alarmed?						
	Are dead-end hallways clearly marked as such?						
	Are they actively monitored with cameras and security?						
	Is there more than one exit from the stairwell?						
	Could someone hide at the bottom of the stairwell?						

Section	Item	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Immediate Attention	N/A	Specific Action Required	Deadline for Addressing
<b>Local Transit</b>	Is transportation offered to staff to and from the local community?						
	Is an identification system in place for staff?						
	Do drivers ever work alone?						
	Is there an attendance/check-in system in place?						
	Are strict routes planned and adhered to?						
	Are only authorized passengers allowed?						
<b>Employee Vulnerabilities</b>	Do employees ever work alone?						
	Do employees carry radios?						
	Do employees carry personal panic buttons?						
	Are there resources identifying wellness supports available?						
	Are staff-only areas access controlled by key or card?						
	Is there ongoing emergency and safety training for staff?						
	Is there an emergency contact list posted?						
	Are there lockers for staff use?						
	Does the staff change frequently?						

## Wise Practices:

### BUDDY SYSTEMS

*A buddy system is a cooperative arrangement in which individuals team up and assume responsibility for one another's welfare.*

The buddy system was initiated in the military, where soldiers provided support for a fellow soldier in conflict situations and in the rest of their duties.

At work, buddying involves sharing knowledge and having a genuine interest in how your partner is performing and feeling. Buddy systems are distinct from mentoring or sponsorship systems, where one party is higher in the hierarchy than the other. Buddying involves peers doing the same or similar work. The outcome should be that both parties are more effective in their job roles and that they feel more secure, valued and content. Buddy systems are a key way of enhancing the security and safety of the workforce.

There is no formal protocol for how a buddy system works, but the following topics provide an effective guide:



- **Sharing of planned activities and locations** - each buddy should know what activities their partner is doing, when they are doing it and where they are.
- **Safety measures for both buddies** - the paired-up team should review the safety measures in place for each other for each of the activities they undertake. The fact that both parties are involved in the review results in a more secure approach to their work.
- **Schedule check-ins with each other** - the pair should set up times when they report on where they are and what they are doing, even if it is only a brief confirmation that they are safe.
- **Reporting on progress of tasks** - by keeping each other up to date with how their work is progressing and on the completion of tasks, both parties can be kept in the picture about their combined efforts.
- **Reporting emergencies** - dealing effectively with emergencies is one of the core benefits of a buddy system. If one party has had an accident or is in danger, the buddy system should have an agreed way of reporting the situation to the core team or command network.

Benefits of a Buddy System:

- The prime issue for working environments where there is an element of jeopardy is that the workforce is safe and secure. The support of a buddy can be critical in reporting danger or rescuing a fellow worker from a threatening situation.
- Buddy systems counter any sense of isolation and provide participants with emotional as well as practical support. Communication between peers is likely to be more beneficial from a mental well-being point of view than talking to management. Both workers can be honest and open without fear of creating an unfavourable impression, which could damage their future prospects.
- New starters at any level in an organisation stand to benefit hugely from a buddy system, as they learn the ropes from a more experienced (but not senior) member of staff. Buddying is a proven approach to successful onboarding.
- Learning from a buddy at work or a fellow student can be a highly effective way of learning and acquiring job skills. In education, it has long been recognised that children learn a huge amount from their classmates, and the same principle applies to the adult world as well.

**Resources:**

- [WorkSafe NB: Violence and Harassment Prevention Guide](#)
- [Canadian Consulting Engineers - Safe Parking Lot Lighting](#)



*Photo Credit: Black Diamond Group*

## 2.0 Creating the Organizational Culture and Providing Personal Support to Enhance Safe RWL Environments

Most companies are familiar with the foundational human resource, health & safety, and labour policies required to create a safe work environment; some are required by federal or provincial law.

The following link compiles federal policies and requirements by province: [HR Insider: Canada's Guide to HR Compliance & Management](#)

To create an organisational culture that is safe for Indigenous People, HR policies must respect Indigenous lived experiences and lives, and nurture a sense of belonging. *Indigenization* means incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

One indigenization solution that's been gaining steam in recent years is the concept of "Two-Eyed Seeing" – or, more simply put, better outcomes are born through a collaboration of two or more unique perspectives.

Indigenizing HR policies and the workplace requires:

- Clarity on the business case for creating a diverse and inclusive organization for all.
  - How does a physically, emotionally, culturally and gender-safe environment enhance the organization?
  - Are leaders championing the development of a diverse, inclusive and safe for all organisation?
- Awareness of where western approaches and policies may overlap, and where they may diverge with Indigenous approaches and teachings, and learn how to balance the two.
- Establish protocols and honoraria guidelines for engaging with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- A review of policies to eliminate unintended barriers to Indigenous employees and ensure policies explicitly include Indigenous cultures and employees.
  - Bereavement policies and family leave.
  - Flexible schedules for and recognition of cultural holidays.
  - Acknowledge that some Indigenous employees require time off for reconnection to community or traditional practices such as hunting and fishing.
- Culturally sensitive Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
  - Include the use of Indigenous Elders as a part of Employee Assistance Programs
- Respecting the need for Indigenous workers to be able to practice tradition and ceremony in the workplace to ensure those practices are carried on for future generations.
- Understanding that Indigenous spiritual practices are not like an organized religion. Different nations or communities may have different practices.

### **"Two-Eyed Seeing" or "Etuaptmumk" in Mi'kmaw**

*"Learning to see with one eye the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and with the other eye the strengths of western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to learn to use both eyes together."* **[Learn More](#)**

Introduced by Mi'kmaw **[Elder Albert Marshall](#)** from Eskasoni First Nation



- For RWL this is important to keep in mind as companies and their operations interact with a variety of nations and communities. The more informed you are as an employer of various practices, the better equipped to appropriately respond to Indigenous employee needs.

## Policies Are Not Enough

In addition to having policies in place, there is a need to implement procedures and programs that build buy-in, support participation and develop capacity to realize a respectful, inclusive, safe, and equitable workplace.

Clear and specific support mechanisms play a crucial role in helping non-Indigenous and Indigenous employees navigate and adhere to Organisational policies designed to create a respectful, inclusive and safe work environment. Intentional programming and training provide guidance and direction to ensure all policies are followed to the best of an employee's abilities. Capacity-building will help to provide all employees with the proper tools to understand the policies and expectation, and make well informed, ethical decisions.

Support mechanisms can encourage consistency, reduce risk of policy violations, address ambiguity, and foster a healthier and safer workplace, especially for those part of vulnerable communities. The more support mechanisms that are easily accessible by staff, the more informed and cohesive an organisations' workforce will be.

Many resources exist. The following section identifies some key considerations for the unique RWL environment, and wise practices and resources are shared here and the throughout the RWL toolkit.

## Supporting the Physical, Emotional and Cultural Wellness of Employees and Guests

Workers that stay in remote workforce lodgings exist in a unique working and living environment. Their workdays are generally long, physically demanding, and stressful. When not on shift and staying at an RWL, they are distanced from friends and family, hobbies, personal wellness outlets, and often any social interactions outside of their colleagues. This type of isolation may have damaging effects on a persons' mental and social wellbeing, and may lead to destructive behaviours, including alcohol abuse and drug use.

It is imperative to a workers' wellbeing that RWL operators provide an environment that not only discourages potentially destructive behaviours but encourages healthy habits and provides resources to help mitigate potential struggles associated with remote work. Offering supports to build a healthy routine while working remotely creates a positive environment for all guests and employees of the RWL, and in turn fosters a safe and supportive work culture.



Key Considerations:

- Visibly respect and value Indigenous culture:
  - Develop an authentic traditional land acknowledgement to enhance awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights.
  - Acknowledge Indigenous commemorative and awareness days the significance of Indigenous Awareness Month, National Indigenous Peoples Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Red Dress Day, etc.
  - Opening ceremony of remote workforce lodging to include Indigenous ceremony
  - Provide traditional healing ceremonies and other cultural relevant services and activities to all remote lodgings workers as a way for cross-cultural learning.
  - Provide cultural programming and recreational activities that educate all workers more about nearby Indigenous communities nearby and build respect for each other.
  - Prioritize the importance of understanding Indigenous culture and engage in co-sponsorship opportunities with nearby Indigenous communities.
  - Finding champions within the organisation that willingly and openly adopt these practices and learn from them.
- Accommodations for cultural practices:
  - Provide safe spaces for Indigenous workers to engage in cultural practices. (smudging, prayer, meditation, etc.)
    - Look at air quality control systems and consider smoke detection protocols in order to allow smudging.
  - Provide traditional foods for meals offered in the workforce lodging.
  - Using talking or healing circles.
  - Dress-code accommodations.
- Create safe space for Indigenous women and others that feel vulnerable to talk about personal safety.
  - Safe spaces provide a platform to openly discuss experiences, challenges, and concerns related to safety in the workplace. Open discussion also allows for validation and empowerment, allowing their feelings and experiences to be acknowledged by their peers.
  - On-site and/or online Indigenous mental health support staff.
- On-site amenities that enhance physical and mental well-being:
  - Support groups, services and programs to help social problems.
  - Organized and individual recreational activities (indoor and outdoor).
  - Quiet spaces: library, tv room/theatre, etc.
  - Healthy living programs, such as fitness and nutrition, physical and mental health supports, and life coaching programs.
  - Access to high-speed Internet to facilitate communication with family and friends.
- Workplace training and education:



- Education and training to understand the regional and community context the RWL is situated on and/or the company is working in.
- The importance of traditional foods to Indigenous communities and indicate off-limit areas for hunting, fishing, and food gathering.
- Implement programs that educate on the practice of culture and ceremony in workplace lodgings to promote tolerance and respect.
- Programs to educate workers about vulnerabilities associated with hitchhiking.
- Programs that increase financial management capacity for Indigenous employees.
  - Planning for after their employment ends with the company if it is temporary.
- Training and resources for recognizing and preventing human trafficking.
  - Concerns have been raised that increased economic development in an area increases the risk of human trafficking. Training RWL staff and guests to recognize potential signs and indicators of human trafficking can help to identify victims.

## Wise Practices:

### Indigenous Employee Network

The primary purpose of Employee Networks (sometimes call Employee Resources Groups) is to offer support, mentoring, and networking opportunities to their members while promoting the understanding and appreciation of various cultures and experiences throughout the organisation.

Benefits of establishing an Indigenous Employee Network include:

- A sense of belonging and social connections by providing a safe and supportive space for Indigenous employees to connect with others who share their experiences and identities.
- A platform for sharing experiences and fostering understanding of different cultures, experiences, and perspectives within the organisation.
- A resource for advocating for a more responsive and inclusive workplace culture. An Indigenous Employee Network can serve as a powerful voice for change within the organisation, advocating for policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Assist with the recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees.
- Provides a forum for employees to make recommendations and influence school policy;
- Professional development and leadership opportunities through their involvement with the network. Planning, organising and implementing activities are management skills that can be demonstrated through membership activities.
- Serve as a valuable source of feedback for organisational leaders as they work to create more inclusive policies and practices.

An Employee Network specific to Indigenous Women would offer the same benefits to both network members and the RWL organisation.

## Resources:

- [Effective employee resource groups are key to inclusion at work. Here's how to get them right.](#)

- [Best Practices For Employee Resource Groups: Success Strategies](#)

## Indigenous Allyship in the Workplace

The allyship of non-Indigenous employees is critical to fostering a physically, emotionally, culturally safe workplace culture. Being an Indigenous ally requires non-Indigenous people to recognize the privilege that settler cultures have and take for granted. An ally works to disrupt oppressive spaces by educating others on the realities and histories of marginalized people. Allies inspire others to act as a change agent.

*While Indigenous leaders may recognize that it may be only a small percentage of men that are responsible for the epidemic of sexual violence against Indigenous women in or near industrial project worksites and camps, they also recognize that failure to address the sexist and racist culture that tolerates such violence likely perpetuates the situation. To address the root causes of sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls, men must be educated and trained not to be “bystanders”. (NWAC Indigenous Women and Impact Assessment Roundtable)*

### Resources:

- [Indigenous Allyship Toolkit](#)
- [10 Ways to be an Ally to Indigenous People](#)

## Unconscious Bias Training

Categorizing information in our brain is universal. With so much information and stimuli coming our way, the brain’s instinct is to sort it quickly and efficiently. These shortcuts are helpful when deciding important things like what might be dangerous or even little things like what breakfast cereal to buy. But when our brains use shortcuts to categorize people based on surface traits, it’s called unconscious bias. These biases, when unexamined, can lead to stereotyping and discrimination—ultimately harming productivity, morale, and retention at work.

Unconscious bias training seeks to raise awareness of the mental shortcuts that can lead to stereotyping and discrimination and have a negative impact on interactions with fellow workers. Importantly, training needs to provide an organisation and its employees strategies for addressing the use of these mental shortcuts that can lead to snap judgements and decisions, and hinder the development of an inclusive and safe workplace for all.

### Resources:

- [Harvard Business Review: Unconscious Bias Training That Works](#)

## Cultural Awareness & Cultural Competency Training

These two concepts are very much related, which involve acknowledging, understanding, and navigating cultural differences. However, they differ in the extent to which individuals build capacity to engage in and respect cultural diversity.

**Cultural awareness** refers to a level of knowledge and recognition of cultural differences, and involves a conscious acknowledgement of different cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices.





It involves effort in being open-minded and receptive to learning about other cultures and is an important step in cultural competency.

**Cultural competency** goes beyond knowledge and awareness; it is the ability to effectively and appropriately interact with individuals and communities of different cultural backgrounds. It involves developing skills and behaviours necessary in engaging and communicating with diverse cultures, and allows an individual to adapt their communication style, decision-making, and problem-solving approaches depending on the culture that is being engaged with.

#### **Resources:**

- [Cultural Competence in the Workplace: What Leaders Need to Know](#)

### **TC Energy/Coastal GasLink Community Workforce Accommodation Advisor (CWAA) Program**

Employs members from neighbouring Indigenous communities to lead programming that promotes inclusion and fosters a deeper understanding of the rich cultures and traditions of Indigenous communities.

#### **Resources:**

- [TC Energy/Coastal GasLink Community Workforce Accommodation Advisor \(CWAA\) Program](#)

### **Deloitte Revamps The Organisations Policies & Procedures To Acknowledge And Celebrate Indigenous Cultures In The Workplace**

As part of the organisation's ongoing commitment to empowering Indigenous Peoples and communities, policy changes include:

- The introduction of five cultural days for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, which will be an opportunity for Indigenous employees to engage in cultural and traditional practices that may fall within typical work hours.
- Coverage for Indigenous health expenses, such as traditional medicines, elders, and healers through our benefits provider.
- Updated bereavement guidelines to accommodate cultural practices. In 2021, paid bereavement days were increased from three to 10, relationship limits for eligibility were removed, and the requirements for the days to be taken consecutively were eliminated. While this benefit now applies to all people at Deloitte, this was a strong recommendation from Indigenous Peoples at the firm.

### **Mentorship & Sponsorship Programs**

A sponsorship program and a mentorship program are two distinct tools that organisations can implement to support employee development and career advancement. While both involve guidance and support, they differ in their scope, objectives, and the level of involvement.

A **mentorship** is a relationship between the mentor, someone who shares their learned experience, knowledge, and provides guidance to a mentee. Contrary to popular assumption, a mentor does not have to hold rank over the person they are guiding; rather, it is a peer-to-peer relationship between two individuals with varying levels of experience in the workforce. There are also group mentorship programs, offering the same knowledge sharing and learning experience.

A **sponsorship** often stems from a successful mentorship. As a mentee builds their merit and displays evidence of growth and development, a mentor can advocate for their mentee and may be willing to campaign for their career advancement. In this case, the mentor becomes a sponsor, advocating for their mentee-turned-protégé's work and giving confidence in their work when they may not be present. As the sponsor is putting their own reputation behind the protégé, they must have confidence and trust in who they are sponsoring, making a strong mentorship an important basis for their relationship.

### Resources:

- [What's the Difference Between a Mentor and a Sponsor?](#)
- [Mentors and Sponsors Make the Difference](#)

## Using Circles to Build Relationships in the Workplace

When people feel disconnected from one another they have more incentive to behave inappropriately because they are less concerned about the consequences of their behaviour.

To show that we are all part of creation, all equal to one another, and all equally vulnerable, we use circles where we sit by side by side to share our perspectives, thoughts, and emotions. Each participant can feel that they will be heard and respected within the circle.

Circles are used to build community, foster connections, facilitate greater understanding of one another, and increase relationships between people. Circles are used to hold people accountable as well as facilitate decision-making in a way that encourages people to be responsible for their behaviour and for the outcomes of decisions. Circles are also used to deepen supports between people and provide a forum for nurturing one another.

Circles are used to build and maintain relationships. They are meant to be collaborative, engaging, to encourage input and opinions, and deepen peoples' understandings of one another. When relationships based on trust are in place ahead of time, it is easier to repair harm when conflict arises.

The circle is a powerful symbol. The nature of the circle itself, as well as what occurs in the circle, helps achieve the goal of building relationships. The circle creates:

- **Equality** – everyone has equal seating.
- **Safety and Trust** – everyone can see one another.
- **Inclusion and Responsibility** – everyone has a chance to participate and can be heard.
- **Connection** – provides an opportunity to hear from others and shows how one person's actions affect many other people, not just the individual harmed.



- **Community** – a connection where connections may not have existed before.
- **Wholeness** – an opportunity to show that actions can restore as well as harm.

Connected people can work together to repair harm, restore dignity, and feel whole again. It empowers the person who did harm to see that they can have a positive effect on others.

### Circle Protocol

- Engage participants by letting them set the rules for the circle at the beginning of the conversation. Many people are accustomed to the circle format and will have a general idea about how to respond. You can ask, “What are some rules that we can use to ensure our circle is respectful and inclusive?” When participants feel engaged in setting rules and norms for participation, they will be more likely to assist in enforcing them.
- Participation is voluntary! A person may decide to ‘pass’ rather than answer.
- You may start with an individual who volunteers to answer first. After responding, he or she can decide whether the circle will flow left or right.
- Using a talking-piece is important. Choose an item that is significant to the group, like an eagle feather or stone, to appropriately pass around the circle.
- If a sacred item is used in the circle, and women are on their time, it may be appropriate for a person sitting next to the woman to hold the sacred item for the woman while she is talking.
- You may start the circle with a smudge if that is appropriate for the group and you or another participant feels confident in leading a smudge. If it feels forced, then don’t worry about it. Make sure people feel comfortable.

### The Role of the Facilitator

- Your job is to facilitate a welcoming, supportive, engaging environment, where people feel comfortable sharing.
- You do not want participants to talk to you directly, so make sure you are not making too much eye contact. You can smile at individuals and look away when they talk to you, to encourage speakers to direct their attention to others within the circle.
- Acknowledge all participants equally. If you give supportive feedback to one participant, give it to all. It is appropriate to say ‘thank you’ to participants after they are done talking, but try not to engage in discussions with participants.
- As a facilitator, it is good practice to come back to anyone who ‘passed’ to ask if they have found an answer after everyone has finished speaking.

### **Resources:**

#### *Creating Inclusive Workplace Environments for Indigenous Workers:*

- [6 Steps to Create an Inclusive Environment for Indigenous Workers](#)
- [Guide to Developing Indigenous Inclusion Policies](#)
- [Cultivating Safe Spaces](#)
- [Indigenous Works: Seven-Stage Inclusion Continuum](#)

- Assessing what stage of inclusion your organisation is at and competencies required to move through the continuum.
- [Best Practices on Organisations doing Reconciliation And Retaining Indigenous Employees](#)
- [Why are territorial acknowledgements important?](#)
  - Reg Crowshoe, former Chief, Piikuni First Nation, and UCalgary senate member, explains the importance of acknowledging the traditional territories of Indigenous people.
- [Why acknowledge territory?](#)
- [Land Acknowledgements: From Recitation, To Real](#)

*Indigenous Honorarium Payment Guidelines:*

- [University of Victoria](#)
- [University of Northern British Columbia](#)
- [Queens University](#)
- [First Peoples Cultural Council: Working with Elders](#)
  - Guidelines for including Elders in a project or event.



*Photo Credit: Royal Camp Services Ltd.*

*Policies*

Smudging & Use of Ceremonial Smoke in the Workplace:

- [McMaster University Smudging Protocol for the Burning of Traditional and Sacred Medicines](#)
- [University of Alberta Smudging Policy](#) - specifically addresses Smudging in Residence Rooms
  - **At Move In**—In accordance with the practice of cleansing a new living space, students may smudge their residence room when they first move in. Students who desire to smudge when first moving into the University residences will have the opportunity to indicate their desire to do so via email to the Resident Services/Residence Coordinator. The Residence Coordinator will then contact them to find an adequate time to do so.
  - **At Other Times and For Special Occasions** - Students desiring to smudge as part of prayer are asked to use the multi-faith Prayer Room. Students desiring to smudge their residence room on special occasions may ask the Residence Coordinator to submit a request and provide seven days' notice.
- [G'minoomaadomin: We Are Living Well Employee Resource Toolkit](#)
  - Designed to address the growing need for education, training, and skills for First Nations employers to create healthier and safer workplaces. Sample policies include:
    - Our Respectful Community Code of Conduct
    - Workplace Wellness Policy
    - Cultural Safety Policy
    - Psychological Safety Policy
    - Domestic Violence Policy



- Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy
- Accommodation Policy

### *Human Trafficking*

- [The Psychological Impact of Remote Rotational Work](#)
- [#notinmycity](#)
- [Truckers Against Trafficking – Energy Program](#)

## 3.0 Authentic Community Engagement

### Introduction

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with communities that a RWL is situated in or near is imperative to the operation’s success and a company’s reputation. Engaging with the community in meaningful, respectful, and collaborative ways will ensure positive and mutually beneficial relationships for the lifespan of the project. It requires an in-depth understanding of the communities’ values, needs, goals, expectations, capacity for engagement, and current well-being.

Indigenous communities vary from one another, all with their own history, struggles, strengths, and ability to engage and negotiate. Establishing a relationship early and assessing a communities’ financial, social, and environmental circumstances will establish a baseline for negotiations, and is the first step towards a positive and mutually beneficial relationship for the lifespan and legacy of an RWL.

### Starting Off on the Right Foot

Research into wise practices recommends there is an extensive review of social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts and is inclusive of gender-based analysis to inform the use, siting and operational plans associated with remote workforce lodgings to be located near Indigenous communities.

While solutions to concerns and mitigation to perceived risks need to be co-created with the community, it is wise for RWL owners and operators to be aware and prepared to discuss the following:

- Transportation plans:
  - To and from the RWL
  - RWL to worksite
  - Personal vehicle use and parking



*Photo Credit: Black Diamond Group*

- Potential use and pressure on local services and infrastructure.
  - If local services are required, identify opportunities to implement strategies that minimize impact, such as the use of high-efficiency appliances and low-flow fixtures (toilets, sinks, showers) and waste management and recycling programs.
- How to optimize local procurement of goods and services.
- How the workforce lodging culture will be developed and enforced by policies, procedures, and programs.
- Concerns regarding RWL residents' conduct and the potential security risk, increased drug and alcohol use and associated activity, crime including theft, sexual harassment and assault, and increased demand for sex trafficking and sex work.
- Policies on drugs and alcohol.
- Physical set up of the RWL to ensure safety and what programs and services are available for workers.
- What will be done to ensure RWL does not have a negative impact on traditional economic activities.
- Gaining an understanding of potential barriers to hiring locals and ways to address them.
- The need to design a monitoring framework to monitor compliance with all environmental, social, cultural, economic and employment benefits.
- Supervision of the performance of all staff, contractors, and subcontractors.
- How grievances will be responded to.
- End-of-life uses of the RWL beyond decommissioning and remediation, including the potential for the community to reuse some of the infrastructure.

It is recognized that for RWLs to address some of these items, input and collaboration from a project proponent/operator may be required.

Leadership must be visible in promoting a healthy relationship between the remote workforce lodging and community.

## Cultural-Gender Sensitivity During the Engagement Process

*Summarized from [Native Women's Association of Canada: Impact Assessment Report](#)*

When engaging in consultations or negotiations with Indigenous peoples, governments and industry must ensure Indigenous women are provided with opportunities to meaningfully participate in expressing their concerns and perspectives and be assured their contributions will be responded to and heard.

A culturally relevant gender lens needs to be employed. This includes understanding Indigenous women's unique relationship with the land and culturally important sites to specifically identify potential negative effects of an RWL and the industries they provide services to may have on Indigenous women and, by extension, the children.



At the same time, it is important to explore the opportunities to improve their socio-economic conditions. This includes consulting with Indigenous women to identify barriers to access to employment and career advancement as well as potential measures to address those barriers and facilitate greater participation in the workforce. Efforts to implement these measures must be purposeful and genuine.

Patience is required. Indigenous women participating in consultation and engagement sessions may refrain from speaking for an extended period. Often, a participant may first sit and listen to the information being presented and take time to discuss the matters with their family before offering responses. It is important not to confuse a participant’s reservation to provide immediate thoughts and opinions as a form of passive consent.

## Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA)

Summarized from [First Nations LNG Alliance: Benefits Agreements: A Wayfinding Guide](#)

IBAs are a legally binding agreement between the company and community, which frames the immediate and long-term successes for both parties, acknowledges the needs and interests of both parties and steps to be taken to fulfill and monitor the project. An IBA should be iterative and flexible, structured to allow for adaptation should there be deficiencies as the project develops.

They should be structured as follows:

- I. **Pre-negotiation** – The community and company relationship is established, the community’s capacity to negotiate and benefit is assessed and supported if necessary, and goals, needs, and expectations for both parties are identified.
- II. **Negotiation** – Both monetary and non-monetary benefits are decided, best practices are established, environmental and traditional land impacts are acknowledged with protections placed, and governance is clearly laid out.
- III. **Implementation** – Benefits and adverse impacts are managed, the IBAs performance is monitored, and the IBA is adjusted as needed.
- IV. **Conclusion** – The project finishes, the IBAs performance through the lifecycle is evaluated for future agreements, and a positive legacy of the IBA is ensured.

*Key Considerations for Establishing an Effective IBA:*

### **Community Interactions**

- Establish a relationship with the community and assess their needs, goals, and capacities prior to IBA negotiations.
- Have a comprehensive understanding of the community’s values and culture.
- Be familiar with the cultural calendars of the communities with which they will engage because seasonal and festive events can have significant effects on community members’ availability to participate in engagement processes.
- Appoint community representatives and a negotiating team.
- Hold public community meetings and panels prior to and throughout the project’s lifecycle.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor the community’s perceptions and well-being.</li> <li>▪ Establish direct lines of communication between the company and the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring Long-Term Benefits and Minimizing Negative Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify the long-term impacts of the RWL after project completion.</li> <li>▪ Work with local community services to ensure that corporate investment is aligned with local needs and priorities,</li> <li>▪ Establish specific programs and resources that will be left for the community, such as employment support, education and training programs, and infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Pay particular attention to the specific needs of Indigenous women and girls.</li> <li>▪ Conduct environmental impact assessment and take appropriate measures to mitigate negative impacts during and after project completion.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring Economic and Non-financial Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the establishment and development of Indigenous businesses in support of the project and community.</li> <li>▪ Prioritize community-employment through all aspects of the project, including construction and operation of the RWL.</li> <li>▪ Establish and ensure economic compensation through royalties, profit shares, fixed cash amounts linked to key milestones, equity interest, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimize Negative Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the IBA is iterative and flexible to allow for adjustments based on the community’s needs.</li> <li>▪ Support environmental laws and regulations with supplemental provisions, advised by the community.</li> <li>▪ Identify and minimize potentially negative social and cultural impacts of the RWL.</li> </ul>
<b>Support Gender Equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify the critical issues in the community for social inclusion, outlining women’s strategic and practical needs.</li> <li>▪ Establish women’s capacity for negotiation and effective engagement.</li> <li>▪ Appoint gender champions at a corporate and project level.</li> <li>▪ Ensure IBA and company policies have gender-specific provisions and goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Collect Relevant and Impactful Data, Information, and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish with the community what content of data is relevant to their interests and priorities.</li> <li>▪ Allow for the community to dictate the content of data collected about them, and who can access the information.</li> <li>▪ Acknowledge that First Nations are not a homogenous group, and each unique community must have sovereignty of the data collection.</li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous Mental Wellness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage with community members early, and in an inclusive and culturally respectful manner.</li> <li>▪ Be mindful of community history, needs, and goals when conducting engagement.</li> </ul>





- Establish a baseline for measurement and assessment of community well-being.
- Conduct community-driven mitigation strategies and programs such as psychiatric therapy, cultural and spiritual development, and company training for cultural competency and sensitivity.

### Resources:

- [A Brief Definition of Decolonization and Indigenization](#)
- [It's Our Time: The AFN Education Toolkit](#)
  - A resource to bring together First Nations and non-First Nations people and foster a spirit of cooperation, understanding and action.
- [WhoseLand](#)
  - A web-based app that uses GIS technology to assist users in identifying Indigenous Nations, territories, and Indigenous communities across Canada. These maps are fluid and ever-changing and should be used as an educational tool to create dialogue around reconciliation.
- [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#)
  - Created by The Royal Canadian Geographical Society in conjunction with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and Indspire.
- [First Nations Major Projects Coalition: Guide to Effective Indigenous Involvement In Federal Impact Assessment](#)
- [About Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA Plus\)](#)
- [Protocols for Engaging with Indigenous Peoples & Communities](#)
- Yellowhead Tribal College and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extensions Indigenous Programs:
  - [Indigenous community Industry Relations \(ICIR\) Certificate and Indigenous Community Engagement \(ICE\) Citation](#)

## 4.0 Contribute to the Economic Security for All as a Foundation to Empowerment and Safety

### Introduction

Most Indigenous leaders and communities recognize a real and pressing need for economic development. Near-term economic gains must be balanced with maintaining traditional economic activities rooted in spiritual connections to the land and cultural practices. Stewardship of the environment is prioritized over financial gain. This is often referred to as the “Seventh Generation

Principle.” It refers to the belief that decisions being made today about development is sustainable for seven generations in the future.

The concept of economy is often very different for Indigenous peoples than for non-Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples tend to take a much more holistic definition of the economy. Traditional Indigenous economies are based on relationships with land, which satisfy not only sustenance and wealth needs but also serve as sources of psychological well-being and identity. This may be even more true for Indigenous women.

The potential for economic benefits for Indigenous communities associated with resource-related development, including the use of RWLs, is well documented. The challenge is that without intentional and meaningful measures, those who are already under-represented in receiving the socio-economic benefits, including many Indigenous women and other vulnerable peoples, are at risk of becoming more marginalized.

The low participation in employment and other economic opportunities, along with the lack of adequate services, supports, and housing issues that many Indigenous communities face, can lead to extreme economic insecurity for vulnerable Indigenous women and other groups. This, combined with the rising cost of living that often accompanies resource development, may force them into unsafe situations, such as sex work, in order to make ends meet.

*Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action #92 specifically calls on businesses to ensure that Indigenous Peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Indigenous communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.*

## Growing Indigenous Business to Improve Socio-Economic Conditions of Indigenous Communities

RWLs have a history of building partnerships with Indigenous bands and economic development entities and procuring local goods and services aimed at enhancing local economies. Perhaps less prominent are undertaking measures to ensure Indigenous women-led businesses are being developed and able to respond to product and service sourcing opportunities.

The following identifies some best practices for procuring Indigenous businesses and services with a focus on including Indigenous women:

- Create a dedicated project office to support Indigenous procurement including procurement staff that have been trained on unconscious bias and cultural competency.
  - Understand the barriers Indigenous businesses face.
  - Recognize that level of “business literacy” (proposal-writing skills, marketing, etc.) may not reflect a business’ capacity to deliver goods or services.
  - Understand the value Indigenous culture and knowledge may bring to the delivery of products or services.
- Work with the local communities to establish an Indigenous business directory.
  - Use a broad definition of an “Indigenous business”.



- Identify those business that are led by Indigenous women.
- Understand the unique qualities of Indigenous procurement and “Indigenize” procurement processes:
  - Holistic and collaborative process.
  - Indigenous culture, protocols, and values are a key piece.
  - First priority of a partnership is stewardship, the second is economic development.
  - Create space for Indigenous worldviews that explicitly aim to support Indigenous self-determination and economic inclusion as a measure of “business and reconciliation”.
  - Set aside contracts that are withheld from competitive bids and either procured as a sole-source agreement or as an “Indigenous-only” competition.
- Implement activities that build the capacity of Indigenous businesses to respond to product and service sourcing opportunities:
  - Procurement boot camps, industry-supported business incubator facilities, and mentoring programs.
- Contract negotiations are collaborative, ensure the business’ capacity to negotiate.
- Ensure contracts are meaningful, measurable, and equitable for all parties.
  - Establish achievable, well understood, and measurable performance indicators.



*Photo Credit: Royal Camp Services Ltd.*

## A Focus on Indigenous Women-Led Businesses & Entrepreneurship

- Establish a directory of Indigenous women-led businesses.
  - Include Indigenous women who have the skills and ability to offer products and services, even if they are not a formal “business”.
  - Recognize the value of the cultural and traditional knowledge Indigenous women bring to the work.
- Host workshops specifically designed to address the needs of Indigenous women entrepreneurs and/or those looking to become entrepreneurs.
- Practices that are more likely to attract interest from Indigenous women-led business include:
  - Streamlined application process
  - Smaller contracts
  - Prompt payment of contract invoices
- Offer micro-grants or small repayable loans to support Indigenous women in obtaining the resources they need to operate their business:
  - Cellphones, laptops, etc.
  - Supplies

- Connect Indigenous women entrepreneurs and business owners with resources and supports available for Indigenous women businesses and entrepreneurs, including funding programs, training, networking and mentoring.

## Attraction and Retention of Indigenous Employees

Employment opportunities are a primary benefit associated with resource development and remote workforce lodgings. RWLs offer employment opportunities to Indigenous people who may not qualify for construction or operations jobs. Many of the RWL career opportunities can be obtained with few entry-level qualifications and/or can be quickly trained. These jobs often offer opportunities for residents not qualified for construction or operations.

Indigenous people report that their employment has given them financial independence and greater autonomy, improved family relationships and an overall enhanced quality of life.

For RWL owners and operators to leverage employment as a path to economic security for Indigenous women and vulnerable peoples, there is a need to address the barriers they face including:

- Rotational work arrangements are a challenge for primary caregivers.
- Lack of onsite and affordable childcare.
- Concerns about sexual harassment and assault, racist discrimination, and male-dominated.
- Lack of understanding of the types of employment available to them and how they can qualify for the work.

## Enhancing Employment & Career Development Opportunities for Indigenous Women

- Ensure those who are making hiring decisions have been trained to be culturally competent and aware of unconscious bias.
- Host employment information sessions and hiring fairs specifically for Indigenous women.
- Ensure recruitment materials feature Indigenous workers.
- Designate positions for Indigenous women.
- Rethink job qualifications. Focus on ability and recognize equivalencies of Indigenous women's lived lives that may not be embedded in education and employment experience.
- Create an equitable, diverse and inclusive work environment. *(as outlined in another section)*
  - Develop, communicate, and enforce clear workplace policies for discrimination, sexual assault and harassment.
- Investigate and implement steps such as flexible schedules and providing childcare support to make employment more accessible to primary childcare providers and single parents.
- Strengthen women's employment participation across all occupations, including those that are traditionally male-dominated, including trades, through partnerships with local colleges and other training programs.



- Bring the training to the community.
- Prepare Indigenous women for what it is like to live and work in an RWL.
- Establish formal mentoring programs to connect women to managerial and leadership roles.
- Establish relationships with Indigenous women employees and ask them why they stay with the company to learn about what is important to them.
- Conduct exit interviews with Indigenous women employees that leave to learn if something could have been done better and prevent turnover.
  - Some of the challenges identified for those who do become employed are a lack of financial literacy, access to a bank and a lack of knowledge about workers' rights.

### Resources:

- [National Indigenous Economic Strategy](#)

#### *Procurement:*

- [National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association – Indigenous Procurement Working Group](#)
- Sample Indigenous Procurement Policy: [City of Regina](#)
- [Indigenizing procurement policies must move beyond token gestures](#)

#### *Building Indigenous Women Businesses & Entrepreneurship*

- [National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association – Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Creating a New Narrative: Empowering Indigenous Women Through Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Resources for Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Breaking Barriers: A Decade of Indigenous Women's Entrepreneurship in Canada](#)
- [What is the Seven Generation Principle?](#)

#### *Inclusive Attraction & Retention*

- [Indigenous Works](#): Community of Practice
- [Community Engagement for Indigenous Recruitment](#)
- [11 Community Outreach Tips for Indigenous Recruitment](#)
- [Women Building Futures](#): training and Employer of Choice Program
- [Native Women's Association of Canada National Apprenticeships Program](#)
- [Work Camp Survival Guide](#): Tools, discussion guide, videos, checklists, etc.
- [The Role of the Indigenous Employment Coordinator](#)