



Annual Report FY 19/20



Where ideas work

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Executive Message

From Don Wright

Deputy Minister to the Premier, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Public Service



Integrity and ethics have always been important to the BC Public Service. The Oath of Employment, Standards of Conduct and Corporate Values are an integral part of the BC Public Service culture. The Standards of Conduct articulate that we all have an obligation to disclose misconduct and wrongdoing, and they have included reprisal protections for employees since 1997.

The implementation of the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA), effective December 1, 2019 in the BC Public Service, provides an opportunity to enhance those provisions with an additional mechanism for disclosure in cases of serious wrongdoing and protection against reprisals for those disclosing the information. The legislation encourages employees to speak up when they have questions or see something that isn't right, knowing they will be protected.

This report fulfills the legislative reporting requirements outlined in section 38 of the Act, and also serves to promote accountability and transparency, demonstrating the BC Public Service values and integrity through our actions.

Public Interest Disclosure Act

Speaking up when things aren't right demonstrates our public service values and commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens and colleagues. Employees of the BC Public Service can choose to report wrongdoing under the [Public Interest Disclosure Act \(PIDA\)](#). The Act came into effect for employees in the BC Public Service on December 1, 2019.

This legislation provides a framework for employees to report specific kinds of serious wrongdoing with legislated protection from reprisal. Here are the kinds of wrongdoing that would qualify to be investigated under the Act:

- A serious act or omission that, if proven, would constitute an offence under an enactment of B.C., or Canada
- An act or omission that creates substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons, or to the environment, other than a danger that is inherent in the performance of an employee's duties or functions
- A serious misuse of public funds or public assets
- Gross or systemic mismanagement
- Knowingly directing or counselling a person to commit wrongdoing as described above

Public interest disclosures must be about a matter of public interest and serious wrongdoing in or relating to a ministry, office or government body.

Public Interest Disclosure Act Reporting

Section 38 of PIDA articulates the reporting requirements related to public interest disclosures in the BC Public Service. This report does not contain any information that could lead to the identification of individuals who have made a disclosure or participated in a PIDA investigation. No personal information is disclosed as part of any public reports issued about PIDA.

Agency Designated Officer Responsibilities

Under the Act, the BC Public Service introduced a centralized model for managing and investigating disclosures. This model ensures that there is a consistent process in place for employees to report serious wrongdoing. The investigations into disclosures of wrongdoing are led by the Agency Designated Officer, a new role created with the implementation of PIDA. The Assistant Deputy Minister of Employee Relations at the BC Public Service Agency has been designated as the Agency Designated Officer for the BC Public Service. The Designated Officer

for political staff (as defined in the [Standards of Conduct for Political Staff](#)) is the Chief of Staff, Office of the Premier.

Since implementation, the Agency Designated Officer has focused efforts on developing the necessary policies, procedures, tools and templates required to conduct assessments and PIDA investigations. Disclosures are assessed by the Agency Designated Officer upon receipt to ensure that the disclosure was made by an employee or former employee of the ministry and that if proven, the allegations would constitute a wrongdoing under the Act. As of March 31, 2020, five disclosures had been received by the Agency Designated Officer for the BC Public Service (see Table 1 for figures). These disclosures are being assessed, and no investigations have been concluded at this time.

No disclosures were received by the Designated Officer for political staff as of March 31, 2020.

As of March 31, 2020, the Agency Designated Officer for the BC Public Service received notification of one disclosure made to the Office of the Ombudsperson under PIDA. In this case, the Office of the Ombudsperson elected to initiate an investigation under PIDA, but as of the date of this report this investigation was not concluded.

Four inquiries have been received by the Agency Designated Officer. These inquiries have ranged from general requests for more information about PIDA and how it works to specific inquiries about how to make a disclosure.

**Table 1: Number of Disclosures Received
December 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020**

Ministry	Disclosures Received	Investigations Initiated	Investigations Concluded	Investigations Carried Over
BC Public Service	5	0	0	0
Total	5	0	0	0

*Per section 38 of PIDA, there is a requirement to report out on disclosures and investigations by ministry and political staff. A rolled-up figure has been used to ensure confidentiality and additional reprisal prevention and protection for those who have made a disclosure during the four-month reporting period.

Appendix A: PIDA Resources and Links

Key references and resources related to PIDA.

Legislation

[Public Interest Disclosure Act](#)

PIDA Information and Resources

[Making a Public Interest Disclosure - Province of British Columbia](#)

[HR Policy 24 - Public Interest Disclosure](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions - PIDA](#)

[PIDA Procedures for BC Government Ministries](#)

[PIDA Procedures for Political Staff](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act Guidance for Ministry Supervisors - Province of British Columbia](#)

[Office of the Ombudsperson | Public Interest Disclosure - Office of the Ombudsperson](#)

Ethics Information and Advisory Service

[Ethics and Standards of Conduct](#)

[Talking to Your Employees About Ethics & the Standards of Conduct - Province of British Columbia](#)

[Who to Talk to About BC Public Service Employee Ethics - Province of British Columbia](#)

[Ethics & Standards of Conduct for Political Staff - Province of British Columbia](#)

[Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service Employees - Province of British Columbia](#)

[Standards of Conduct for Political Staff](#)