

Anti-Racism Toolkit

April 2021

STANDING TOGETHER

AGAINST RACISM

Toronto Construction Association
The Acoustical Association of Ontario
TOGETHER

Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario
DIVERSITY Council of Ontario Construction Associations
FAIRNESS Ontario Association of Demolition Contractors DIFFERENCES
Peterborough Construction Association Hamilton-Halton Construction Association
Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association APPRECIATION Windsor Construction Association
AWARENESS Construction Association of Thunder Bay COMMUNITY Niagara Construction Association
Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association PARTNERSHIP Ontario Masonry Contractors' Association
HEALTH North East Ontario Construction Association HUMANITY London & District Construction Association
Barrie Construction Association CULTURES Ontario Structural Steel Fabricators Association EMPOWERMENT
INCLUSIVE Architectural Glass & Metal Contractors Association VALUES Utility Contractors' Association of Ontario
Grand Valley Construction Association CARE Ontario Erectors Association LOVE Canadian Farm Builders Association
Samia Construction Association CELEBRATE Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario Inc. TRANSGENDER
Canadian Institute of Steel Construction (Ontario Region) TOLERANCE Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada
Ontario Industrial Roofing Contractors Association JUSTICE Ontario Painting Contractors Association COLLABORATIVE
Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario RESPECT Reinforcing Steel Institute of Canada

Anti-racism Toolkit

Introduction

The fight against racism has taken on a new sense of urgency. It's a priority issue across North America and in all sectors of the economy, including the construction industry. High-profile incidents of racially motivated violence and harassment aimed at Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) have shone a spotlight on our collective responsibility to take action.

Systemic and lasting change won't happen overnight, but the journey to racial equality starts with a few steps. The best time to begin is now.

COCA has created this online resource as a living document and a launching point for continued learning and action.

This toolkit covers five areas:

1. [Why We Need to Take Action Against Racism](#)
2. [Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities](#)
3. [Writing an Anti-Racism Statement](#)
4. [Sample Policies and Practices](#)
5. [Recommended Reading and Viewing](#)
6. [COCA's Anti-racism Statement](#)

1 - Why We Need to Take Action Against Racism

We've all seen or heard disturbing news reports about incidents of racist violence and harassment in cities across Canada and the U.S. These horrific acts reflect deeply rooted racist beliefs that endanger individuals and weaken our society.

As the Ontario Human Rights Commission says: "Racism and discrimination divide communities, pose a serious threat to peaceful coexistence and exchange among and within communities, imperil democratic and participatory citizenship, and entrench and aggravate inequalities within society."

Here are a few statistics and findings that illustrate the extent and impact of racism in our society.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Black individuals face systemic racism throughout their lives. This creates discrimination and inequity that can lead to deadly consequences.

- Black students are **four times more likely** to be expelled from a Toronto high school than White students.
- Black workers are **twice as likely** as Asian workers and **four times as likely** as White workers to report experiencing racial discrimination in major decisions at workplaces in Canada.
- Black university graduates earn only **80 cents** for every dollar earned by White university graduates, despite having the same credentials.
- Black women are **three times less likely** to have a family doctor than non-racialized women in Ontario.
- Black residents are **20 times more likely** than a White resident to be shot dead by police in Toronto.

At the same time, a 2019 survey indicates nearly half of Canadians believe discrimination against Black people is "no longer a problem" – even as 83 percent of Black people in Canada say they are treated unfairly at least some of the time.

Source: [Boston Consulting Group](#)

HATE CRIMES

Race and ethnicity are the leading factors in hate crimes in Canada. There were more than 870 police-reported hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity in 2019, **an increase of 37 percent** since 2015. Source: [Statistics Canada](#)

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In 2016, the federal government launched a national inquiry into the hundreds of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The final report states that "persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind

Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people." The report contains 231 calls to action reflecting the testimonies of more than 2,380 people. Source: <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>

RACISM AND COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant rates of harassment experienced by Canadians of Asian descent. A June 2020 poll conducted by Angus Reid and the University of Alberta found that of the more than 500 Chinese-Canadians surveyed, half were called names or insulted because of COVID-19, while 43 per cent said they had been threatened or intimidated. In Vancouver, the police department reported that anti-Asian hate crimes skyrocketed by more than 700 percent in 2020, from 12 cases in 2019 to 98 in 2020.

2 - Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities

In Ontario, there are two pieces of legislation that require employers to protect workers from racism and maintain a healthy, safe and discrimination-free work environment. These laws and regulations apply to the workplace, at worksites and work-related events:

- [The Ontario Human Rights Code](#) (OHRC); and
- [The Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA).

The OHRC is a provincial law that gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. It applies to specific areas including employment, housing, services, facilities, and contracts or agreements. The *Code's* goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment based on 17 grounds, including race, sex, disability and age. The [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) (OHRC) promotes and protects human rights, based on the Human Rights Code.

Overview: [Racial Discrimination Brochure](#) (OHRC)

The OHSA sets out the rights and duties of all parties in the workplace, with the goal of making Ontario's workplaces safe and healthy. It requires employers to assess the risks of workplace violence and harassment, develop policies and programs to address and eliminate these risks, and review their plan at least annually.

Overview: [Understanding the Law on Workplace Violence and Harassment](#) (Government of Ontario)

RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

E-Courses (30 minutes each):

[Human Rights 101: Learn about your rights and responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Call it Out: Racism, racial discrimination and human rights](#)

Posters:

[Ontario Human Rights Code Cards](#) to print and display in your workplace.

RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES

If you are being discriminated against at work, [Settlement.Org](#) is a useful website to guide you through your rights and what you can do.

The Government of Ontario provides an overview of your workplace rights on the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development website](#).

[Being Harassed at Work? Information for Workers](#) from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

3 - Writing an Anti-racism Statement

An anti-racism statement is a touchstone in our efforts to create diverse, inclusive and respectful organizations where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. It requires us to take a purposeful approach and commits us to meaningful action against racism and discrimination.

This statement must be more than window-dressing. It must be thoughtful, sincere and action oriented. Here is a framework for writing your anti-racism statement:

- **Acknowledge** that systemic racism exists.
- **Issue a call to action** for your organization.
- **State the specific steps** you will take to eliminate racism.
- **Outline how you will be accountable** to implementing your plan and achieving results.

Example:

You may wish to use the [COCA Anti-Racism Statement](#) as a template that you can modify to suit your organization.

4 - Sample Policies and Practices

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

The Ontario Government offers templates for you to create workplace harassment and violence policies:

Sample Workplace Harassment Policy: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/code-practice-address-workplace-harassment#section-7>

Sample Workplace Violence Policy: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/understand-law-workplace-violence-and-harassment#section-7>

Industry Examples:

Ellis Don Policy: [Respect in the Workplace](#)

Ellis Don Policy: [Violence in the Workplace](#)

ANTI-RACISM

Several companies and organizations within the residential and ICI construction industries have created anti-racism campaigns that include resources, policies and practices you can adapt for your organization.

Ellis Don has taken a leadership role in this area. Their [Inclusive Diversity web page](#) provides an excellent overview and helpful resources that you can use as a guide for your own organization.

As part of this initiative, Ellis Don has made their [Inclusive Diversity online training modules](#) available to the industry at large. This training is completely online and can be accessed 24/7 from any location.

Additional resources from Ellis Don:

- [Anti-racism resources](#): A series of fact sheets on various topics—from “the problem with microaggressions” to “unpacking your privilege”— that raise awareness and knowledge of how our individual actions can contribute to allyship and anti-racism.
- [Eight Steps to Aid Preparedness Against Systemic Racism in Construction](#)
- [Code of Conduct Provisions for Subcontractors](#)
- [Toolbox Talks](#): a monthly overview of various topics relating to Inclusive Diversity
- [Ellis Don Commitment to Inclusive Diversity](#)
- [Stamping out Systemic Racism](#) A message from Samuel Ajobo, P.Eng. at EllisDon and company lead for the Alliance of Black Employee Experience and Leadership (ABEEL).

ECAO Anti-racism Toolbox Talk Resources to assist and educate companies and employees on what racism is, how to recognize it on construction sites, and how to eliminate it.

Built for Respect Anti-racism campaign by Tridel.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Plan from BILD.

RESCON Launches CARE Campaign to Combat Racism in Construction Industry

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Afro Canadian Construction Association A not-for-profit organization founded in September 2020 with the primary goal of increasing the presence of black-owned contracting companies in the Canadian construction industry.

Overcoming Construction Industry Racism Article in Ontario Construction Report.

How to Stamp Out Racism in Construction Blog post by RESCON with links to relevant resources and information.

5 - Recommended Reading and Viewing

For all of us, this is an ongoing journey of learning, growing and taking action against racism. To inform and inspire you on the road ahead, we encourage you to explore some of these resources.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Confronting Racism at Work: A Reading List Source: Harvard Business Review

Seven Important Books for Building an Anti-Racist Workplace Source: Fast Company

Tools to Create Anti-Racist Workplaces Source: Penguin Random House

Indigenous Ally Toolkit Source: Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network

FILMS AND VIDEOS

Anti-racist Film Viewing Recommendations Source: Coolidge Corner Theater

7 Movies You Can Stream Right Now if You're Trying to Understand What it Means to be an Anti-racist Source: Business Insider

10 Documentaries to Watch About Race Instead of Asking a Person of Colour to Explain Things to You Source: DocPlay

6 - COCA Anti-Racism Statement

The Council of Ontario Construction Associations stands with its member associations in our commitment to recognize, address and eradicate all forms of racism and inequities faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) within our organizations and the construction industry at large, including companies, unions, employer associations, workers and job sites.

COCA is on a journey of continuous learning about systemic and individual racism in our society, our organizations and our industry. While on this journey, we will take action to challenge racism in all its forms, whether intentional or unintentional.

Simply put, COCA will not tolerate any forms of racism – period.

We are engaged in this effort alongside our member associations, many of whom have already taken steps to create and promote an inclusive workplace culture free of racism, bullying, and harassment of any kind.

COCA is taking action in these areas:

- We commit to developing policies and practices that foster a culture of anti-racism within our organization.
- We commit to sharing resources that support our members in their respective journeys to becoming diverse, inclusive and welcoming workplaces.
- We commit to promoting and celebrating the work and perspectives of BIPOC individuals in our industry.
- We commit to sharing updates on our progress towards these goals.

As individuals and organizations, we are at various points along the journey to becoming anti-racist. This work will cause discomfort for some, but discomfort means we are making progress. Lasting change is only possible when we move out of our comfort zone.

Achieving racial equality in our industry and our society is an urgent, vital and collective goal. When our individual differences are recognized, respected and valued, we are all stronger.