



Community Care & Safety Policy

River & Sky is a grassroots, not-for-profit arts and music festival committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space for everyone. All those who attend, perform, volunteer, or work at our festival have the right to feel safe, respected, and able to enjoy the art, music, and nature; free from harassment, discrimination, violence or abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is:

- * To affirm River & Sky's commitment to a festival culture grounded in community care, consent, respect, and the collective wellbeing of all participants.
- * To establish clear guidelines for reporting, preventing, and addressing harassment, unsafe conduct, and behavior that harms individuals or the festival community.
- * To ensure the safety, dignity, and autonomy of individuals who experience harm are prioritized.
- * To promote a culture of community care in which festival participants share responsibility for looking out for one another and for the land, recognizing that safety and wellbeing are collective responsibilities.

Scope

- * This Policy applies to all individuals participating in or associated with River & Sky, including but not limited to attendees, staff, volunteers, contractors, vendors, performers, suppliers, sponsors, media partners, board members, and visitors.
- * This Policy also applies:
 - During all phases of the festival, including planning, pre-festival activities, set-up, event days, and tear-down;
 - On all festival grounds and in any spaces designated for festival-related activities, including performer, artist, staff, and volunteer areas; and
 - To conduct occurring offsite where there is a sufficient connection to the festival and where such conduct may reasonably affect the safety, integrity, or reputation of the festival community.

Definitions

Consent

Freely given, informed, enthusiastic agreement to engage in any activity. Consent cannot be assumed, coerced, or implied, and must be obtained without manipulation, intoxication, or pressure. It can be withdrawn at any time.

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Culture of Consent

A shared collective understanding in which respect for personal boundaries, clear communication, and mutual agreement are actively promoted across all interactions and in which participants are encouraged to seek and respect consent and share responsibility for fostering a culture where consent is understood, respected, and prioritized.

Harm

Any unwanted or unwelcome behavior that creates a hostile, intimidating, or unsafe environment. Harm may include, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination based on protected characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race, ability, or age.

Safer Space

Safer spaces are designed to minimize harm, promote participation and provide accessible pathways to provide support for anyone experiencing harm. Safer Spaces reflect shared values of consent, inclusion, and care while acknowledging that safety is subjective and that no space can be completely free from harm or risk.

Festival Participants

For the purposes of this policy, "Festival Participants" means anyone attending, working, volunteering, performing, or otherwise involved or associated with the River & Sky. This includes, but is not limited to, attendees, staff, volunteers, contractors, vendors, performers, artists, suppliers, sponsors, media partners, and board members.

Standards of Behavior & Harassment Guidelines

All River & Sky festival participants are expected to adhere to the following standards and understand that sexual harassment, assault and unsafe conduct will not be tolerated. The following list of behaviors and unsafe conduct that may result in intervention or other safety and accountability measures, including the removal of a person who has caused the harm from the festival:

- * Suggestive remarks, sexual jokes, or pressure to engage in sexual activity when consent is not freely given.
- * Any form of unwanted sexual contact, including touching, groping, or other physical sexual acts.
- * Any sexual activity with someone who cannot give consent due to intoxication (alcohol or drugs), sleep, unconsciousness, or any other condition that prevents clear, informed, and voluntary agreement is strictly prohibited.
- * Non-consensual recording or photography of someone without their knowledge and/or permission.
- * Using authority, peer pressure, or any form of manipulation to coerce sexual activity or attention.

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- * Any form of unwanted, persistent, or aggressive behavior that creates discomfort, distress or fear.
- * Any form of physical aggression, threatening behaviour or violence.
- * Any attempt to punish, intimidate, or threaten someone for reporting harassment, assault, or unsafe behavior.
- * Pressuring or coercing the consumption of alcohol or other substances, or directly providing substances to others in ways that compromise consent, impair decision-making, or undermine the safety and well-being of individuals and the wider community.
- * Any actions that intentionally or recklessly damage the land, water, trees or natural environment or undermine Leave No Trace principles.

Training & Education

River & Sky will provide training, educational materials, and guidance to staff, volunteers, and security personnel, and participants are expected to review and integrate these approaches into their roles. Topics may include:

- * Recognizing harassment and unsafe behavior;
- * Intervening safely and respectfully;
- * Understanding de-escalation pathways, survivor-focused responses and reporting protocols
- * Fostering a culture of community care and mutual responsibility.
- * Reinforce the “Leave No Trace” principles.

Planning & Prevention

River & Sky will proactively embed safety, consent, and community care into festival planning, including:

- * **Pre-Festival Screening:** Reviewing potential suppliers, vendors, performers, and artists before engagement, which may include references, business reviews, social media scans, and inquiries into policies and practices.
- * **Code of Conduct Agreements:** Requiring all staff, volunteers, performers, artists, vendors, and contractors to sign agreements committing to uphold the festival's Code of Conduct. Acceptance of Code of Conduct is also required as part of application submissions, contracts and online ticket purchases.

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- * **Safety Walk-Throughs:** Conducting safety assessments and walk-throughs, as appropriate, to identify higher-risk areas and inform decisions regarding staffing, lighting, signage, and accessibility.
- * **Festival Infrastructure:** Where possible, providing adequate lighting and staff coverage in high-risk areas, including pathways, washrooms, and darker areas of the grounds.
- * **On-Site Supports:** Where possible, River & Sky will work to build relationships with community-based sexual violence and survivor-support organizations to support access to trauma-informed resources, educational materials, and referral information for festival participants during the festival.
- * **Signage:** Providing clear and visible signage throughout the festival to help participants access available supports, resources, and assistance, and to reinforce messages of consent, respect, safety, and community care.

Reporting

Festival participants are encouraged to report any harassment or unsafe situations as soon as possible. Early reporting allows for the most effective response and support.

- * Reports can be made in-person to the festival staff, volunteers, medics or security.
- * River & Sky respects the wishes of the person who has experienced harm in determining how to proceed, including decisions about medical attention, law enforcement involvement, or other support measures.
- * All reports are treated with discretion. Information is only shared on a need-to-know basis to ensure safety and follow-up, in accordance with privacy and workplace safety obligations.
- * Individuals who wish to report incidents after the festival will be provided access to secure reporting channels or designated email address(es). The festival will acknowledge and respond to reports promptly, within a defined timeframe
- * Reports can only be formally initiated by the individual affected. Information shared by others may be considered in support of preventative measures or to help staff respond to potential risks.

Responding

River & Sky is committed to responding to reports of harassment, assault, discrimination, or unsafe behavior in a way that prioritizes the safety, dignity, and wishes of the individual who has experienced harm while fostering a respectful and supportive festival community.

- * When a report is made it must be directed to a designated team member(s) to receive disclosures who will support the individual who has experienced harm by connecting them with security, medics, police or other appropriate authorities, as needed.

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- * The designated team member will explore options with the individual who has experienced harm to support decision-making, and help identify options and supports for the remainder of the festival experience. All responses are guided by the individual's preferences, including whether to involve medical staff, law enforcement, or other support personnel.
- * Festival staff will assess immediate risks or threats to the impacted individual or community. Based on this assessment, appropriate protective actions or immediate safety measures may be required to protect the individual and the wider community, including removing individual(s) reported to have caused harm from the festival grounds, contacting emergency services, or involving other appropriate authorities.
- * Individuals who report harm will be treated with respect and care. River & Sky recognizes that speaking up takes courage and is committed to supporting those who come forward. River & Sky will not restrict, exclude, or disadvantage an individual for having reported harm, except where temporary safety measures are requested by the individual or required to address an immediate and serious risk.
- * Depending on the context and severity of the behavior, responses may also include:
 - A discussion with the individual(s) reported to have caused harm to address the impact of the behaviour and encourage accountability, consent, respect, and community care.
 - Providing information, resources, or opportunities for learning related to respectful behaviour, consent, and community care, where appropriate.
 - Restricting the access of the individual(s) reported to have caused harm to certain areas, activities, or roles at the festival for a defined period.
 - Requesting that individual(s) reported to have caused harm demonstrate meaningful efforts toward accountability, learning, or repair, where appropriate, before consideration is given to restoring access intended to address the reported harm, before consideration is given to restoring access to festival privileges, roles, or activities.
 - Immediate removal of the individual(s) reported to have caused harm from the event and potential bans from future festivals or activities.
 - Reviewing or, where appropriate, suspending or canceling contracts, agreements, or participation arrangements with vendors, performers, artists, or other contracted individual(s) reported to have caused harm.
 - In serious cases, River & Sky may involve emergency services, local authorities, or other appropriate resources, in coordination with the wishes of the impacted individual where possible.

Incident Record Privacy & Storage

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- * All incident records are held by two designated custodians appointed by the Board of Directors, either staff or Board members, and stored in a restricted, password-protected location accessible to custodians only. Information is never shared beyond those with a direct need to know.
- * Full incident records are retained for a minimum of seven years. Records involving serious incidents are retained indefinitely. Anonymized records are retained permanently for trend analysis and continuous improvement.
- * Custodians are responsible for the secure handoff of records when their role changes.

Review & Continuous Improvement

- * River & Sky Board of Directors will review policies, procedures, and practices on an annual basis to ensure they remain relevant, clear, and aligned with evolving community needs and best practices for safety, consent, accessibility, and inclusivity.
- * Feedback from festival participants collected through post-event surveys and communications will be reviewed to identify areas for improvement in training, education, and festival operations.

In particular, all incident reports, whether handled during the festival or reported post-event, will be carefully reviewed to identify trends, potential risks, or gaps in current practices.

R&S Board Approved: June 22, 2026

R&S Board To Review by: June 23, 2027