

Bona Fide Occupational Requirements

In brief

A bona fide occupational requirement (BFOR) is a genuine requirement of a job: something a person must be able to do for the role to work, adopted in good faith and reasonably necessary for the job's purpose. We share ours openly so you have a clear picture of the work before you apply.

These requirements apply to every role at RCY because of the nature of what we do. They are not used to screen out people who bring lived experience, including their own histories of trauma. Lived experience is valued here. We assess each person individually and we provide accommodation. A requirement only becomes a limit when no accommodation could meet it without fundamentally changing the role itself.

If you have questions about what any of this means for you, or you would like to talk through accommodation, please contact Sophie Langlois at Sophie.Langlois@rcybc.ca or 236-478-3870.

The full requirements

The text below is taken from our policy manual (section 3.7).

A bona fide occupational requirement (BFOR) is a standard or competency that is genuinely necessary for the performance of a role, adopted in good faith, and reasonably necessary to accomplish a legitimate work purpose. Where an employee cannot meet a genuine BFOR, even with reasonable accommodation in place, the accommodation may reach the threshold of undue hardship, not because RCY has refused to accommodate, but because the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the role itself. RCY has currently identified one bona fide occupational requirement that applies across the organization and is relevant to the accommodation analysis, cross-referenced in section 4.11. Others may be developed over time, with the same care and tested against the same legal standard before they are adopted. Supervisors do not raise a bona fide

occupational requirement with an employee on their own. Where a supervisor believes a requirement may be relevant, they consult their Executive Director and the Accommodation Coordinator before anything is said to the employee. Where the requirement is then to be discussed with the employee, the Accommodation Coordinator or Executive Director takes part in that conversation.

Capacity to engage with sensitive material

Every role at RCY, even those in support services, involves some level of exposure to accounts of child abuse, neglect, trauma, family separation, colonial harm, and death. For many roles, that exposure is detailed, pervasive, and sustained. The capacity to engage with that material effectively, not without personal impact, but with self-awareness, active self-management, and a willingness to seek support, is a genuine occupational competency. It is not intended to screen out employees who carry their own histories of trauma. On the contrary, lived experience is valued at RCY. This does not mean every employee must engage with every kind of content at all times. People may need to step back from particular material, sometimes for a period and sometimes around specific topics, and we will work to accommodate that wherever we reasonably can. What this requirement sets is only an outer limit. Where someone is unable to engage with the core subject matter of their role even with reasonable accommodation in place, that limit becomes relevant to what the organization is able to offer.

No requirement of this kind is a threshold that employees must clear on their own. RCY's commitment is to explore every reasonable accommodation option before concluding that a requirement cannot be met. A BFOR sets the outer limit of what accommodation can achieve, not the starting point of the conversation. Supervisors should not raise a BFOR in an accommodation conversation without first consulting their Executive Director and the Accommodation Coordinator.