

## *What is the Union Club Guest Membership?*

The Union Club of British Columbia was established in 1879, and is located within walking distance of the Legislative Assembly. One of the many long-standing traditions of the Union Club is to offer complimentary privileges to select politicians and civic leaders in British Columbia. This privilege entitles the holder to full use of Club facilities and access to individual Club functions, with no associated membership fees or dues, while the holder is in their current position. Holders of this type of membership are only required to settle their monthly account for any charges incurred in that month.

## *Can Members accept the Union Club's offer?*

**Yes.** The following sections of the Members' Conflict of Interest Act apply:

- 7(1) A members shall not accept a fee, gift or personal benefit, except compensation authorized by law, that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of their duties of office.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a gift or personal benefit that is received as an incident of the protocol or social obligations that normally accompany the responsibilities of office.

The Union Club's offer is only extended to those holding public office, and so the complimentary privileges are a gift or personal benefit "connected directly or indirectly with the performance of the member's duties of office". However, it is a personal benefit that falls under the section 7(2) exemption as being "an incident of the protocol or social obligations that normally accompany the responsibilities of office". This is because access to the Union Club's facilities allows Members to host guests such as visiting dignitaries or counterparts from other jurisdictions in a private and semi-private environment, which provides Members with the opportunity to more efficiently and effectively carry out their responsibilities of office.

## *Do I need to report that I accepted the offer?*

**Yes.** Gifts or personal benefits must be reported to our Office within 30 days of receipt. Members who have accepted the Union Club's offer must submit complete a Gifts Declaration Form (Form 5), stating the month that their Guest Membership began. As the Guest Membership includes a waiver of annual dues (\$1,920 per year), and initiation fee (\$750), the value should be listed as \$2,670 for the first year and \$1,920 for subsequent years. As all types of memberships have the option to add a spouse at no additional cost, there is no need to declare any value for a spousal membership. As we assume that Members will keep their membership for the entirety of their elected term, there is no need to submit a Gifts Declaration Form each year. Accordingly, Members should notify our office if they cancel their membership at any time before the completion of their term.

**Questions? Contact our Office at (250) 356-0750 or [conflictofinterest@coibc.ca](mailto:conflictofinterest@coibc.ca)**