

Approved 7/27/2023 by FOSS4G-NA 2023 Organizing Committee

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1 FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023 Code of Conduct

Participants at FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023 conference are expected to act respectfully toward others in accordance with the [OSGEO Code of Conduct](#).

FOSS4G is dedicated to providing a harassment-free conference experience for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion, or technology choices. We do not tolerate harassment of conference participants in any form. All communication should be appropriate for a professional audience including people of many different backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate for any conference venue, including talks, workshops, social media, or parties. Be kind to others. Do not insult or put down other attendees. Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate for FOSS4G. Attendees violating these rules may be asked to leave the conference without a refund at the sole discretion of the conference organizers. Thank you for helping make this a welcoming, friendly event for all.

Please read the FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023 Code of Conduct.

If you see or are involved in an incident, please follow the Attendee Procedure for Handling Harassment. Our staff are trained to follow the Staff Procedure for Handling Harassment.

1.1 Introduction

FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023 is a community conference intended for networking and collaboration in the open-source geospatial community.

We value the participation of each member of the FOSS4G community and want all attendees to have an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. Accordingly, all attendees are expected to show respect and courtesy to other attendees throughout the conference and at all conference events, whether officially sponsored by FOSS4G 2023 or not.

To make clear what is expected, all delegates/attendees, speakers, exhibitors, organizers and volunteers at any FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023 event are required to conform to the following Code of Conduct. Organizers will enforce this code throughout the event.

Above and beyond this code of conduct, as an OSGeo event, participants are expected to act respectfully toward others in accordance with the [OSGEO Code of Conduct](#).

The Short Version

FOSS4G is dedicated to providing a harassment-free conference experience for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion, or technology choices. We do not tolerate harassment of conference participants in any form.

All communication should be appropriate for a professional audience including people of many different backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate for any conference venue, including talks.

Be kind to others. Do not insult or put down other attendees. Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate for FOSS4G.

Attendees violating these rules may be asked to leave the conference without a refund at the sole discretion of the conference organizers.

Thank you for helping make this a welcoming, friendly event for all.

The Longer Version

Harassment includes offensive communication related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

Exhibitors at sponsor booths or similar activities are also subject to the anti-harassment policy. In particular, exhibitors should not use sexualized images, activities, or other material. Booth staff (including volunteers) should not use sexualized clothing/uniforms/costumes, or otherwise create a sexualized environment.

Be careful in the words that you choose. Remember that sexist, racist, and other exclusionary jokes can be offensive to those around you. Excessive swearing and offensive jokes are not appropriate for FOSS4G.

If a participant engages in behavior that violates this code of conduct, the conference organizers may take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender or expulsion from the conference with no refund.

Contact Information

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact either our conference chair or the event coordinators:

- Guido Stein, Conference Organizer & Community Committee Co-Chair;
guido@guidostein.com
- Michele Tobias, Community Committee Co-Chair; mmtobias@ucdavis.edu
- Lara Miller, Community Committee; larawoodmiller@gmail.com
- Caitlin Gaborow, Project Manager / Event Coordinator at Delaney Event Management;
caitlin@delaneymeetingevent.com

Conference staff will be happy to help participants contact venue security or local law enforcement, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the conference. We value your attendance.

1.2 Encouraged Behaviors

- Be welcoming. FOSS4G NA 2023 Baltimore conference strives to be a community that welcomes and supports people of all backgrounds and identities. Some examples of behavior that contribute to creating a positive environment include:
 - The use of welcoming and inclusive language;
 - Respect for differing viewpoints and experiences;
 - Empathy towards other community members;
 - Be considerate and patient.
- Actively seek to acknowledge, respect, and understand fellow community members. Any decision you make may affect others, and those consequences should be taken into account. While critique is a natural and important part of our culture, good critiques are kind, respectful, clear, and constructive.
- Assume good faith. It is surprisingly easy to misunderstand each other, be it online or in person. Misunderstandings can easily arise when we are in a rush, or otherwise distracted. Please ask clarifying questions before assuming that a communication was inappropriate.
- Be respectful. Enthusiastic discussions are part of the lifeblood of a successful project but can also lead to disagreements. We should strive to keep our discussions and disagreements appropriate. Members of the FOSS4G NA community should be respectful when dealing with others. We note, however, that non-FOSS4G NA spaces are not part of this Code of Conduct.
- When we disagree, try to understand why. Disagreements, both social and technical, happen easily and often. It is important that we seek to understand each other and work to resolve disagreements and differing views constructively. When someone contradicts your own perceptions, try to understand where the other person is coming from. Try to ask questions that will serve to clarify, rather than to escalate, an issue.

1.3 Behaviors not tolerated

Examples of behaviors not tolerated include, but are not limited to:

- Violent threats or language directed against another person, including deliberate intimidation or harassment (online or in-person);
- Verbal, written, or physical abuse;
- Discrimination of any person or group of persons;
- Discriminatory jokes and language;
- Conduct or speech which might be considered sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, ableist or otherwise discriminatory or offensive in nature;
- The use of unwelcome, suggestive, derogatory or inappropriate nicknames or terms;
- Disrespect towards others (ex. personal insults, innuendo);

- Posting sexually explicit or violent material, or including this content in events such as conference presentations, talks, workshops, or parties;
- Posting (or threatening to post) other people's personally identifying information ("doxing");
- Inappropriate attention or contact. Be aware of how your actions affect others. If it makes someone uncomfortable, stop. This includes:
 - Continued unwelcomed one-on-one communication after a request to cease
 - Unwelcome sexual attention
 - Repeated harassment of others. In general, if someone asks you to stop, then stop.
 - Sustained disruptions of community events and discussions
 - Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behavior

1.4 Scope and Limitations

The Code of Conduct emphasizes marginalized people's safety over privileged people's comfort. The conference committee also has limited resources and a specific scope. We will not act on complaints covering:

- "Reverse"-isms, including "reverse racism", "reverse sexism", and "cisphobia"
- Reasonable communication of boundaries, such as "leave me alone," "go away," or "I'm not discussing this with you"
- Communicating in a "tone of voice" that a person doesn't find congenial
- The logistics of physical events, such as the venue, food and beverage options, or failures to meet an individual or group's particular needs. These matters should generally be discussed with the event organizers

1.5 How to handle a complaint

If you believe anyone is in physical danger, please notify appropriate law enforcement and/or emergency services immediately by calling 911.

For all other situations, it is preferable to work out issues directly with the people involved, or to work with other Community Members who can help you resolve the issue. If you witness a potential violation, you are encouraged to speak up. This may take several forms:

- Talk it out with the offending party (if possible). Assume that communications are positive and that people are treating each other with respect. Cues about emotions are often lacking from digital communications. Many of our modes of digital communication tend towards brevity, which can be easy to interpret incorrectly as being negative.
- If the issue occurred online (such as on Slack), please report the behavior to the moderator, even if you are not among the directly affected parties.

- If the issue occurred on an online platform without a moderator (such as Twitter). Please notify the Code of Conduct Committee
- If you are at an event, reach out to the Code of Conduct Committee to discuss the incident, report inappropriate behavior, and/or seek assistance or moderation.

If you do not wish to invoke the complaint process for moderation but you do feel that FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023 conference organizers should be aware of the incident, then you can make a confidential complaint to a Code of Conduct Committee member and specify that you are seeking No Action. If the Code of Conduct Committee receives multiple No Action complaints about an individual's behavior, it may contact the reporters to inform them and ask if they would like to escalate the incidents for moderation.

1.5.1 Attendee procedure for incident handling

This procedure has been adopted from the Ada Initiative's guide titled "Conference anti-harassment/Responding to Reports" and PyCon 2017's policy.

Contact Code of Conduct Committee. The staff will also be prepared to handle the incident. All of our staff members are informed of the code of conduct policy and guide for handling harassment at the conference. There will be a mandatory staff meeting onsite at the conference when this will be reiterated as well.

Report the harassment incident (preferably in writing) to the Code of Conduct Committee - all reports are confidential.

When reporting the event to staff, try to gather as much information as available, but do not interview people about the incident - Staff will assist you in writing the report/collecting information.

The important information consists of:

- Identifying information (name) of the participant doing the harassing
- The behavior that was in violation
- The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time the report was made)
- The circumstances surrounding the incident
- Other people involved in the incident

The staff is well informed on how to deal with the incident and how to further proceed with the situation.

If everyone is presently physically safe, staff will involve law enforcement or security only at a victim's request. If you do feel your safety in jeopardy please do not hesitate to contact local law enforcement by dialing 911. If you do not have a cell phone, you can use any hotel phone or simply ask a staff member or other conference attendee.

All reports should be made directly to the Code of Conduct Committee.

1.5.2 Staff procedure for incident handling

This procedure has been adopted from the Ada Initiative's guide titled "Conference anti-harassment/Responding to Reports" and PyCon 2017's similar document.

Be sure to have a good understanding of our Code of Conduct policy. Also have a good understanding of what is expected from an attendee that wants to report a harassment incident. These guidelines can be found here.

If there is an immediately dangerous situation, do not hesitate to call 911 first.

All reports should be made directly to Code of Conduct Committee:

If contact cannot be made via phone or email, please proceed to the registration desk.

1. Incident Report - Try to get as much of the incident in written form by the reporter. If you cannot, transcribe it yourself as it was told to you. The important information to gather include the following:

- Identifying information (name) of the participant doing the harassing
- The behavior that was in violation
- The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time the report was made)
- The circumstances surrounding the incident
- Other people involved in the incident

2. Initial Response Prepare an initial response to the incident. This initial response is very important and will set the tone for FOSS4G 2023. Depending on the severity/details of the incident, please follow these guidelines:

- If there is any general threat to attendees or the safety of anyone including conference staff is in doubt, summon security or police.
- Offer the victim a private place to sit,
- Ask "is there a friend or trusted person who you would like to be with you?" (if so, arrange for someone to fetch this person)
- Ask them "how can I help?"
- Provide them with your list of emergency contacts if they need help later
- If everyone is presently physically safe, involve law enforcement or security only at a victim's request.

There are also some guidelines as to **what not to do as an initial response**:

- Do not overtly invite them to withdraw the complaint or mention that withdrawal is OK. This suggests that you want them to do so, and is therefore coercive. "If you're OK with it [pursuing the complaint]" suggests that you are by default pursuing it and is not coercive.
- Do not ask for their advice on how to deal with the complaint. This is a staff responsibility.
- Do not offer them input into penalties. This is the staff's responsibility.
- Do not discuss the issue with people who do not need to know about it.

3. Staff Meeting Once something is reported, at least two of the Code of Conduct Committee should meet. The main objectives of this meeting is to find out the following:

- What happened?
- Are we doing anything about it?
- Who is doing those things?
- When are they doing them?

4. Follow-up with alleged harasser After the staff meeting and discussion, have a staff member (preferably the conference chair or event coordinator if available) communicate with the alleged harasser. Make sure to inform them of what has been reported about them. Allow the alleged harasser to give their side of the story to the staff. After this point, if the report stands, let the alleged harasser know what actions will be taken against them.

* Some things for the staff to consider when dealing with Code of Conduct offenders (*note that the list below is not a requirement and only applies if the staff deems it necessary based on the report*):

- Warning the harasser to cease their behavior and that any further reports will result in sanctions
- Requiring that the harasser avoid any interaction with, and physical proximity to, their victim for the remainder of the event
- Ending a talk that violates the policy early
- Not publishing the video or slides of a talk that violated the policy
- Not allowing a speaker who violated the policy to give (further) talks at the event now or in the future
- Immediately ending any event volunteer responsibilities and privileges the harasser holds
- Requiring that the harasser immediately leave the event and not return

- Publishing an account of the harassment and calling for the resignation of the harasser from their responsibilities (usually pursued by people without formal authority: may be called for if the harasser is the event leader, or refuses to stand aside from the conflict of interest, or similar, typically event staff have sufficient governing rights over their space that this isn't as useful)
- Additional common responses that are outside the scope of FOSS4G NA Baltimore 2023, but are maintained here for future consideration:
 - Requiring that the harasser not volunteer for future events your organization runs (either indefinitely or for a certain time period)
 - Requiring that the harasser refund any travel grants and similar they received (this would need to be a condition of the grant at the time of being awarded, and was not in 2023).
 - Banning the harasser from future events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period)
 - Removing a harasser from membership of relevant organizations
- Please keep in mind that it is not a good idea to encourage an apology from the harasser.

5. Follow-up Communication It is very important how we deal with the incident publicly. Our policy is to make sure that everyone aware of the initial incident is also made aware that it is not according to policy and that official action has been taken - while still respecting the privacy of individual attendees. When speaking to individuals (those who are aware of the incident, but were not involved with the incident) about the incident it is a good idea to **keep the details out**. Depending on the incident, the conference chair or their designate may decide to make one or more public announcements. If necessary, this will be done with a short announcement either during the plenary and/or through other channels. No one other than the conference chair or someone delegated authority from the conference chair should make any announcements.

If some attendees were angered by the incident, it is best to apologize to them that the incident occurred to begin with. If there are residual hard feelings, suggest to them to write an email to the conference chair or to the event coordinator. It will be dealt with accordingly.

6. Record of Incident Record of incidents and actions taken is to be preserved for future LOC and OSGeo use to be able to recognize patterns of behavior. The experience of many other Conferences has shown that patterns of harassment often occur over multiple years. and these records allow future staff and volunteers to react appropriately. Collections of incident records should be kept confidential and communicated from conference chair to conference chair or from conference chair to OSGeo Board of Directors as appropriate.

1.6 Credits and additional resources

Credits for the sources and inspiration of this code of conduct go to the [Open Street Map State of the Map 2023](#) (credited to [Speak Up! Project](#), [HOT Code of Conduct](#), [Django Code of Conduct](#), [Geek Feminism Code of Conduct](#), [Slack Code of Conduct](#) and [The Ada Initiative](#) under

a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike](#) license) and the [PyCon 2017 Code of Conduct](#) (which was forked from the [Geek Feminism wiki](#), created by the Ada Initiative and other volunteers which is under a Creative Commons Zero license).

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