

Violence Free Workplace Program

Introduction

The Corporation is committed to maintaining a work environment free of violence to ensure that all employees feel safe and secure within the workplace. The Town's strategy of a violence free workplace is reflected in the Violence Free Workplace Policy HR.13-03 which is implemented by this program.

Purpose

The purpose of the Violence Free Workplace Program is to outline measures and procedures with respect to preventing or eliminating risks of violence in the workplace and what to do in the event of workplace violence.

This program includes:

- Developing, posting and annually reviewing the Violence Free Workplace Policy with respect to workplace violence.
- Measures and procedures to control the risk of violence in the workplace and those likely to expose an employee to physical injury inclusive of threats of violence.
- Measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur.
- Measures and procedures for employees to report incidents of workplace violence.
- Procedures to investigate and address incidents or complaints of workplace violence.
- Methods of providing appropriate information and instruction to employees regarding workplace violence.
- Recognizing the employee's right to refuse unsafe work in situations where an employee has reason to believe that workplace violence may endanger the employee, subject to applicable legislation.
- Providing information about a person with a history of violent behaviour to employees who can be expected to encounter them at work and the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the employee to physical injury.



Definitions

"Workplace Violence" - Is defined as:

- (a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,
- (c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to:

- threatening behaviour - such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects.
- verbal abuse or verbal or written threats - any expression of an intent to inflict harm.
- physical attacks - hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking.

"Workplace" - The Occupational Health & Safety Act defines a workplace as:

"Any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works."

- It should be noted that workplace violence can occur at off-site business-related functions (conferences, trade shows), at social events related to work, in residents homes or away from work but resulting from work (a threatening telephone call to your home from a client, customer, resident, etc.). This includes all activities that occur while on Town premises or while engaging in work related activities or Town sanctioned social events.

"Domestic Violence" – Violence Free Workplace Policy HR.13-03 defines Domestic Violence as:

A person who has a personal relationship with an employee such as a spouse or former spouse, current or former intimate partner or a family member that may physically harm or attempt or threaten to physically harm the employee at work.

"Complainant" – Refers to an employee that has been a victim or has been threatened of violence in the workplace.

"Respondent" – Refers to an employee or group of employees who is the alleged aggressor. Where the alleged aggressor is not an employee, the Workplace Violence and Harassment Coordinator may implement different investigation



methods.

“Supervisor” – Refers to an employee who directly supervises the complainant or respondent.

“Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator” - The Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator will undertake or coordinate investigations of workplace violence incidents; inform department heads of workplace violence incidents, as appropriate; and may secure external resources as appropriate.

Procedure

The Town will investigate and address threats or incidents of violence in the workplace.

This program applies to all employees engaged in work-related activities that occur in a workplace. Workplace violence can occur at off-site business-related functions (conferences, trade shows), at social events related to work, in residents homes or away from work but resulting from work (a threatening telephone call to your home from a client, customer, resident etc.).

Risk Assessment

The Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator in collaboration with the Joint Health and Safety Committee will prepare and maintain a risk assessment specific to workplace violence that is likely to arise from the nature of the workplace, type of work or conditions of work. The Joint Health and Safety Committee will make appropriate recommendations to management with respect to mitigating risks of violence in the workplace. The results of the risk assessment will be used to identify the measures and procedures that may be required to control risks of violence in the workplace. The risk of workplace violence should be re-assessed as often as is necessary to protect employees from workplace violence. For example, a re-assessment should be undertaken if:

- The workplace moves or the existing workplace is renovated or reconfigured.
- There are significant changes in the type of work.
- There are significant changes in the conditions of work.
- There is new information on the risks of workplace violence.
- A violent incident indicates a risk related to the nature of the workplace, type of work or conditions of work was not identified during an earlier assessment.



Workplace inspections are conducted by the Joint Health and Safety Committee to assist in the development of the risk assessment to identify hazards specific to each workplace related to violence and identify the controls that exist or that may be implemented to reduce the levels of risk of workplace violence.

Employee and supervisor surveys are conducted as part of the risk assessment in order to receive feedback on past violent incidents that may have occurred or concerns that employees may have of a risk of workplace violence. The results from the surveys assist in the analysis of the controls that have been implemented or may be implemented to minimize risk levels.

The Need to Summon Immediate Assistance

Employees involved with incidents of workplace violence should immediately summon assistance. Whenever a situation in the workplace becomes volatile or escalates into a situation where workplace violence is likely to occur, employees should contact police or emergency assistance.

Employees who are in a situation where workplace violence is likely to occur because of threats made by someone in person, over the phone, by e-mail or mail should contact police and emergency assistance.

Employees who need to summon immediate assistance have a number of options including, but not limited to:

- Using a panic button, as appropriate.
- Using code words with co-workers to seek immediate assistance.
- Yelling for assistance from co-workers.
- Phoning someone such as the Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator or a Joint Health and Safety Committee member for immediate assistance.
- Phone police or emergency assistance.

Making an Emergency Services Call:

- Avoid delay in making the call.
- Remain calm.
- Use the phone to dial 9-1-1 or your emergency assistance contact. Remember to dial “9” if required.
- When asked by the operator, state the service you require; for example police, fire or ambulance.
- Let the operator control the conversation. They have standard questions for obtaining critical information from you in a timely and orderly manner.
- Clearly state your location and the location of the situation you are



reporting using the street address, if you know it.

- State briefly and clearly what you have observed or why you are calling.
- If possible, without exposing yourself to danger, stay on the line until emergency services arrive, unless the operator specifically asks you to hang up.
- Panic buttons can be used to summons immediate assistance if provided depending on your location.
- Be proactive and be prepared. Employees should check with their supervisor for other methods or procedures to obtain immediate assistance.

Each department has the responsibility to implement measures and procedures specific to that workplace to mitigate workplace violence. It is important to recognize that each workplace is different taking into consideration the workplace circumstances and type of work done.

Domestic Violence

If an employee is experiencing domestic violence or an employee has reason to believe that a co-worker is experiencing domestic violence that could expose that employee or another employee to physical injury in the workplace, the employee should seek immediate assistance. The Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator, in consultation with the department will develop a safety plan on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the targeted employee to assist in preventing and responding to the situation. In developing the plan, the supervisor and employee may be able to work with the police or other informed community services.

Process for Reporting Workplace Violence

An employee must report a situation that he/she believes is workplace violence to his/her supervisor after calling police. If the incident or complaint is brought to the attention of the supervisor, he/she will report the incident to the Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator without delay.

A report may be made many parties including but not limited to:

- the actual complainant of alleged workplace violence;
- another employee who witnessed the incident(s); and/or
- a third party reporting on behalf of the complainant(s).

Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

An employee has the right to refuse work, subject to applicable legislation, if he/she has reason to believe that workplace violence is likely to endanger



him/her. In that instance the employee should immediately contact his/her supervisor, at which point appropriate measures will be taken to protect the employee and investigate the situation according to the Town's Work Refusal Procedure.

For some employees the right to refuse work for any reason, including for workplace violence, is limited.

Certain employees who protect public safety cannot refuse work if the danger is an inherent or normal part of their job or the refusal would endanger the life, health or safety of another person (i.e. firefighters).

Information about a Person with a History of Violent Behaviour:

Where there is a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour, the employer will provide information to those at risk, including personal information, as appropriate. This information will be provided when the employee can be expected to encounter the violent person in the course of employment with the Town and the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the employee to physical injury. The Town will not disclose more information than is reasonably necessary for the protection of an employee from physical injury.

Investigation Process

The Workplace Violence & Harassment Coordinator or designate will decide who will investigate the incident of workplace violence. The investigation will commence immediately in accordance with the Town's Accident/Incident Investigation Procedure, Appendix A.

Information and Instruction

Information and instruction on the Violence Free Workplace Policy and Program regarding workplace violence will be communicated to every employee of the Corporation.

Employees will receive training in the following:

- Intent and content of the Violence Free Workplace Policy and program.
- Their responsibilities and obligations under the policy and program and relevant legislation.
- How to summon immediate assistance.
- How to report incidents of workplace violence to the employer or supervisor.



- How the employer will investigate and deal with incidents, threats or complaints.
- How to carry out the measures and procedures that are in place to protect employees from workplace violence.

Management will receive training in the following:

- Responsibilities and obligations of supervisors under the Violence Free Workplace Policy, Program and relevant legislation.
- Reporting and investigation procedures related to threats or incidents of workplace violence.

Confidentiality of Complaints and Investigations

The Corporation recognizes the sensitive nature of violence complaints and will keep all complaints confidential, to the fullest extent possible. The Corporation will only release as much information as is necessary to investigate and respond to the complaint or situation or if required to do so by law.

Out of respect for the relevant individuals, it is essential that the complainant, respondent, witnesses and anyone else involved in the formal investigation of a complaint maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation and afterwards.

Cross References

Provincial and federal legislation such as the Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act, Canada Criminal Code, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as amended from time to time.

Employee Code of Conduct CAO.3-01

Progressive Discipline HR.4-01

Employee Complaint HR.4-02

Resignation/Termination of Employment HR.4-03

Alcohol and Drug Policy HR.5-02

Violence Free Workplace HR.13-03

Harassment & Discrimination Free Workplace HR.13-04

Health and Safety Procedures Manual

- Section 3-01 – Accident Reporting and Investigation
- Section 1-05 – Work Refusal Procedures

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