

Category: Human Resources

Title: Workplace Violence Prevention Policy HRM-120

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Administered by: Human Resources

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1. Background

The City is committed to creating a work environment where everyone plays a vital role in ensuring a safe and healthy Workplace by preventing Workplace Violence.

This Policy is supported by the accompanying Preventing and Addressing Workplace Violence Standard Operating Procedure. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Occupational Health and Safety and Respectful Workplace Policies and the Employee Code of Conduct – which is about our values, principles and standards of behaviour that govern our actions. These Policies, along with other reference documents are linked below.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a) Adopt a proactive approach to preventing Workplace Violence;

- b) Outline the requirements of acceptable behaviours for those who have a role in dealing with Workplace Violence; and,
- c) Comply with the City's legislative responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* respecting Workplace Violence.

3. Application and Scope

This Policy applies to:

- Employees (including but not limited to service contractors, students and volunteers);
- Members of Council;
- Vendors and suppliers; and
- Members of the public (including citizen members of committees).

4. Outcomes

- 4.1 Establish and maintain a physically and mentally safe and healthy work environment free from Workplace Violence for all individuals.
- 4.2 All individuals are treated with respect, Civility and dignity.
- 4.3 The City and Employees will comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* respecting Workplace Violence.

5. Principles

5.1 Violence Free Workplace

All individuals have the right to work or access services in a safe environment free from perceived, actual, attempted or threatened Workplace Violence.

Workplace Violence is a serious matter and the City will take every reasonable precaution to prevent it.

5.2 Shared Responsibility

It is a shared responsibility between all individuals to create an environment where everyone is able to work without potential or actual threat of Workplace Violence. All individuals should be prepared to actively work together to address Workplace Violence.

5.3 Zero Tolerance

Violent behaviour in the Workplace is unacceptable from anyone. Workplace Violence from any individual will not be tolerated, condoned, or ignored.

6. Policy Statements

6.1 The City is committed to work in collaboration with its Workplace Parties and members of the public to create a Workplace free from Workplace Violence. This is achieved by complying with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and:

6.1.1 Establishing and communicating expectations and behaviours considered appropriate and inappropriate in the City Workplaces and in the delivery of / or access to the City services;

6.1.2 Proactively preventing Workplace Violence through assessing risk of violence;

6.1.3 Training, and informing Employees when there is a potential or actual risk of violence from all possible sources, including but not limited to customers, clients, Supervisors, Employees, and domestic partners; and,

6.1.4 Addressing incidents through corrective actions and support for Employees who are victims of violence, as necessary.

6.2 Employees will report potential or actual incidents of Workplace Violence to their Supervisor, Human Resources, or any member of management immediately, after going to a safe location and calling Police, if necessary.

6.3 Supervisors, Human Resources, or any member of management will address and deal with incidents of Workplace Violence to ensure corrective actions are taken to protect Employees from Workplace Violence in accordance with their responsibilities.

6.4 Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible. Out of respect for all Workplace Parties involved, it is essential that the Workplace Parties involved in an incident or investigation, maintain confidentiality throughout the process. Information may need to be disclosed to protect employees, to investigate the incident, to take corrective action, or otherwise required by law.

6.5 All individuals have the right to report, or act as a witness in good faith, incidents of Workplace Violence without fear of Reprisal, and / or further violence. Where it is confirmed that an incident of Workplace Violence has occurred, corrective action taken will not be considered a Reprisal.

6.6 The City recognizes that involvement in Workplace Violence incidents may be stressful and emotionally upsetting. All affected individuals are encouraged to seek counselling or rehabilitation from the following support systems:

- Employee and Family Assistance Program; and,
- Peer Support Network, where available.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Senior Leaders

- a) Ensure a Workplace Violence Prevention Policy is in place and reviewed at least once, annually, and ensure a program is in place to implement this Policy; and,
- b) Comply with section 7.2 Roles and Responsibilities for Supervisors.

7.2 Supervisors

- a) Lead by creating and maintaining a safe and healthy Workplace free of Workplace Violence while being a role model for others;
- b) Understand and comply with this Policy and accompanying program;
- c) Post this Policy in a visible location in the Workplace;
- d) Hold Employees accountable for their behaviour and for following measures and procedures;
- e) Ensure Employees awareness of, training, and compliance with this Policy and accompanying program;
- f) Conduct Risk Assessments and address hazards of Workplace Violence with corrective actions;
- g) Advise Employees of the risk of Workplace Violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour they may encounter where physical injury is likely;
- h) Inform Employees of how to summon immediate assistance in the case of an extreme or imminent threat of Workplace Violence;
- i) Advise Employees to report concerns, and incidents of Workplace Violence to their Supervisor, Human Resources or a member of management;
- j) Act immediately on incidents of Workplace Violence;
- k) Document incidents reported by the Employee, or are known or witnessed;
- l) Report the incidents to Human Resources who will provide support for the intake, tracking, and processing of inquiries, complaints, and investigations;
- m) Address incidents, and depending on the nature of the incident or complaint, collaborate with Human Resources to determine who will investigate further;
- n) In collaboration with Human Resources, determine appropriate corrective action to address the incident;
- o) Notify Human Resources immediately if a critical injury or fatality occurs in their Workplace as a result of incident of Workplace Violence; and,

- p) Notify Human Resources as soon as possible if a Ministry of Labour Inspector attends at their Workplace as a result of incident of Workplace Violence.

7.3 Employees

- a) Create and maintain a Workplace free from Workplace Violence while being a role model for others;
- b) Understand, participate in training, and comply with this Policy and accompanying program;
- c) Summon immediate assistance by contacting Police in the case of extreme or imminent threat of physical harm to themselves or any individual from Workplace Violence;
- d) Raise any concerns about Workplace Violence to their Supervisor;
- e) Report incidents of Workplace Violence experienced, witnessed or having knowledge of to their Supervisor, Human Resources, or any member of management; and,
- f) Cooperate fully in investigations of incidents of Workplace Violence.

7.4 Human Resources

- a) Prepare, maintain and facilitate the review of this Policy at least once, annually, and review the program as often as necessary, in consultation with Workplace Parties, as needed;
- b) Receive all incidents of Workplace Violence, and support the appropriate party to address and / or investigate;
- c) Provide support and guidance to Supervisors and Employees to ensure compliance with this Policy and accompanying program;
- d) Participate in Risk Assessments for Workplace Violence, as part of the Risk Assessment Team;
- e) Make available a copy of the Risk Assessment results to the Joint Health and Safety Committees;
- f) Facilitate interactions with Ministry of Labour Inspectors as a result of incidents of Workplace Violence;
- g) Facilitate informal resolutions, mediations, and investigations, as required;
- h) Engage the Incident Assessment Team, to assist in the investigation and ensure corrective actions are consistent in the resolution of incidents of Workplace Violence;
- i) Report any fatal or critical injury as a result of Workplace Violence to the Ministry of Labour; and,
- j) Offer Workplace Violence Prevention Program training and other requisite training programs (eg. Workplace investigations) as required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

8. Monitoring and Compliance

- a) Supervisors must monitor their Employees' compliance to this Policy on an ongoing basis.
- b) Operating departments must keep Records to verify compliance with this Policy in case of periodic reviews by Human Resources.
- c) The Policy must be reviewed at least once, annually by Senior Leaders to ensure its effectiveness and to comply with legislation.

8.1 Consequences of non-compliance

8.1.1 Any Employee, who violates this Policy, including making a report of violence that is false, frivolous, or made in bad faith, may be subject to:

- regulatory action and / or criminal charges; and / or,
- immediate corrective action which may include:
 - i. termination of employment;
 - ii. prohibition from City property;
 - iii. having the incident reported to the Police; and /or,
 - iv. other action as appropriate.

8.1.2 Members of the public, visitors to City facilities or individuals conducting business with the City, are expected to adhere to this Policy. This includes refraining from inappropriate behaviour towards Employees, Members of Council, and persons acting on behalf of the City. If inappropriate behaviour occurs, the City will take appropriate action to ensure a Workplace free from violence. This could include barring the person from facilities, reporting the incident to Police or other action with vendors or suppliers.

8.2 Alternate Approach

Circumstances may exist where the provisions of this Policy may not apply or may require an alternate course of action. In these circumstances, written approval from the Chief Administrative Officer and Director, Human Resources is required prior to any alternate action.

9. Definitions

9.1 'Civility' means the act of showing regard for others, being considerate in your interactions, and recognizing the inherent value of each individual in the Workplace.

9.2 'Critical Injury' means an injury which:

- places life in jeopardy
- produces unconsciousness
- results in substantial loss of blood
- involves the fracture of a leg or arm, including a wrist, hand, ankle or foot
- involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand, foot or multiple fingers or toes
- consists of burns to a major portion of the body
- causes the loss of sight in an eye

9.3 'Domestic Violence' means a person who has a personal relationship with a worker – such as a spouse or former spouse, current or former intimate partner or a family member – who may physically harm, or attempt or threaten to physically harm, that worker at work.

9.4 'Employee' means any of the following:

- a) a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation;
- b) a secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled;
- c) a person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university, private career college or other post-secondary institution; or,
- d) such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation.

9.5 'Incident Assessment Team' is comprised of but not limited to: the relevant Supervisor, relevant operating Department Head if required, Human Resources Business Partner, Labour Relations Advisor, Director, Human Resources if required, and Chief Administrative Officer if required, Facility Management, Corporate Security, Legal Services, Law Enforcement, and Employee and Family Assistance Program provider to determine the appropriate corrective action.

9.6 'Joint Health and Safety Committee' means a committee of employee and supervisory representatives who are mutually committed to improving health and safety conditions in the workplace. Committees meet on a regular basis to identify potential health and safety issues and bring them to the employer's attention, and conduct workplace inspections monthly.

9.7 'Member of Council' refers to any elected or appointed official on Council, including the Mayor.

- 9.8 'Record' includes documented business transactions, decisions and activities, such as notes, memos, agendas, minutes, training records, etc.
- 9.9 'Reprisal' means any act of retaliation, either direct or indirect. Retaliation can include creating a hostile work environment, harassment, demotion, or dismissal.
- 9.10 'Risk Assessment' means assessing the risk of Workplace Violence, from a prevention perspective, that may arise from the nature of the Workplace, the type of work or the conditions of work.
- 9.11 'Risk Assessment Team' is comprised of but not limited to: the relevant Supervisor, an experienced Employee, Facility Management representative, Corporate Security representative, Human Resources Business Partner, and Health and Safety Advisor, to evaluate the potential for Workplace Violence through a risk assessment.
- 9.12 'Senior Leader' means the Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioners, and Department Heads.
- 9.13 'Supervisor' means a person who has charge of a Workplace or authority over an Employee and can include, but not limited to, Members of Council, Senior Leaders, Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Forepersons.
- 9.14 'Workplace' means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which an employee works, and may include but not limited to:
- physical, telephone, social media, e-mail and any other electronic and virtual City work environments;
 - locations visited by Employees while traveling on City related business; or,
 - locations of work-based social gatherings, training, and conference or travel.
- 9.15 'Workplace Parties' means Supervisors, Employees, Joint Health and Safety Committees, unions and associations, service contractors, students and volunteers.
- 9.16 'Workplace Violence' means:
- a) The exercise of physical force by a person against an Employee, in a Workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the Employee;
 - b) An attempt to exercise physical force against an Employee, in a Workplace, that could cause physical injury to the Employee; and,
 - c) A statement or behaviour that is reasonable for an Employee to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the Employee, in a Workplace, that could cause physical injury to the Employee.

10. References and Resources

This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the following references and resources as updated from time to time. Please note that some of the following documents may not be publically available.

External references

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990](#)

Internal References

- [Council Handbook](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Members of Council](#)
- [Council-Staff Relations Policy](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Policy](#)

References to related corporate-wide procedures, forms, and resources

- [Preventing and Addressing Workplace Violence SOP](#)
- [Supervisor's Report of Employee Accident Form](#)
- [Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference](#)

Revision History

Date	Description
2018/05/30	Approved by Council Resolution No. C141-2018, CW204-2018
2019/11/20	Scheduled Review. Revisions made to make the policy easier to understand and emphasize joint responsibility in the workplace and clarify responsibilities. Amendments approved by Council Resolution No. CW470-2019, C424-2019
2020/11/20	Next Scheduled Review