



Workplace Violence Policy

Policy Statement

The City of Toronto is committed to working with its employees to provide a safe work environment. The City will not tolerate any acts of violence and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent violence and protect employees from acts of violence. Appropriate remedial, disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken according to the circumstances.

Purpose of Workplace Violence Policy

The policy and its supporting guidelines are intended to:

1. Maintain a work environment free from workplace violence
2. Provide a definition of workplace violence
3. Identify the responsibilities of the workplace parties to maintain a workplace free of actual, attempted or threatened violence
4. Establish measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur
5. Establish measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace violence and for the City to investigate and deal with incidents or complaints immediately

Application

The Workplace Violence policy applies to all employees, contractors of the City, volunteers, students, clients of City services, any person engaged in business with the City, and visitors to City properties.

This policy applies to all types of workplace violence incidents, i.e. general public to employee, client to employee and employee to employee.

The City's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy should be consulted regarding issues of personal harassment and harassment related to discrimination and inequitable work practices.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, violence includes:

- the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker
- an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker that could cause physical injury to the worker
- 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

The City's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy addresses harassment or intimidation (e.g., behaviours that demean, embarrass, or humiliate and are known or would be expected to be unwelcome).

Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of violence that threaten or perceive to threaten a safe work environment.

The City will:

- Take reasonable preventative measures to protect employees and others in City work places from workplace violence
- Ensure that workplace violence risk assessments are completed and reported
- Post this policy in a conspicuous location in each workplace

- Establish and maintain a process for reporting and responding to incidents of violence
- ~~Ensure that the process for reporting and responding to incidents of violence is communicated, maintained and followed~~
- Ensure that this policy is reviewed at least annually

Management of Divisions will:

- Understand and uphold the principles of this policy
- Communicate this policy and its procedures to all employees
- Conduct workplace violence risk assessments to determine whether the nature of the workplace, the type of work or conditions of work may place employees at risk of violence
- Consult with Joint Health & Safety Committees (JHSCs)/OHS Representatives, assigned Human Resources/divisional health & safety staff, and where appropriate, Corporate Security, in conducting risk assessments, and develop practical measures and procedures to control identified risks
- Take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or eliminate risks identified through the risk assessment process, workplace inspections, or the occurrence of a workplace violence incident
- Conduct further risk assessments at intervals of time appropriate to the specific conditions and circumstances of the jobs performed
- Review risk assessments annually, or as changes to job responsibilities or environments occur, and revise the assessment as needed
- Maintain and follow a process for reporting, investigating, documenting, and debriefing incidents of violence
- Respond promptly to all reports of violence, address immediately all incidents of workplace violence, and not condone or permit any behaviour contrary to this policy. Exceptions to this must be clearly defined in the divisional procedures, describing specific behaviours that are unacceptable (e.g., unacceptable behaviours among a specific client group such as young children or clients with developmental, cognitive or psychiatric disabilities). This exception must be communicated to staff and must not condone physical assaults against staff.
- Ensure that all known incidents of workplace violence are investigated. To the extent appropriate based on the nature of each incident and the actual or potential threat it posed to worker safety:
 - consult with other parties (e.g., Corporate Security, Health & Safety staff, JHSCs/OHS Representatives, Employee Health and Rehabilitation, Employee Assistance Program, Human Rights Office, Toronto Police Services)
 - take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or address risks identified by the incident
 - document the incident, its investigation, and corrective action taken
- Take all reasonable and practical measures to protect workers, acting in good faith, who report workplace violence or act as witnesses, from reprisal or further violence
- ~~Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for worker protection if they become aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence that would likely expose a worker to physical injury may occur in the workplace~~
- Review annually, in conjunction with review of risk assessments, the effectiveness of actions taken to minimize or eliminate workplace violence and make improvements to divisional procedures, as required
- Provide information to workers, including appropriate personal information, related to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour
- Provide workers with information and instruction appropriate for the worker on the City's workplace violence policy and program

Human Resources/Divisional Occupational Health and Safety staff will:

- Assist management to implement this policy, develop divisional procedures, and initiate the annual review of the policy and procedures

Joint Health and Safety Committees/OHS Representatives will:

- Review the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment results and provide recommendations to management to reduce or eliminate the risk of violence
- Review all reports forwarded to the JHSC regarding workplace violence and other incident reports as appropriate pertaining to incidents of workplace violence that result in personal injury or threat of personal injury, property damage, or police involvement
- Participate in the investigation of critical injuries (e.g., incidents that place life in jeopardy, result in substantial blood loss, fracture of leg or arm, etc.)
- Recommend corrective measures for the improvement of the health and safety of workers
- Respond to employee concerns related to workplace violence and communicate these to management
- Participate in the review of the policy and guidelines for continuous improvement

In addition, JHSCs/OHS Representatives may participate in the investigation of reported incidents that result in personal injury or have the potential to result in injury.

The Occupational Health and Safety Coordinating Committee will:

Review annually the effectiveness of the policy and guidelines and make changes as required by consulting with management staff and employee representatives

All Employees will:

- Maintain a safe work environment, whenever possible
- Not engage in or ignore violent, threatening, intimidating or other disruptive behaviours
- Report promptly to their supervisor (or the appropriate alternative listed in the attached guidelines) any incident where the employee is subjected to, witnesses, or has knowledge of workplace violence, or has reason to believe that workplace violence may occur

Reprisal

This policy prohibits reprisals against individuals, acting in good faith, who report incidents of workplace violence or act as witnesses. Management will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent reprisals, threats of reprisal, or further violence. Reprisal is defined as any act of retaliation, either direct or indirect.

Authorities

Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.1)

Criminal Code of Canada (1985)

City of Toronto Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Policy (1999, reviewed annually)

Approvals

Occupational Health and Safety Coordinating Committee (October 30, 2001)

Executive Management Team (February 18, 2002)

Reviewed, Amendments Endorsed by OHSCC: April 14, 2010



David Miller
Mayor



Joseph P. Pennachetti
City Manager

