



# Violence in the Workplace

## **Purpose of Procedure:**

The procedure has been developed in accordance with the provincial policy on violence in the workplace.

The procedure defines violence and provides guidance for employees to reduce the risk of violence in the workplace. In the event that violence does occur, appropriate steps are identified to assist employees with reporting violent incidents.

## **Who does this procedure apply to?**

This procedure has been developed for all employees

## **Definition of Violence:**

Violence covers a broad spectrum of behaviour. It encompasses threatening behaviours, verbal or written threats, harassment, verbal abuse and physical attacks. Workplace and work-related violence can occur at off-site business related functions, social events, clients' homes and at your own home.

## **Risk factors:**

There are specific factors which increase the risk of violence occurring. The following factors have been identified as being likely to increase risk for employees.

- Working with the public
- Working with unstable or volatile persons
- Working alone or in isolated areas

## **Geographical locations of greater risk of violence:**

In some situations, geographical locations present a greater risk of violence occurring. The following locations have been identified as posing a greater risk for employees.

- Isolated areas away from buildings, inside some structures, or places where there are people who are apt to intervene.

### **Hazards/Risks:**

There are a number of specific behaviours or actions which increase the risk of violence occurring. The following behaviours have been identified as being likely to increase the risk of violence occurring.

- Rumours
- Swearing & Verbal abuse
- Physical assault
- Intimidation
- Pushing
- Arguments

### **Training**

Training is necessary for employees, supervisors, and staff members at any work location where responding to an incident of workplace violence may occur.

Providing appropriate training informs employees that management will take threats seriously, encourages employees to report incidents, and demonstrates management's commitment to deal with reported incidents.

### **Workplace design considerations:**

Install physical barriers, as required.

Have procedure in place to alert co-workers as needed (i.e., cell phone contact lists). Where practical, use fencing or hedges to control access to the workplace.

### **Procedure For Reporting and Investigating Actual or Potential Incidents of Workplace Violence:**

All reports of incidents or potential incidents of violence will be taken seriously and will be dealt with by the immediate supervisor in an appropriate and timely fashion.

**Reporting Emergencies:** immediate danger, weapons involvement, physical injury related to violent behaviour, and obvious signs of abusive threatening behaviour.

For threats of violence, assaults or other violent incidents:

- 1) call 911 immediately
- 2) contact your supervisor immediately.
- 3) critical Information must be provided including the nature of the incident; whether emergency services are required; whether perpetrator(s) are still present; whether weapons are involved; etc.
- 4) After requesting police involvement and proper control of the emergency has been established, the event particulars shall be recorded by the supervisor on the "Violent Incident Report".
- 5) The supervisor, in consultation with the client's Health & Safety manager if applicable, a representative of the client's Health & Safety Committee, or a Human Resources Department/Labour Relations officer or designate, may request the participation of other workplace parties to review the details surrounding the situation and determine the appropriate corrective action to resolve the issue.

**Reporting Non-Emergencies:** verbal threats, actions and/or activities that may in the future lead to activities that may result in an emergency.

- 1) To reduce the risk of violence occurring, employees are reminded to refrain from engaging with perpetrators.
- 2) Employees are encouraged to report threatening statements or behaviour that gives one reasonable grounds to believe that there is a potential for workplace violence immediately to the immediate supervisor who will determine the appropriate response. Such reports may assist in identifying patterns of potential violence and may assist in the prevention of emergency situations in the future.
- 3) The immediate supervisor, once made aware of such allegations, should contact the client's Health & Safety manager if applicable, a representative of the client's Health & Safety Committee, or a Human Resources Department/Labour Relations officer or designate, for advice and direction as may be necessary.
- 4) The supervisor, in consultation with the client's Health & Safety manager if applicable, a representative of the client's Health & Safety Committee, or a Human Resources Department/Labour Relations officer or designate, may request the participation of other workplace parties to review the details surrounding the situation and determine the appropriate action to resolve the issue.
- 5) Workplace violence may extend off a client's property and may occur outside of normal working hours. Therefore this procedure will apply for any of the above listed behaviours that are determined through investigation to stem from, or are related to or can be linked back to the individuals' employment or a contractor working on behalf of a client. Therefore, with consideration to your duties and responsibilities
  - a) do not enter any situation or location where you feel unreasonably unsafe
  - b) get assistance when your personal safety is at risk
  - c) have immediate, reliable, accessible communication (radios/cell phones)
  - d) if you are in a situation which you feel is unsafe, leave and notify your supervisor or RCMP.

**Support Services/Medical Assistance:**

In the event of an incident of workplace violence resulting in physical injury, access to appropriate first aid or medical aid will be provided by the supervisor as required under the Occupational Health & Safety Act. Ambulance or police may be contacted depending on the severity of the injury.

Once the injured employee has received the required care, the supervisor will complete the appropriate "Report of Workplace Injury" form, as in any other incident involving workplace injury.

In cases where other support services are deemed to be required, the immediate supervisor shall advise and assist the employee to seek such service, and/or initiate the appropriate response.

**REFERENCES:**

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

PEI Occupational Health & Safety Act & Regulations