## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

[Organization Name] is committed to providing a healthy, safe and supportive work environment for all employees that is free from workplace violence and will not tolerate any such incidents that are perpetuated by or against an employee, client, volunteer, vendor or visitor.

In pursuit of this commitment, [Organization Name] will take all reasonable steps to prevent workplace violence and will deal with incidents and complaints made in good faith, in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

This policy and program are in compliance with Nova Scotia's *Violence in the Workplace Regulations*, *N.S. Reg. 209/2007 (henceforth known as “the regulations”)*  which were enacted according to Section 82 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and are intended to:

* Ensure that [Organization Name] maintains a work environment that is free from workplace violence.
* Establish measures and procedures to control the risk of workplace violence.
* Communicate the procedure for summoning immediate assistance in the event of an incident of workplace violence or where an incident is imminent.
* Establish a procedure for reporting incidents of workplace violence.
* Establish how reports of workplace violence will be dealt with and investigated by the organization.

DEFINITION

The Regulations define Workplace Violence as:

* Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury,
* Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.

POLICY

[Organization Name] acknowledges, in accordance with the Regulations that:

* workplace violence is an occupational health and safety hazard;
* workplace violence can result in physical and emotional harm;
* any form of workplace violence is unacceptable; and
* the management of [Organization Name] is committed to minimizing and, to the degree practicable, eliminating the risk of workplace violence.

[Organization Name] is committed to providing a healthy, safe, and supportive work environment for all employees that is free from workplace violence and will not tolerate any such incidents that are perpetuated by or against an employee, client, volunteer, vendor, or visitor.

In pursuit of this commitment, [Organization Name] will take all reasonable steps to prevent workplace violence and will deal with incidents and complaints made in good faith, in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

Employee Responsibilities

* Understand what constitutes workplace violence as defined in this policy and adhere to the organization’s zero tolerance requirement.
* Immediately report any incident of violence one is subject to or witnesses in accordance with the organization’s anti-violence program.
* Participate as required in internal and external investigations concerning incidents of workplace violence.
* Refrain from any retaliatory acts against any individual who has brought forward a complaint of violence.
* Attend and actively participate in training and education sessions regarding workplace violence.

Employer and Management Responsibilities

* Assess the risk of workplace violence and implement procedures, response plans and other controls to help minimize identified risks.
* Educate and train employees on this policy and program, response plans and other controls established to protect employee health and safety.
* Ensure a copy of this policy is available to all employees.
* Review the Workplace Anti-Violence Policy and Program annually or as often as necessary to properly protect employees from the risk of violence. This policy and program will be reviewed after any violent incident to determine if changes are necessary.
* Take appropriate action(s) upon receipt of a complaint of workplace violence or when aware that workplace violence is occurring.
* Impose appropriate disciplinary measures in response to substantiated claims of workplace violence.

All members of management who are aware, or who ought to reasonably be aware that incidents of workplace violence are occurring or are thought to be occurring are obligated to take appropriate action to stop the offending behaviours and actions, even in the absence of a formal complaint.

WORKPLACE ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAM

Reporting Incidents of Workplace Violence

* In the event you are directly affected by, or witness to an act of violence or a threat of violence in the workplace, it is imperative that the incident be reported immediately. Reports are to be made to your direct supervisor, the management designate or other relevant party.
* For the health and safety of everyone, employees are encouraged to request an informal meeting with their supervisor/manager or their designate to discuss issues concerning or related to workplace violence.
* Employees should also notify their supervisor/manager or their designate if any restraining order affecting them is in effect or if they are aware of a non-work-related situation that could result in violence in the workplace including concerns regarding the potential for domestic violence to occur in the workplace.

If you are subject to workplace violence, you also have the option to pursue recourse through the Provincial Police or the Federal Criminal Code.

Summoning Immediate Assistance

* If you require immediate assistance following an act of violence, are being threatened, or consider yourself to be in imminent danger, contact the police/emergency services immediately by dialing “911” and follow department/facility emergency response procedures (where relevant).
* If you are unable to phone 911 right away, you should:
  + Yell for help.
  + If in a vehicle, honk the horn repeatedly, turn on hazard lights and lock all vehicle doors.
  + If possible, use the vehicle’s emergency alarm.
  + Immediately move to a safe location.
  + Contact a manager/supervisor.

Violence Risk Assessment

[Organization Name] shall conduct a risk assessment for violence and document the results in a report. The Risk Assessment Report is prepared in conjunction with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee/Occupational Health and Safety Representative.

A copy of the "Risk Assessment Report" and the "Violence Prevention Plan" shall be kept in a safe but easily accessible location that is available to employees, the JOH&S Committee or Representative, and other workplace parties.

In any of the following circumstances, [Organization Name] shall conduct a new or amended workplace violence risk assessment every 5 years at minimum or when one of the following occurs:

* the management becomes aware of a new type of violence occurring in a similar organization that was not considered during the previous risk assessment;
* there is a significant change in the circumstances in which work takes place, the interactions that occur in the course of performing work, or the physical location or layout of the workplace.
* management intends to build a new facility or renovate an existing one; OR
* [Organization Name] has been directed to do so by an officer.

Assessment Considerations:

* Violence that has previously occurred in the workplace;
* Violence that is known to have occurred at similar workplaces;
* The circumstances in which work takes place;
* The interactions that occur in the course of performing work;
* The physical location and layout of the workplace.

Personal Privacy

* If the risk is associated with a specific individual, the protection of personal privacy must

be considered (Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act) and the risk

shall not identify the individual.

* The named risk may refer to a file which is kept in a secure location. There shall be a “Workplace Violence Prevention Plan” completed for each individual who poses a specific risk. Alternatively, a company form used to record a plan to control the risk through behaviour management may be used.
* Management shall judge which staff need to know about the risk and the violence prevention plan. Management will direct those staff to become familiar with the plan.

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

In the event that a significant risk of violence is identified through the violence risk assessment or an officer orders a plan, [Organization Name] shall establish and implement a workplace violence prevention plan and it shall be kept secure yet accessible to all employees, the JOH&S Committee or Representative and other workplace parties.

As part of the workplace violence prevention plan, [Organization Name] shall do the following:

* Prepare a written workplace violence prevention statement:
  + take and document reasonable measures to minimize and, to the extent possible, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace, **or**
  + adopt a code of practice on violence in the workplace published by the Director governing the primary business conducted at the employer’s workplace;
* Establish and document procedures for providing employees with information and training;
* Establish and document procedures for reporting, documenting and investigating incidents of violence
* Consult with the committee or representative at the workplace when establishing, reviewing or revising a workplace violence prevention plan.
* Make a copy of the workplace violence prevention plan available for examination at the workplace by any employee, contractor, constructor, supplier, or visitor in that workplace.

Review/Revision of Violence Prevention Plan

If a new violence risk assessment indicates a significant change to the extent and nature of the risk of violence, [Organization Name] will establish and implement a revised workplace violence prevention plan. Alternately, the plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least every 5 years.

Emergency Response Plan

This document contains a plan for responding to significant incidents in the workplace which is approved by the Regional Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Its objective is to establish a plan for responding to workplace situations during the first thirty minutes. We have included it in the Violence Prevention Plan because it addresses how to respond to, communicate and document information during and following a violent incident.

Providing Information to Employees

The [INDICATE POSITION] shall ensure that all employees are aware of the location of the Violence Risk Assessment. If required, the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan shall be established and the location and contents be made available for viewing.

[Organization Name] shall educate new employees about the violence prevention strategies that address potential hazards associated with their activities at the workplace.

Training

[Organization Name] shall provide training to all staff on the following topics:

* The rights and responsibilities of employees under the Act.
* The workplace violence prevention statement.
* Recognizing circumstances that have the potential to escalate into violence.
* Observing and reporting violent acts.
* Responding to violent occurrences and enlisting emergency personnel's assistance.

Further training shall be provided on the following for any employee who is exposed to a significant risk of violence:

* The measures taken by the employer to minimize or eliminate the risk of violence.

[Organization Name] shall provide any employee who is required to perform a function under the workplace violence prevention plan with training on the plan generally and on the particular function to be performed by the employee.

Documentation and Investigation

If a case of workplace violence occurs, the [INDICATE POSITION] or their designee shall promptly conduct an investigation and document the incident.

If an employee threatens or commits a violent act, the supervisor shall be immediately notified by anyone who is aware of the threat/situation/act. The supervisor shall then immediately inform [INSERT POSITION].

The [INDICATE POSITION] or their designee is responsible for investigating and taking preventative measures to prevent further escalation and/or to avoid a recurrence.

Following the incident, the [INDICATE POSITION] or their designee will maintain a file containing information about the investigation and corrective/preventive actions taken. The file shall be reviewed by all of the following, under consideration of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act:

(a) any employee affected by the incident of violence;

(b) the committee established at the workplace; or

(c) any representative selected at the workplace.

The Health and Safety Rep will assess the incident, its documentation, investigation, and response. A new business item will be documented in the minutes if the incident review concludes that an update or a new plan for preventing violence is necessary.

Debriefing and Treatment

Any individual who is exposed to or affected by violence at the workplace shall be provided with an appropriate debriefing and shall be advised to consult a health professional of choice for treatment and/or counseling.