## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY AND PROGRAM

This policy and program 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.
* Outline the responsibilities of all workplace parties.

DEFINITIONS

“Incidents of Violence” as defined by British Columbia’s *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*, means:

* “attempted or actual exercise of physical force by a person, other than a worker, so as to cause injury to a worker and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which causes a worker to reasonably believe he or she is at risk of injury.”

POLICY

[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. We will fulfil our obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* and the *Workers Compensation Act*.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer Responsibilities

* Assess the risk of workplace violence through risk assessments
* Implement and instruct workers and supervisor about procedures, response plans and other controls to eliminate the identified risks or, when not possible, reduce them
* Develop and implement a workplace violence prevention program, that is developed in cooperation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee
* Inform workers who may be exposed to the risk of violence of the nature and extent of the risk and how to prevent incidents of violence
* Have a process to report, investigate and act on allegations of violence in the workplace
* Complete proper follow up to any incident by reviewing actions taken in response to the incident and evaluating their effectiveness

Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities

* Ensure they offer an open door for communication, to receive, discuss and move forward on allegations
* Ensure the immediate safety, if applicable, of any employee coming forward with a serious and immediate concern
* Advise any injured workers to see a physician for treatment or referral after a traumatic incident
* Be aware of the law and the policy including understanding what constitutes workplace violence and the procedures that are in place to deal with said allegation
* Bring forward any allegations of violence to the employer and/or the Human Resource Department immediately
* Conduct or cooperate in the facilitation of an investigation where required
* Ensure their actions adhere to the terms laid out in this policy

All members of management who are aware, or who ought reasonably to 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.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to ensure the working environment is free from violence by:

* Fostering an environment based on mutual respect and dignity. Treating one another as they would want to be treated.
* Openly supporting and adhering to this organization’s anti-violence policy and refraining from any form violence.
* Advising any member of management or Human Resources of an incident violence or any other incident of retaliation against any person for invoking this policy;
* Cooperating in an investigation and handling of any complaints of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee/Occupational Health and Safety Representative

* Review Workplace Violence Hazard Assessment results and provide recommendations to management on reducing or eliminating risks of violence.
* Review all reports forwarded to the committee/representative regarding workplace violence and other incident reports as appropriate pertaining to workplace violence that result in personal injury or the 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 a leg or arm, etc.) sustained because of workplace violence.

Respond to employee concerns related to workplace violence, communicating those concerns and recommending solutions to management.

WORKPLACE ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAM

**Reporting Incidents of Workplace Violence**

* If 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, their 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.

**Right to Refuse Unsafe Work Due to Workplace Violence**

If you believe that you are being endangered by workplace violence, you have the right to refuse to perform the work you deem to be unsafe. If you are refusing to work because of workplace violence, you must immediately report the refusal to your supervisor/manager or their designate.

Once reported, an investigation into the refusal will commence. During the investigation, you must remain at work and remain available to the investigator(s) for the purpose of the investigation.

**Reports of Violent Incidents Workplace Expectations**

The Organization Shall:

* Promptly investigate all reported acts and incidents of violence.
* Consult with other parties (i.e., legal counsel, Health and Safety Consultants, Health and Safety Representatives, Employee Assistance Providers, Human Rights, and local Police Services) as deemed necessary to address, resolve and mitigate incidents.
* Take all reasonable measures to identify and eliminate risks and root causes resulting from the incident.
* Comply with the violent incident reporting obligations of the *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*

**Incident Investigation Reports**

[Organization Name] will document and securely retain records of all complaints or incidents of violence according to the *Workers Compensation Act*. Information to be included will be:

* The complaint or details about the incident;
* Completed violent incident report forms;
* Records of the investigation including notes;
* Witness statements, if taken;
* The investigation report, if any;
* Results of the investigation that were provided to the Complaint and Respondent; and
* Any corrective action taken to address the complaint or incident of workplace harassment.

**History of Violent Behaviour**

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, the organization may be required to inform workers of the potential for violence from persons who have a history of violent behaviour and whom workers are likely to encounter in the course of their work.

Pursuant to this obligation, if the organization is of the view that there is a risk of workplace violence such that an employee is likely to be exposed to physical injury, information that is deemed reasonably necessary to protect employees from physical injury, including personal information and any known triggers of the individual’s potentially violent behaviours will be communicated.

When disclosing personal information, the organization will limit as much as possible the amount of personal information provided and will not release any medical information that is deemed protected.

Furthermore, the organization will not disclose any information to individuals who are unlikely to encounter the person with a history of violence or to those who are not at risk of physical injury from that person.

**Violence Risk Assessment**

[Organization Name] will conduct regular risk assessments of the work environment to identify the types and probability of risks of injury due to violent actions.

When conducting the risk assessment [Organization Name] will take into consideration specific areas that may contribute to the risk of violence including:

* Working in a community-based setting
* Interaction with the public and/or working with unstable or possibly volatile clients.
* The exchange of money
* Working alone or in small numbers
* Working at night
* Working in a high crime area

As part of its assessment the organization will help make the results available to all workers and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC).

**Prohibition Against Retaliation/Reprisal**

[Organization Name] strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee for filing a genuine complaint under this policy or for participating in the investigation process.

Specifically, no employee shall be demoted, dismissed, disciplined, or denied a promotion, advancement, or other opportunity because they have lodged a complaint in good faith or have participated in an investigation.

**Disciplinary Action**

Any employee who is found to have breached this policy by engaging in violence or a form of reprisal; who breaches confidentiality expectations; fails to cooperate with an investigation; makes a complaint in bad faith or supplies falsified information will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may range from training, counselling, written warning, suspension, work transfer and termination of employment, depending on individual circumstances. Additionally, the organization may pursue criminal charges where warranted.

**Confidentiality**

[Organization Name] will ensure that information and documents regarding a complaint or incident will not be disclosed except to the extent necessary to protect workers, to investigate the complaint or incident, to take corrective action or as otherwise required by law.

All parties involved in a workplace violence complaint, including Complainants, Respondents, witnesses, management, and support persons are expected to treat the matter and any information they become aware of as confidential. No party shall discuss the matter or associated details with other employees or witnesses. An employee may face disciplinary action if it is determined that they have failed to adhere to these confidentiality expectations.

All investigation notes and full reports will be retained in a separate file and are not to be saved in employee personnel files. Investigation outcome letters and disciplinary action will be saved in applicable employee files only when the complaint has been verified and is found to be in breach of this policy.