

 Region of Waterloo	Human Resources and Citizen Services Policies	Section #	Policy #
		IV Approval Date: Mar 2002	15 Revision Date: June 2019
Title:	Workplace Violence Prevention		
Applies To:	All Employees		

Policy Statement:

The Region of Waterloo is committed to providing a safe, **respectful** and hospitable work environment for its employees and for those it serves by establishing a workplace violence prevention program. Workplace violence in any form will not be tolerated and reasonable steps will be taken to prevent workplace violence from all possible sources such as employees, customers, clients, supervisors, workers, strangers and domestic/intimate relationships.

Definitions:

Workplace Violence:

- (a) The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- (b) An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker;
- (c) A statement or behaviour that 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.

Examples of workplace violence may include, but are not limited to, hitting, throwing objects, pushing, kicking, and physical restraint. Threatening gestures or remarks, either verbal, written, or via social media, which could reasonably be interpreted as a threat to exercise physical force against an employee in the workplace are also considered to be workplace violence, regardless of how they are communicated.

Workplace - Any land, premise, or location where the business of the Region is being conducted or where Regional services are provided. Violence that occurs outside the workplace may be considered workplace violence if it proves to have repercussions in the work environment that adversely affects working relationships. The individual circumstances of the incident will be considered.

Domestic Violence - When 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 – may physically harm, or attempt or threaten to physically harm, that worker at work.

Social Media - Web-based technologies and sites including, but not limited to texting, blogging, microblogging (Twitter), photo sharing (flickr), video sharing (YouTube), webcasting (blogtv), and networking (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, wikis, discussion boards) which allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, photos,

knowledge, and interests.

Responsibilities:

The Region of Waterloo is responsible for:

- Ensuring the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations are complied with in the workplace;
- Ensuring that a workplace violence prevention policy is established, posted, and reviewed at least annually and a workplace violence prevention program is developed and maintained to support the policy.

Management is responsible for:

- Upholding and abiding by this Policy and the corresponding Program.
- Treating others in a professional manner with courtesy and consideration and to discourage workplace violence;
- Proactively providing a workplace free of violence;
- Taking seriously all reported instances of violence;
- Assessing the risk of workplace violence which may arise from the nature of the workplace, type of work, or conditions of work;
- Developing measures and procedures to control identified risks associated with workplace violence, including instances where it has become known that domestic violence may occur in the workplace and it is likely to expose a worker to physical injury;
- Immediately investigating all aspects of any reported instances of violence and reporting incidents to the Manager, Health and Safety;
- Being familiar with their responsibilities under the Region's policy IV-15 Workplace Violence Prevention;
- Ensuring that a bargaining unit employee is aware of their right to have the assistance of a union representative during all steps of a violence investigation, if they so choose;
- Making decisions on what steps, if any, should be taken as a result of any investigation;
- Ensuring that the Region's policy IV-15 Workplace Violence Prevention is posted in the workplace in a visible and accessible spot;
- Promoting and restoring a positive and respectful work environment during and after any incidents of violence.

Employees are responsible for:

- Following this policy;
- Promoting a violence-free workplace;
- Immediately reporting instances of actual or potential workplace violence, whether directly experienced or witnessed, to appropriate management staff or to the Manager, Health and Safety;
- Treating others in a professional manner with courtesy and consideration and to discourage workplace violence;
- Refraining from engaging in workplace violence;
- Co-operating in interventions and investigations regarding workplace violence;
- **Maintaining confidentiality during an investigation**

- When using social media, not engaging in harassment, personal attacks, or abuse towards individuals or organizations, and not using language that is discriminatory, hateful, or violent or that incites others to discriminate, practice hate, or violence.
- **Contacting emergency services in the event of an extreme or imminent threat of physical harm to themselves or another individual;**
- **Removing themselves from dangerous situations in the workplace involving violence or the threat of violence.**

Health and Safety is responsible for:

- Developing a workplace violence prevention program including policies, procedures, training, and documentation associated with the program;
- Interpreting and clarifying the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, its Regulations and any relevant standards and best practices in regard to workplace violence;
- Providing assistance as required on the policy and program provisions and any workplace concerns and complaints.
- if the complaint is against the direct supervisor please see section 4.2.3 of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program for further instructions

Joint Health and Safety Committee/Health and Safety Representatives are responsible for:

- Being a cooperative partner in the process of evaluating and managing risks associated with violence in the workplace;
- Receiving risk assessment documents and workplace incident reports (HR18's) in regard to workplace violence.
- **Ensure a violence risk assessment is completed.**

Union Involvement:

All bargaining unit employees may have the assistance of a union representative during all steps of a violence investigation, if they so choose. The unionized employee will be required to sign a waiver if they choose not to have a union representative present.

Operating Details:

If the provisions of this policy differ from the terms and conditions of any applicable collective agreement, the collective agreement will apply.

A Workplace Violence Prevention Program has been developed to provide the tools and assistance necessary to recognize, evaluate and manage workplace violence risks. Measures and procedures for reporting and investigating workplace violence incidents are also outlined in this Program.

Because of its profound impact, all reasonable efforts will be taken to recognize and assess potential sources of workplace violence, including domestic violence which may enter the workplace. This assessment must consider the nature of the workplace, the type of work, and/or the conditions of the work.

Steps must be taken to prevent workplace violence involving Regional employees and/or members of the public through the implementation of controls and workplace specific procedures.

Specific instances of workplace violence can be assessed using the HR Incident Assessment Tool and depending upon the nature and severity of an incident or threat, it may be necessary to contact police or other emergency services.

All incidents must be investigated and reported via the Workplace Incident Report (HR18).

Employees have the right to refuse work if they have reason to believe they are in danger from workplace violence. Certain employees continue to have only a limited right to refuse (staff employed in an ambulance service or a long-term care home).

Confirmed instances of workplace violence will be taken seriously and will be subject to corrective action and/or discipline up to and including dismissal.

Confidential Advisory Service:

All employees who believe that they have experienced workplace violence can request confidential advisory services from, the Manager, Health and Safety or a Health and Safety Advisor in Human Resources, or a union official.

Employees are also encouraged to seek support through the Region's Employee and Family Assistance Program which is a confidential and anonymous counseling service.

Training and Information:

The Region will provide information and instruction that is appropriate for the employee on the policy and program including the prevention, identification, and reporting of workplace violence, upon hire.

The Region will educate all management staff members in assessing risks associated with workplace violence and the procedure for investigating and addressing reported instances of workplace violence.

Where department, division, or task specific workplace violence prevention procedures exist, employees will receive information and instruction that is appropriate for their work.

Documentation:

Written records of training attendance, material, who provided the training and who attended the training shall be forwarded to Health and Safety.

See Also:

- [Workplace Violence Prevention Program](#)
- [Human Resources Incident Assessment Tool \(Workplace Violence\)](#)

- [Workplace Incident Report \(HR18\)](#)
- [I-35 Discovery and Reporting of Serious Wrongdoing](#)
- [I-14 Interpersonal Conduct](#)
- [I-13 Workplace Harassment Prevention](#)
- [Workplace Harassment Prevention Program](#)
- [Right to Refuse Unsafe Work Fact Sheet](#)
- [I-19 External Complaints](#)

For Further Information Please Contact:

- Manager, Health and Safety
Human Resources and Citizen Service