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Policy Title: Prevention of Violence in the Workplace

Year of Next Review: May, 2018

INTENT

This policy addresses the prevention of workplace violence as part of the Renfrew Public Library Board's responsibility for worker health and safety under the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***.

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone including staff, members of the board, volunteers, clients, and others who do business with the library. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from library property, and in the case of employees, are subject to disciplinary action including termination.

Section 1: Definition

1. The Renfrew Public Library recognizes the definition of violence as set out in the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***. Workplace violence means:
 - 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 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
2. Violence in the workplace may include:
 - a) verbally threatening to attack a worker
 - b) leaving threatening notes or sending threatening e-mails to the workplace
 - c) shaking a fist in a worker's face
 - d) hitting or trying to hit a worker
 - e) throwing or kicking an object
 - f) sexual aggression against a worker
3. Violence in the library or on library property also includes:
 - a) intentionally or recklessly damaging of the property of another person

- b) intentionally causing alarm
- c) recklessly creating a risk by fighting
- d) creating a hazardous condition or danger by recklessly engaging in conduct which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury
- e) intentionally placing or attempting to place another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury
- f) wielding a weapon

Section 2: Responsibility and Response

1. The CEO or designate must develop and maintain a workplace violence program.
See Appendix A.

The program will set out:

- a) a process for assessing the risk of violence in the workplace
 - b) measures to control risk including those from domestic violence
 - c) procedures for reporting incidents of violence
 - d) the process for dealing with, and investigating, violent incidents and complaints.
2. All reports will be thoroughly investigated by the CEO or designate. The CEO will update the Board Chair of all reported incidents. The Board Chair will determine whether the issue needs to be brought before the whole of the Board.
 3. Physical or sexual assault or threat of physical violence will be reported to the police.
 4. The library will provide staff with information on the risk of violence in the library and training workshops on a periodic basis addressing concerns such as “dealing with difficult people.”
 5. Anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call the police.
 6. Workplace violence should be reported immediately to the most senior staff member available.
 7. Employees are encouraged to report behaviour that they reasonably believe poses a potential for violence as described above.
 8. The Renfrew Public Library, at the request of an employee, or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing an employee on library property in cases where the employee suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individual(s).
 9. This policy will be:
 - a) reviewed annually by the board
 - b) posted in the staff room along with the Violence Prevention Program – **See Appendix A**
 - c) posted on the library’s website

Section 3: Confidentiality and False Reports

1. All investigations shall be conducted in strict confidence to the extent possible. Documents will be stored in the CEO's file cabinet and access to these records will be restricted.
2. Employees who are found to have made false or malicious complaints will be subject to disciplinary action.

Related Documents:

Renfrew Public Library – ***OP- 02 Safety, Security and Emergency Occupational Health and Safety Act*** R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER O.1
Bill 168 An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to violence and harassment in the workplace and other matters. S.O. 2009 Chapter 23

Prevention of Workplace Violence

Appendix A – Workplace Violence Program

Plan for Maintaining Security in the Library

1. The library staff will conduct a worksite assessment as often as necessary to ensure measures for violence prevention are effective – **Appendix B**. The assessment will:
 - a) identify jobs or locations with the greatest risk
 - b) identify high risk factors
 - c) include a physical workplace security audit
 - d) evaluate the effectiveness of existing security measures
2. The CEO, or designate, will annually review the history of past incidents to identify patterns or trends.

Recognized areas of higher risk in the library include:

- a) contact with the public
- b) working alone or in small numbers
- c) the circulation desk where money is kept
- d) closing the library at night
- e) secondary entrances to the library
- f) stairwell from main floor to Raglan St. entrance
- g) staff parking area at night

Measures for reducing the risk:

1. General
 - a) designate the CEO's office and Children's office (rooms with doors that lock and phone) as emergency safe rooms
 - b) keep in good working order the exterior lights around the building
 - c) staff will not work alone in the library ever.

2. Recognize the Signs of Violence

Early identification and prevention of violence in the workplace is encouraged. Potential threats of violence that should be reported could include the following:

- a) threatening statements to do harm to self or others
- b) reference to other incidents of violence
- c) confrontational behaviour
- d) major change in personality, mood or behaviour
- e) substance abuse

3. Steps to Increase Your Personal Safety

- A. Notice your surroundings and report any unsafe or dangerous situation to the most senior staff member.

- B. If you feel uncomfortable about a person who has entered the library, trust your instincts. If you feel threatened, make a scene - YELL!
 - C. Use a buddy system when leaving work.
 - D. If you ever find you are working alone in the library, let the CEO or someone at home, know the situation and tell him/her when you expect to leave. Report the situation. Working alone is not permitted and if this occurs during library hours all attempts should be made to find someone else to come in to work. Doors should remain locked until another staff member shows up to work.
 - E. If you enter a bathroom and suspect it is unsafe, don't call out. Back out, go to a safe, lockable place with phone and call for help.
 - F. Know the nearest exit or room with a lock.
4. Domestic Violence : Steps to Increase Your Personal Safety
- A. Tell someone at work about your situation.
 - B. Make up a "code word" for co-workers so they know when to call for help.
 - C. Ask your co-workers to screen your calls and visitors.
 - D. Ask a co-worker to call the police if your abuser is bothering you.
5. Staff Procedures

Threatening Behaviour:

- A. Do not argue with a threatening person. Identify yourself as a library staff member. Remain calm and keep your voice low and firm.
- B. Do not put yourself or others in danger. Keep a distance of four feet.
- C. Be friendly but firm, introduce yourself, look at the person while you talk to him/her, and let the person talk, clarify the problem and offer solutions.
- D. Get assistance from another staff person. If in the children's department push the panic alarm.
- E. Advise him/her that the police will be called if the abuse does not stop.
- F. If the behaviour doesn't change call the police.**
- G. Notify the CEO or designate.

Violence/Assault

- A. If you hear raised voices or sounds of a scuffle investigate.
- B. If you witness violence or an assault call the police and describe the situation.**
- C. Recruit other staff to move others out of the way to a safer location.
- D. Do not block exits to prevent a threatening/violent person from leaving the building.
- E. Do not invade the personal space of the threatening person.
- F. Do not get between two people fighting.
- G. Notice details so you can describe the situation to the police.
- H. Notify the CEO.

How to report

1. A report should be made as soon as possible after an action or behaviour occurred
2. An informal, verbal complaint may be brought forward to the CEO. It is in the best interest of all concerned that a report be written.

3. If a formal complaint is requested, the employee must file a written report with the CEO
4. The report should include a brief statement of the incident, when it occurred, where it occurred, date and time it occurred, the person(s) involved and the names of any witnesses if any.

Investigation and Dealing with Incidents or Complaints

1. After receiving a report the CEO or designate will complete an investigation as quickly as possible, depending on the nature and severity of the issue. This will include interviews with the staff member(s), the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member, and any witnesses.
2. The results of the investigation will be discussed with the employee and recommended preventative actions and/or resolutions presented.
3. A separate meeting will be held with the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member.
4. If the findings do not support the allegations the CEO will recommend that no further action is necessary and that the matter be closed.
5. Should the investigation conclude that there is evidence of misconduct the CEO will prescribe a resolution that may include police intervention.
6. Employees who are found to have made false or malicious complaints will be subject to disciplinary action.
7. The CEO will update the Board Chair of all reported incidents. The Board Chair will determine whether the issue needs to be brought before the whole of the Board.

Prevention of Workplace Violence (Continued)

Appendix B – Workplace Assessment

Access Control

How many public entrances does the building have		
Can the number be reduced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is the building connected to other buildings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, does the building have access control?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is your building shared with other businesses or renters?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, is there access control to your area(s) only?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there a system to alert employees of access by intruders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are office areas arranged / arranged to distinguish public vs private spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are coded cards or keys used to control access to the building or certain areas in the building?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you keep track of who has coded cards or keys?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there a system to minimize the distribution of keys / entry cards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you change codes/locks immediately if keys/cards are lost or misplaced or if employees are let go?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Security System

Is there a security system in place?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, is the system tested on a regular basis (monthly) to assure correct functions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is the existing security system effective based on past performance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are security guards/safety walking services available at your location?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have you posted signs indicating a security system is in use?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are security cameras and mirrors placed in locations that would deter potential offenders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Appendix B – Workplace Assessment (Continued)

Reception

Is your reception area easily identifiable and accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Can the desk staff see incoming visitors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is the reception area visible to fellow employees or members of the public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is your reception area staffed at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Can outsiders enter the building when no desk staff is present?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is circulation desk first point of contact for visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Does circulation desk staff work alone at times?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there an emergency call button at the circulation desk?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, have response procedures been developed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there objects/equipment that could be used as a weapon in this area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Signage

If some entrance doors are not open, are there signs showing which doors are open?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Upon entering the building, are there signs to identify where you are?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Once in the building, are there signs showing you where to get emergency assistance if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If no, what signs are needed and where?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are public and private areas clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there exit signs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there areas where exit signs are not present but are needed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, where?		
Are signs posted to be highly visible to all?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If no, where are these signs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are the hours of operation adequately posted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Impression of overall signage?	<input type="checkbox"/> very poor <input type="checkbox"/> poor <input type="checkbox"/> satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> very good	
Are other signs necessary?		

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Appendix B – Workplace Assessment (Continued)

Lighting

Is the lighting evenly spaced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are any lights out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, where?		
Can desk staff access main light control switches?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Can public access main light control switches?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Stairwells and exits

Do exit doors identify where they exit to?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there places at the bottom of stairwells where someone could hide?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, where?		
Is the lighting adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Can lights be turned off in the stairwell?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there more than one exit route?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do any exit routes restrict your ability to get away?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, where?		
Do stairwell doors lock behind you during regular hours of operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do stairwell doors lock behind you after regular hours of operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Possible Entrapment sites

Are there unoccupied rooms or storage areas that should be locked?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, where?		
Are there small, well-defined areas where you would be hidden from view of others such as:		
• Recessed doorways	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
• Stairwells	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
• Unlocked storage areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
• Elevators	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
•	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are there unlit storage areas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Appendix B – Workplace Assessment (Continued)

Natural surveillance

Are there any physical objects/ structures that obstruct your view?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, could someone hide behind such objects / structures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If so, where?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Comment		
Do members of the public approach staff only from the front?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Washrooms

Is public access to the washrooms controlled?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Can the lights in the washrooms be turned off?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are the washrooms checked before the building is vacated?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Meeting Rooms

Do you have public meeting rooms?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, is natural surveillance possible?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there an alarm system in this room(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is the furniture arranged to allow emergency exits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Emergency assistance

Has an emergency contact number been established during regular hours of operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has an emergency contact number been established after regular hours of operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are emergency contact numbers posted in staff accessible areas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are emergency phones available in all areas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If no, where is access needed?		

Appendix B – Workplace Assessment (Continued)

Individual Offices

Are certain employees at higher risk of violence?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, has their furniture been arranged to allow for quick exit from the office?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Can the staff member maintain a minimum distance (1 – 1.5 metres) between themselves and the visitor?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have they reduced the number of objects that can be used as weapons?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do these offices have good natural surveillance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Work Practices

Does staff handle money or valuables?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Does staff provide service, care, advice or education?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Does staff work with unstable or volatile people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Does staff work alone or in small numbers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Working Alone

Do any areas feel isolated?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, which areas?		
In these areas, is there a telephone or sign directing you to emergency assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
In these areas, how far is the nearest person to hear calls for assistance?		
Are alarms or panic buttons installed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are the alarms or panic buttons easily accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you periodically check the functioning of alarms or panic buttons?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is it easy to predict when people will be around?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Movement predictors

How easy would it be for someone to predict your patterns of movement?	<input type="checkbox"/> very easy	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat obvious	<input type="checkbox"/> no way of knowing
Can you tell what is at the other end of each walkway /corridor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

If no, where		
Are there corners, alcoves etc. where someone could hide and wait for you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, where?		

Appendix B – Workplace Assessment (Continued)

Areas of Improvement

List areas where lighting was a concern	
What improvements would you like to see?	

Overall Impression

How safe do you feel in each area listed below? Check the box that indicates your feeling of safety in each area

	Very safe	Safe	Neutral	Unsafe	Very unsafe	N/A	Additional Comments
Main desk / front entrance							
Information desk							
Elevator							
Stairwells							
In the stacks							
Corridors / hallways							
At your desk							
Office areas							
Parking areas							
Washrooms							
Common areas							
Meeting Room (s)							