



<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>HR-08</b>
<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Workplace Violence Prevention Policy</b>
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## Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

This policy addresses the prevention of workplace violence as part of the County of Prince Edward Public Library Board's responsibility for worker health and safety under the Ontario **Occupational Health and Safety Act**. This policy is for the mutual protection of staff and visitors from violence or threats of violence.

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. The library is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all staff, patrons and visitors.

### Section 1: Definition

1. The County of Prince Edward 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. *Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, chapter O.1, s.1 (1)*
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 which 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.
  - e) A system for maintaining all associated records should an inspection by the Ministry of Labour or employee enquiries occur. (See **Appendix A** which follows).
2. Employees are encouraged to report behaviour that they reasonably believe poses a potential for violence as described above.
3. Anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call the police.
4. Workplace violence should be reported immediately to the most senior staff member available.
5. Physical or sexual assault or threat of physical violence will be reported to the police.
6. All reports will be thoroughly investigated by the CEO or designate.
7. 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.”
8. The County of Prince Edward 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 (HR-08) and the Workplace Violence Program (HR-08-Appendix A) will be:
  - a) reviewed annually by the library board
  - b) posted in the staff room at each location

### **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 Human Resources 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:**

***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.** (Statutes of Ontario, 2009, Chapter 23)

County of Prince Edward Public Library Policy ***HR-07: Workplace Harassment and Discrimination***

County of Prince Edward Public Library Policy ***HR-09: Health and Safety***

County of Prince Edward Public Library Policy ***OP-02 Safety, Security and Emergency***



## 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. 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.
3. The CEO, or designate will review the annually the previously recognized areas of higher risk in the library including :
  - a) ongoing contact with the public
  - b) working alone or in small numbers
  - c) the circulation desk where money is kept
  - d) closing the library building at night
  - e) monitoring of secondary entrances to the library

### Measures for Reducing the Risk of Workplace Violence

1. General Measures
  - a) Ensure there is a specific emergency plan for each Library branch and that all staff are aware of its location and contents.
  - b) Each telephone should have emergency numbers posted nearby.
  - c) Each branch should have an emergency safe room including a lockable door.
  - d) Staff working alone or in a remote area of the branch shall carry a telephone with them at all times.
  - e) Staff will not work alone in the library outside of usual operating hours of other branches without prior consent of the CEO or designate.
  - f) All secondary entrance doors as well as lockable unused areas of each branch should be kept locked.
  - g) The exterior lights around the building will be kept in good working order
2. Learn to recognize the signs of violence
  - a) Early identification and prevention of violence in the workplace is encouraged. Potential threats of violence that should be reported could include the following:
    - i. threatening statements to do harm to self or others
    - ii. reference to other incidents of violence
    - iii. confrontational behaviour
    - iv. major change in personality, mood or behaviour
    - v. substance abuse



3. Staff procedures to increase 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 or her when you expect to leave.
  - e) If you enter a bathroom and suspect it is unsafe, do not call out. Back out, go to a safe, lockable place with telephone 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 for 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, let the person talk, clarify the problem and offer solutions.
  - d) Get assistance from another staff person.
  - e) Advise him/her that the police will be called if the abuse does not stop.
  - f) If the behaviour does not change, call the police.**
  - g) Notify the CEO or designate and complete an incident report (see **Appendix B**).
  
6. Staff procedures for dealing with 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 or designate and complete an incident report (see **Appendix B**).



### **How to report a situation**

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 her designate will complete an investigation as quickly as possible, depending on the nature and severity of the issue. This will include interviews with the employee, 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.



## Appendix B: Incident Report Form

### Part 1: Assailant Information

Part 1: Assailant Information		
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Delivery Person	
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex-Employee	
<input type="checkbox"/> Visitor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____	
Name (if known)		
Identification details		
Gender:	Height:	Complexion:
Age:	Weight:	
Other distinguishing marks:		
Vehicle description (if any):		
Other Information:		
Has the assailant been involved in any previous incidents with employees? If yes, provide details.		
Did any working conditions contribute to the incident?		
Name the witnesses (name, telephone #, etc):		
Please provide any other information you think is relevant:		
Name of Investigator:	Signature of Investigator:	
Date:		



## Appendix B: Incident Report Form

### Part 2: Complainant Information

Part 2: Complainant Information	
Name	
Job Title	Branch
Date of incident	Time of incident
Type of Incident <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Description of Incident	
Location of Incident	
Medical Attention required (Please explain):	
Police called? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, give details:	
WSIB reported issued? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Provide details:	
Investigation conducted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Names of investigators involved:	
Reported to Supervisor? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Name of Supervisor:	





**Appendix C: Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Form**

<b>Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Form</b>				
Name		Branch		
Job Title		Date		
<b>Work Area:</b> <i>Briefly describe your branch/department/area and the types of activities or functions performed by employees in the branch.</i>				
<b>Activities which might expose employees to risk of violence</b>				
<b>Task</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Describe/Specify *</b>	<b>Action to be taken or Control measure to implement</b>
Do employees work with money?				
Do employees lock up their personal belongings?				
Do any employees work alone during normal working hours?				
Do any employees work alone after normal working hours?				
<b>Site factors which might expose employees to risk of violence</b>				
<b>Task</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Describe/Specify *</b>	<b>Action to be taken or Control measure to implement</b>
Does the library have clear visibility from the street?				
Does the library have isolated areas where workers are alone?				
Is the lighting in the parking area adequate?				
Is inside and outside lighting adequate?				
<b>Site factors which might expose employees to risk of violence (continued)</b>				



Task	Yes	No	Describe/ Specify *	Action to be taken or Control measure to implement
Are effective alarm systems appropriately placed and operating?				
Is public access to all areas limited?				
Are convex or ball mirrors placed to improve sight lines around corners?				
Is there visible signage to indicate restricted access – Employees Only?				
Are panic buttons installed in high risk areas, and are they routinely checked?				
Is emergency contact information easily locatable?				
<b>Reducing the risk of violence</b>				
Task	Yes	No	Describe/ Specify *	Action to be taken or Control measure to implement
Describe policies or procedures already in place to reduce the risk of violence in your library.				
In light of your responses to the questions in this assessment: a) Do you consider that you have taken all reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the risk of violence? b) What further steps would you recommend? c) What assistance do you need to accomplish any of the above steps?				



### Appendix D: Incident Investigation Checklist

Use this check chart for violent incident investigations to ensure that all aspects of the incident have been reviewed. Prepare an Incident Report based on your findings.

Task	Completed
Names, addresses, telephone numbers of complainants, assailants, and witnesses	
Occupation of complainants, assailants, and witnesses	
Date and time of incident	
Date and time of incident reported to employer	
Exact location of incident	
Exact location of complainants, assailants, and witnesses	
Activities of complainants, assailants and witnesses before, during and after the incident	
Statements of witnesses and their locations	
Detailed explanation of events in order of sequence of occurrence	
Complainant's account of events	
Description of assailant(s)	
Description of any vehicles involved in incident	
Assailant's account of events	
What participants said and did immediately before and after the incident	
Physical conditions of work environment at the time of incident	
Assailant's physical and mental state prior to and at the time of the incident	
Unusual activity that may have contributed to incident	
Substance use or abuse	
Relationship between the complainant and the assailant, if any	
Investigator's relationship to complainant and assailant, if any	
Photographs of incident site	
Diagram of incident site, location of injured worker and witnesses	