



## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLANDFORD-BLENHEIM

Section: **Health and Safety**  
Subject: **Workplace Violence Policy**  
Reference:

Policy Number: **HS 20**  
Date Approved:  
Date Last Reviewed:  
Date Last Revised:

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### **PURPOSE**

The Township is committed to providing a respectful, supportive, healthy, safe, accessible and inclusive work environment for all employees, who are entitled to work in an environment free from violence, intimidation and other disruptive behaviour. The Township is also committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all those who enter its facilities and access its services.

The intention of this policy is to prevent violence from taking place and where necessary to act upon incidents of violent behaviour promptly, fairly and judiciously. The most effective element in preventing violence in the workplace is education. The Township will provide education, information and promote awareness of violence issues to foster a safe, secure and respectful workplace.

### **POLICY:**

Violent behavior of any kind or threats of violence either implied or direct, are prohibited at The Corporation of the Township of Blandford-Blenheim (Township), in properties and at Township sponsored events. Such conduct by a Township employee or member of municipal council will not be tolerated.

An employee or member of municipal council who exhibits violent or threatening behavior may be subject to criminal prosecution and shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment or office. Violent threats or actions by a non-employee may result in criminal prosecution.

The Township will investigate all complaints filed and will also investigate any possible violation of this policy of which we are made aware. Retaliation against a person who makes a complaint regarding violent behavior or threats of violence made to him/her is also prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment or office.

**SCOPE:**

ADMINISTRATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BUILDING SERVICES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PUBLIC WORKS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COMMUNITY SERVICES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FINANCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FIRE & PROTECTIVE SERVICES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This policy applies to all those working for the Township including firefighters, support, professional and administrative staff, co-op and summer students, members of Council.

**OBJECTIVE**

The Township will not tolerate, condone, or ignore workplace violence. Every employee at the Township is responsible for keeping the workplace free from violence. This includes intimidating, hostile, threatening, bullying or violent behaviour by employees or non-employees against self, others or the Townships property.

**DEFINITIONS**

As of June 15, 2010, workplace violence is defined as:

- the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker; or,
- 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.

Some of the types of violence that workers could experience in the workplace include hitting, pushing, physical assault, sexual assault, stalking, criminal harassment, robbery, or threats of violence.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The Township shall:**

- Ensure that all known incidents of workplace violence are investigated and to the extent appropriate based on the nature of each incident and the actual or potential threat it posed to worker safety:

- consult with other parties (i.e. Legal Counsel, Health & Safety consultants, JHSCs, Employee Assistance Provider, Human Rights office, Local Police Services)
- take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or address risks identified by the incident
- document the incident, its investigation, and corrective action taken
- Take all reasonable and practical measures to protect workers, acting in good faith, who report workplace violence or act as witnesses, from reprisal or further violence
- Submit a report of the incident to the Ministry of Labour (Note: Ontario requirement) where an employee incurs a lost time injury as a result of violence in the workplace.
- Review this policy and hazard assessments annually, or as changes to job responsibilities or environments occur, and revise the assessment as needed
- Review annually, in conjunction with review of hazard assessments, the effectiveness of actions taken to minimize or eliminate workplace violence and make improvements to procedures, as required.

#### **The Safety Committees/Safety Rep will:**

- Review the Workplace Violence Hazard Assessment results and provide recommendations to management to reduce or eliminate the risk of violence
- Review all reports forwarded to the SC regarding workplace violence and other incident reports as appropriate pertaining to incidents of workplace violence that result in personal injury or threat of personal injury, property damage, or police involvement
- Respond to employee concerns related to workplace violence and communicate these to management

In addition, SCs may participate in the investigation of reported incidents that result in personal injury or have the potential to result in injury.

#### **Employee's Role**

As an employee of the Township, you have the following responsibilities to our workplace.

- We trust that all of our employees will help us eliminate the threat of violence from our workplace.
- All employees are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of violence that threaten or perceive to threaten a safe work environment.

## **Management's Role**

- Legally, management is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and health workplace free from violence.
- Directors/Managers must be sensitive to the climate in the workplace and address potential problems before those problems become serious.
- If a manager becomes aware of violence in the workplace and chooses to ignore it, that Manager and the Township risk being named co-respondent in a complaint and may be found liable in legal proceedings brought about by the complainant and/ or government representatives.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Township will conduct a risk assessment of the work environment to identify any issues related to potential violence that may impact the operation and will institute measures to control any identified risks to employee safety. This information will be provided to the Safety Committee or Safety Representative.

The risk assessment may include review of records and reports i.e. security reports, employee incident reports, staff perception surveys, health and safety inspection reports, first aid records or other related records. Specific areas that may contribute to risk of violence may include: contact with public, exchange of money, receiving doors, working alone or at night etc. Research may also include a review of similar workplaces with respect to their history of violence.

## **CONFIDENTIALLY**

The Township will do everything it can to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure that complainants and respondents are treated fairly and respectfully. The Township will protect this privacy so long as doing so remains consistent with the enforcement of this policy and adherence to the law.

Neither the name of the person reporting the facts nor the circumstances surrounding them will be disclosed to anyone whatsoever, unless such disclosure is necessary for an investigation or disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be determined by the Company and will be proportional to the seriousness of the behaviour concerned. The Township will also provide appropriate assistance to any employee who is victim of discrimination or harassment.

## **PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR:**

Violence in the workplace may include, but is not limited to the following list of prohibited behaviors directed at or by a co-worker, supervisor or member of the public or council:

1. Direct threats or physical intimidation.
2. Implications or suggestions of violence.
3. Bullying.
4. Intimidation.
5. Unwelcome and/or disrespectful comments or gestures.
6. Stalking.
7. Possession of weapons of any kind on Township property, including parking lots, other exterior premises or while engaged in activities for the Township in other locations, or at Township sponsored events, unless such possession or use is a requirement of the job.
8. Assault of any form.
9. Physical restraint, confinement.
10. Dangerous or threatening horseplay.
11. Loud, disruptive or angry behavior or language that is clearly not part of the typical work environment.
12. Blatant or intentional disregard for the safety or well-being of others.
13. Commission of a violent felony or misdemeanor on Township property.
14. Any other act that a reasonable person would perceive as constituting a threat of violence.

**Domestic Violence**, while often originating in the home, can significantly impact workplace safety and the productivity of victims as well as co-workers. For the purposes of this document, “domestic violence” is defined as abuse committed against an adult or fully emancipated minor.

Abuse is the intentional reckless attempt to cause bodily injury, sexual assault, threatening behavior, harassment, or stalking, or making annoying phone calls to a person who is in any of the following relationships:

- Spouse or former spouse;
- Domestic partner or former domestic partner;
- Cohabitant or former cohabitant and or other household members;
- A person with whom the victim is having, or has had, a dating or engagement relationship;
- A person with whom the victim has a child.

Township recognizes that domestic violence may occur in relationships regardless of the marital status, age, race, or sexual orientation of the parties.

**PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING INCIDENTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**  
**INCLUDE:**

- Visiting the scene of an incident as soon as possible.
- Interviewing injured and threatened employees and witnesses.
- Examining the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident, including any reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator.
- Determining the cause of the incident.
- Taking mitigating action to prevent the incident from recurring.
- Recording the findings and mitigating actions taken.

In appropriate circumstances, the Township will inform the reporting individual of the results of the investigation. To the extent possible, the Township will maintain the confidentiality of the reporting employee or member of municipal council and the investigation but may need to disclose results in appropriate circumstances; for example, in order to protect individual safety. The Township will not tolerate retaliation against any employee or member of municipal council who reports workplace violence.

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CAO/Clerk