



Section of Policy Manual: Personnel	Policy No. : PER-14
Subject: Prevention of Workplace Violence	Policy Approval Date: Sept. 10, 2020
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This policy addresses the prevention of workplace violence as part of the Gravenhurst Public Library Board's responsibility for worker health and safety under the Ontario ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***.

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone including staff, members of the board, volunteers, patrons 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 Gravenhurst Public Library recognizes the definition of violence as set out in the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act R.S.O. 1990, chapter O.1, s.1 (1)*** 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
  - g. stalking someone



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. standing excessively close to someone in an aggressive manner
  - f. physically restraining someone
  - g. intentionally placing or attempting to place another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury
  - h. wielding a weapon

Violence that occurs outside the normal workplace but which has an impact on the working environment, including working relationships, may also be considered violence in the workplace.

The employee has the right to refuse work if workplace violence is likely to endanger them. In that instance, the employee needs to immediately contact the CEO/Chief Librarian (or designate) at which point appropriate measures will be taken to protect them and investigate the situation.

**Domestic violence** - Employees experiencing domestic violence that would likely expose them, or other workers, to physical injury in the workplace, can be assured that the Library Board will take every reasonable precaution to protect them and their co-workers in these circumstances.

This may include some or all of the following:

- a. creating a safety plan
- b. contacting the police
- c. establishing enhanced security measures such as a panic button, code words, and door and access security measures
- d. screening calls and blocking certain email addresses
- e. setting up priority parking or providing escorts to an employee's vehicle or to public transportation
- f. adjusting an employee's working hours and work location so that they are not predictable; and
- g. facilitating access to counselling through an Employee Assistance Program or other community programs.



The Library Board appreciates the sensitivity of these issues and will do its best to assist employees as discreetly as possible while maintaining their privacy.

## **Section 2: Responsibility and Response**

1. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate must develop and maintain a workplace violence prevention 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. (See Appendix A).
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/Chief Librarian or designate.
7. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate 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 CEO/Chief Librarian, at the request of an employee, or at their 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 (PER-14) will be:
  - a. reviewed as needed by the Library Board
  - b. posted in the staff room



10. Employees, volunteers, Library patrons, contractors and consultants are responsible for ensuring that their behaviour does not violate this policy and by fostering a work environment that is based on respect and is free from violence.

### **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 employee files and access to these records will be restricted. The Employer will only release as much information as is necessary to investigate and respond to the complaint or situation or if required to do so by law. Out of respect for the relevant individuals, it is essential that the complainant, respondent, witnesses and anyone else involved in the formal investigation of a complaint maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation and afterwards.
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)

***Appendix A (PER-14)*** Workplace Violence Prevention Program

***Appendix B (PER-13 and PER-14)*** Workplace Harassment and Discrimination and/or Violence Incident Report Form

***Appendix C (PER-14)*** Witness Account Form

Gravenhurst Public Library Policy ***(PER-13) -: Workplace Harassment and Discrimination***