

APPENDIX A Policy PER-14  
Gravenhurst Public Library  
Program for the Prevention of Workplace Violence



**Introduction**

The Gravenhurst Public Library Board is committed to creating and fostering an environment that is free from workplace violence. This commitment is reflected in **Policy PER-14 Prevention of Workplace Violence** and will be implemented with use of the program outlined in this appendix.

**Section 1: Risk Assessment**

- 1.1. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate conducts worksite assessments as often as necessary to ensure measures for violence prevention are effective. The assessment will:
  - 1.1.1. identify jobs or locations with the greatest risk;
  - 1.1.2. identify high risk factors;
  - 1.1.3. include a physical workplace security audit;
  - 1.1.4. evaluate the effectiveness of existing security measures;
  - 1.1.5. the results of the risk assessment will be used to control risks of violence as identified.
- 1.2. A re-assessment will take place if:
  - 1.2.1. there is a change in workplace location or significant renovation to the workplace;
  - 1.2.2. there is a significant change in working conditions;
  - 1.2.3. there is new information regarding risk of workplace violence;
  - 1.2.4. a workplace violence incident has occurred in a manner that has not been previously identified as a potential risk.
- 1.3. The CEO/Chief Librarian, or designate, will annually review the history of past incidents to identify patterns or trends.

**Section 2: Measures and Procedures for Controlling Identified Risks**

The following measures and procedures for all employees and volunteers apply to the identified risks. All potential or actual instances of workplace violence shall be reported according to the process in Section 6.

- 2.1. Early Identifiers of Violence  
Early identifiers of potential threats of violence that should be reported could include the following:
  - 2.1.1. threatening statements to do harm to self or others;
  - 2.1.2. reference to other incidents of violence;
  - 2.1.3. confrontational behaviour;

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- 2.1.4. major change in personality, mood or behaviour;
- 2.1.5. substance abuse;
- 2.1.6. If the situation escalates to pose an immediate danger of physical violence, follow the measures and procedures in this section regarding violence and assault.

2.2. General Risk Reduction Measures

Institute general measures and procedures to reduce risk including:

- 2.2.1. designate the CEO/Chief Librarian's office, staff room and programming room (rooms with doors that lock and have a telephone) as emergency safe rooms;
- 2.2.2. designate a single entrance for public use and controlling access to all secondary entrance doors by keeping these locked;
- 2.2.3. keep the exterior lights around the building in good working order;
- 2.2.4. ensure staff do not work alone in the library outside of regular hours of operation without prior consent of the CEO/Chief Librarian. There shall be a minimum of two staff members present in the Gravenhurst Public Library during regular open hours of operation. The Library will remain closed if this condition cannot be met with Library staff (see Policy **PER-01 Working Alone**).

2.3. Personal Safety

Implement the following measures and procedures to increase personal safety, as applicable:

- 2.3.1. Notice your surroundings and report any unsafe or dangerous situation to the most senior staff member;
- 2.3.2. If you feel uncomfortable about a person who has entered the library, trust your instincts. If you feel threatened, make a scene - YELL!
- 2.3.3. Use a buddy system when leaving work after dark;
- 2.3.4. If you ever find you are working alone in the library, let the CEO/Chief Librarian, or someone at home know the situation and tell them when you expect to leave;
- 2.3.5. If you enter a bathroom and suspect it is unsafe, do not call out. Back out, go to a safe, lockable place with a telephone and call for help;
- 2.3.6. Know the nearest exit or room with a lock.

2.4. Threatening Behaviour

Implement the following measures and procedures for threatening behaviour, as applicable:

- 2.4.1. Do not argue with a threatening person. Identify yourself as a library staff member. Remain calm and keep your voice low and firm;
- 2.4.2. Do not put yourself or others in danger. Keep a distance of four feet;

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- 2.4.3. Be friendly but firm, introduce yourself, look at the person while you talk to them, let the person talk, clarify the problem and offer options;
- 2.4.4. Get assistance from another staff person;
- 2.4.5. Advise them that the police will be called if the abuse does not stop;
- 2.4.6. If the behaviour does not change, call the police (call 9-1-1);**
- 2.4.7. Notify the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate. Keep the Health and Safety Staff representative informed as needed.

2.5. Violence and Assault

Implement the following procedures for dealing with violence/assault, as appropriate:

- 2.5.1. Investigate if you hear raised voices or sounds of violence;
- 2.5.2. If you witness violence or an assault, call the police and describe the situation;**
- 2.5.3. Recruit other staff to move others out of the way to a safer location;
- 2.5.4. Do not block exits to prevent a threatening/violent person from leaving the building;
- 2.5.5. Do not invade the personal space of the threatening person;
- 2.5.6. Do not get between two people fighting;
- 2.5.7. Notice details so you can describe the situation to the police (call 9-1-1);
- 2.5.8. Notify the CEO/Chief Librarian. Keep the Health and Safety Staff representative informed as needed.

2.6. Domestic Violence

Encourage the following steps to increase personal safety for employees or volunteers experiencing domestic violence:

- 2.6.1. Tell someone at work about your situation;
- 2.6.2. Make up a "code word" for co-workers so they know when to call for help;
- 2.6.3. Ask your co-workers to screen your calls and visitors;
- 2.6.4. Ask a co-worker to call the police if your abuser is bothering you.

**Section 3: Summoning Immediate Assistance**

3.1. Employees or volunteers involved in or who are witness to a workplace violence incident or who believe that they are in a situation where workplace violence is likely to occur should summon assistance or contact police.

3.2. Employees or volunteers who need to summon immediate assistance have several options including, but not limited to:

- 3.2.1. Use of a panic button. There are three of these in the Library. One at the front desk, one at the Child and Youth Services Librarian's desk and one at the second-floor service desk;

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- 3.2.2. Notify another staff member of a situation of where workplace violence is likely to occur;
- 3.2.3. Use of “code words” with co-workers so they know to summon for immediate assistance;
- 3.2.4. Yelling for assistance;
- 3.2.5. Phone the police and other emergency services.

#### **Section 4: Domestic Violence**

4.1. If the Library is aware that an employee or volunteer is experiencing domestic violence or if the Library or an employee believe that another employee or volunteer is experiencing domestic violence that could expose that employee or other library employees or volunteers to violence in the workplace, immediate assistance should be sought and notification of the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate is required.

4.2. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will develop a safety plan on a basis specific to the targeted employee situation to reduce the risk of a workplace violence incident.

#### **Section 5: Provision of Information about a Person with a History of Violent Behaviour**

5.1. If an employee or volunteer can expect to encounter a person with a history of violent behaviour and there exists a risk of a workplace violence incident, the Library will disclose as much information reasonably necessary to protect the employee or volunteer from physical injury.

#### **Section 6: Workplace Violence Reporting Process**

6.1. Following an incident of workplace violence, including calling the police if appropriate, an employee or volunteer will notify the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate and complete the Workplace Violence Incident Report (Appendix B).

6.2. The Workplace Violence Incident Report may be completed by the complainant or victim of alleged workplace violence, witnesses of the alleged workplace violence, or third parties reporting on behalf of the complainant or victim. Witnesses can also use the Witness Account Form (Appendix C) for reporting.

6.3. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will determine the appropriate course of investigation in accordance with the Workplace Violence Investigation Process.

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**Section 7: Workplace Violence Investigation Process**

7.1. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate must investigate all reports of workplace violence. After receiving a report, the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will complete an investigation as quickly as possible. This will include interviews with the complainant, the alleged perpetrator (if a staff member), and any witnesses. A complaint about the CEO/Chief Librarian will be directed to the Board and the Board will appoint an investigator.

7.2. The results of the investigation will be discussed with the complainant and recommended preventative actions and/or resolutions presented.

7.3. A separate meeting will be held with the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member.

7.4. If the findings do not support the allegations the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will recommend that no further action is necessary and that the matter be closed.

7.5. Should the investigation conclude that there is evidence of misconduct the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will prescribe a resolution.

7.6. The Library will reasonably preserve and protect the privacy of those involved and confidentiality through the investigation. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality or anonymity of those involved as it may be necessary for the Library to take action, including consultation with others.

7.7. If an individual involved believes the matter has not been resolved in a satisfactory manner, the individual shall notify the CEO/Chief Librarian and the Board Chair. In no circumstances will any person who in good faith reports an incident of threats, intimidation or violence, or assists in its investigation, be subject to any form of retribution, retaliation, or reprisal.

7.8. Any person who makes or participates in such retribution or retaliation, directly or indirectly, will be subject to disciplinary action. A person who believes they have been or is being subjected to retribution or retaliation should immediately notify the CEO/ Chief Librarian or designate or file a reprisal complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.