

## Purpose

This policy addresses the prevention of workplace violence as part of the West Perth Public Library Board's responsibility for worker health and safety under the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990*.

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone including staff, members of the Board, volunteers, patrons, visitors 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.

## Definition

1. West Perth 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 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.

## **Responsibility**

1. The CEO or designate must discuss workplace violence processes with the Municipal Human Resources Coordinator, including:
  - a. methods of 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. dealing with, and investigating, violent incidents and complaints.
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. West Perth 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).

## **Confidentiality and False Reports**

1. All investigations shall be conducted in strict confidence to the extent possible, 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:**

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Confidentiality and the Protection of Privacy.*

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Health and Safety.*

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Safety, Security and Emergencies.*

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Workplace Discrimination and Harassment.*

Municipality of West Perth. *Employee Policy Manual.*

Municipality of West Perth. *Health and Safety Manual.*

Government of Ontario. *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).

Government of Ontario. *Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, chapter O.1, s.1 (1)*

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