

6.19 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

6.19.1 Intent

The Prince George Public Library Board recognizes the potential for violent acts or threats directed against Library staff by the public. The Board is committed to the prevention of violence in the workplace. Threats or acts of violence against Library employees are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy is intended to work in tandem with related library policies and procedures, including the Workplace Bullying & Harassment Policy and the library's Code of Conduct.

6.19.2 Definition

Violence is the attempted or actual exercise by a person of any physical force so as to cause injury to the worker, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that the worker is at risk of injury.

6.19.3 Implementation

Management, working in conjunction with the Library's Health and Safety Committee, are responsible for establishing and maintaining a Workplace Violence Prevention Program that includes:

- 6.19.3.1 Determining training requirements to ensure that Library staff are equipped to handle violent and potentially violent situations.
- 6.19.3.2 Investigating reported incidents of violence in a prompt, objective and sensitive manner.
- 6.19.3.3 Taking necessary corrective action to eliminate or minimize the risks to Library staff.
- 6.19.3.4 Conducting and documenting risk assessments.
- 6.19.3.5 Providing appropriate support for employees affected by incidents of violence. The Library will retain the services of a professional counselling firm to conduct the debriefing of staff when an incident occurs.

The Library Director will submit an annual written report to the Library Board at the January Board meeting summarizing the details of any violent incidents that occurred in the Library over the past year and detailing how these incidents were handled.

6.19.4 Responsibilities

All employees, volunteers, supervisors, managers, and library trustees are responsible for promoting and maintaining a work environment free of violence, and for applying these guidelines in order to eliminate or minimize of the risks of workplace violence at the Library.

Each employee/volunteer has the responsibility to:

- a. Inform their supervisor of any violence, potential risk of violence, or unacceptable behaviour they may experience or witness. This includes issues in the employee's/volunteer's personal life that may impact on the workplace safety of the employee/volunteer or their co-workers.
- b. Report to their supervisor any incidents of violence or close calls, according to Library procedures.
- c. Follow the procedures implemented for their protection and report all incidents within the assigned work area; and
- d. Attend any training or information sessions provided by the employer to reduce violence or risks of violence and apply the information provided.

Supervisors have the responsibility to:

- a. Assess the risk of violence to employees/volunteers within their assigned work area, minimizing those risks where necessary or reasonably possible and informing any affected employee/volunteer of such risk or potential risk;
- b. Communicate workplace violence prevention procedures to employees/ volunteers within the assigned work area;
- c. Provide information, including personal information that is reasonably necessary related to risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour to an employee/volunteer if the worker can be expected to encounter that person in the course of his or her work and the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury;
- d. Respond to any complaint or incidence of violence within the assigned work area;
- e. Ensure proper medical care is provided for anyone involved in an incident within the assigned work area;
- f. Secure the safety of employees/volunteers, before investigating the incident or taking reports;
- g. Report and document incidents within the assigned work area;
- h. Encourage employees/volunteers to report incidents of potential violence or unacceptable behaviour; and
- i. Cooperate with police, Library investigators or other authorities, as required during any investigation related to workplace violence.

Management team members are responsible to create and implement procedures for:

- a. Reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents of violence in accordance with WorkSafe BC regulations;
- b. Evaluating the work environment;

- c. Conducting and documenting periodic risk assessments;
- d. Determining training requirements;
- e. Maintaining training records;
- f. Informing employees of the nature and extent of the risk of violence;
- g. Ensuring that corrective actions are taken in response to incidents of violence;
- h. Conducting reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program; and
- i. Advising employees who are reporting injuries as a result of an incidence of violence to consult a physician for treatment or referral, including incident trauma counselling.

The members of the Health and Safety Committee are responsible to:

- a. Assist in the review of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program.
- b. Recommend measures to reduce the risk of violence or injury to employees.

6.19.5 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are a proactive process designed to ensure workers are protected. Specific risk assessment requirements for organizations in B.C. are defined in different parts of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. A number of required health and safety processes are forms of risk assessment, such as workplace inspections and investigations.

Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are accurate for the organization's specific needs. Risk assessments should be reviewed whenever the organization introduces new equipment, materials, or work processes. At a minimum, risk assessments should be updated annually.

Components of the Risk Assessment

- 1) Conduct a survey of all staff. The goal of the survey is to identify hazards that impact staff health and safety.
- 2) Determine the likely impact and probability of potential hazards.
- 3) Compile actual incidents of violence in the last 3-5 years.
- 4) Review incidents to trends, areas of activity, and activities of concern.
- 5) Look at workplace layout including: lighting, access, egress routes, and other concerns.
- 6) Once the risks are identified and organized by rank, eliminate the risks. If risks cannot be eliminated, we must minimize the risks by identifying controls to help reduce the probability or impact. Controls can be engineered, administrative, or ensuring proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used.