

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION POLICY

Policy

Qualicum Graham Park Community Association (QGPCA) is committed to providing a respectful, supportive, healthy, safe, accessible and inclusive work environment for all employees, as they are entitled to work in an environment free from Workplace Violence. We uphold a zero tolerance to acts of Workplace Violence. All incidents and alleged incidents of workplace violence, no matter of what magnitude or whom it may involve, must be treated seriously and handled in a manner which includes immediate reporting to the supervisor/manager and, when required, the police. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated. Sanctions could include up to immediate dismissal for perpetrators and criminal charges.

Purpose

QGPCA will be proactive in working with its employees to prevent violence in the workplace by establishing and implementing a comprehensive workplace violence prevention program to fulfill the requirements of relevant legislation including the:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Criminal Code of Canada
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act

This policy defines Workplace Violence (violence) and identifies the responsibilities of Employees and Management. It identifies behaviours that constitute violence and identifies the process for reporting and resolving incidents of violence.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of QGPCA which includes but is not limited to regular, temporary and contract employees including consultants. This policy also applies to volunteers, including Board of Directors.

This policy covers incidents of violence, as defined below. This policy does not apply to Workplace Harassment. Refer to the Workplace Harassment Policy and Workplace Harassment Program in response to incidences of Workplace Harassment.

Definitions

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence includes acts of physical violence, abuse (verbal or physical), bullying, intimidation, or other threatening behaviour that occurs in the work place.

Workplace

For the purposes of this policy, workplace includes any location in which employees and/or volunteers are engaged in QGPCA business activities necessary to perform their assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, QGPCA offices, employee/volunteer parking lots, employee/volunteer organized social events, field locations, and during business related travel.

Bullying

Bullying is an offensive, cruel, intimidating, insulting or humiliating behaviour that includes physical violence or the threat of physical violence. It can be physical or verbal, direct or indirect such as gossip. Bullying is considered harassment in general, unless there is physical contact or a threat of violence, where it is considered violence. Bullying is ill treatment that is not addressed under human rights legislation or criminal codes.

Policy Application

Note: If you witness an act of workplace violence in progress or if an individual becomes violent and your safety is at risk, leave the area immediately and call 911 or the emergency services number in your area.

A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work related situations such as family crises, alcohol or drug abuse, financial pressures, or legal difficulties. Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, volunteer, supervisor, manager, co-worker, client, family member, or even a stranger.

However, there is no sure way to predict human behaviour and, while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. The best prevention comes from identifying any problems early and dealing with them.

Prevention

Prevention of workplace violence is the most important part of any plan. At its core, it involves awareness by management, employees and volunteers on the potential of violence and steps that can be taken to lessen the possibilities of an incident:

Pre-employment screening – The adherence to present policies regarding employee and volunteer screening is essential to identifying potential offenders before they are hired or engaged

Code of Conduct – All employees and volunteers are to read, sign and abide by the Code of Conduct.

Security – Maintaining a safe workplace is part of any good prevention program. There are a variety of ways to help ensure safety, such as locked doors after hours and general awareness.

Dispute resolution – An employee or volunteer may turn violent, in part, due to a build-up of frustrations in the workplace. Use of the organizations appeal process is key to providing individuals with a constructive outlet for their concerns. Where there is interpersonal conflict, efforts will be made to support all parties.

Finally, and most importantly, employees and volunteers need to be aware of the fact that interpersonal behaviours can dramatically affect the possibility of a violent incident. Relations among all those in the organization's family, including participants, should include respect for one another and an awareness of the importance of human dignity. Furthermore, willingness to listen to and assist fellow staff members and volunteers can go a long way towards mitigating feelings of depression and helplessness that can lead to violent behaviour.

Rights

Everyone has the right to an environment that is free from violence, and threat of violence, and to file a complaint when the environment is not free from violence. Employees have the right to file a complaint without fear of any discrimination or retaliation for being, or perceived to be, victims of workplace violence.

Employees have the right to refuse unsafe work where workplace violence is likely to endanger them. While work refusal is being investigated, the employee is to remain in a safe place that is as near as possible to their work location, making themselves available for the purposes of the investigation.

Responsibilities

Employees & volunteers are responsible for:

- Being familiar with applicable policies, procedures and programs affecting violence in the workplace, including Harassment in the Workplace, and Workplace Violence; securing their own workplace; questioning and/or reporting strangers to supervisors/managers
- Reporting any threats, physical or verbal, and/or any disruptive behaviour of any individual to the appropriate supervisor/manager
- Being familiar with any local procedures for dealing with workplace threats and emergencies
- Taking all threats seriously
- In the event of an incident of violence, reporting it immediately to his/her supervisor/manager or police, as the case may necessitate.

Management is responsible for:

- Informing employees and volunteers of applicable policies, procedures and programs affecting violence in the workplace, including Harassment in the Workplace and Workplace Violence.
- Ensuring that employees and volunteers know specific procedures for dealing with workplace threats and emergencies, and how to contact police, fire, and other safety and security officials
- Ensuring that employees and volunteers with special needs are aware of emergency evacuation procedures and have assistance (as necessary) regarding emergency evacuation situations
- Ensuring the security of buildings and offices
- Providing adequate resources for training and awareness and including workplace violence awareness in employee and volunteer orientation. Training is to be updated for any new sites or situations that may present new or different risks for workplace violence.
- Ensuring compliance with applicable provincial/territorial Health and Safety legislation
- Responding to potential threats, escalating situations and incidents of violence by utilizing proper resources from the following: first aid providers, local law enforcement and medical services.
- Ensuring that all incidents of violence in the workplace are documented as outlined by the individual affected using the applicable Staff Incident/ Accident Report and Investigation Form. These forms are located in the first aid kits. The Executive Director will be advised of all incidents resulting in lost time from the workplace or if medical attention is required in order that proper documentation is completed and sent to Workers' Compensation
- In consultation with Executive Director or Board, determining whether sufficient evidence exists to justify taking disciplinary action or discharging the employee/volunteer once the investigation of any misconduct is complete
- Taking all threats seriously
- Providing information about third party support opportunities for any employee who experience violence in the workplace

Process

Where an act of violence has occurred, workplace injury protocols are to be followed, the perpetrator removed (by police where there is an ongoing threat) and the site secured. Authorities are notified, if they have not been already, as well Executive Director and in turn the Board of Directors. An investigation will then be conducted.

Where a threat of violence has occurred, the Executive Director and in turn Board of Directors are to be notified. If the person who is uttering the threat is at the worksite, s/he shall be removed prior to any further investigation. An investigation will then be conducted.

If there has not been a threat or an act of violence, the act may be considered harassment. Refer to QGPCA Workplace Harassment Policy.

No investigation information is to be kept on the employee/volunteer's personnel file with the exception of official disciplinary/termination papers. Similar to problem resolution cases, investigation information should be kept indefinitely in a separate file. Proven allegations of violence, including disciplinary action taken shall be documented and form part of the employee/volunteer's permanent record.

Disciplinary action

An act of violence, committed or threatened, by an employee or volunteer is a serious offence. If the act or threat of violence is substantiated, the violent employee/volunteer will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. QGPCA reserves the right to discipline those whose complaints are frivolous or vexatious.

Any interference with the conduct of an investigation, or retaliation against a complainant, respondent or witness, may itself result in disciplinary action.

Criteria in determining level of disciplinary action shall be based on fact scenario and will take into account harm to the individual, harm to the organization and its reputation, and whether or not there was an unequal power relationship.

Where the conduct involves, or may involve, criminal activity, QGPCA reserves the right involve the appropriate Police Services.

Employees and volunteers have a duty to disclose criminal activity.

Legal parameters

Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to limit the right of an employee or volunteer to pursue criminal charges or civil legal action.

Responsibility

The Board of Directors is responsible for maintaining, monitoring, and revising this policy; and for authorizing exceptions. The Board is responsible for reviewing this policy annually.

Members of QGPCA's Management Team are responsible for applying and implementing this policy throughout their organization.

**Approved by the Board of Directors
DATE March 31, 2017**