

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: Model Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Workplace violence has become a recognized hazard that all employers must be aware of. At a minimum, you need a policy banning workplace violence, explaining what workplace violence means and setting out specific controls to prevent violence hazards. The template below illustrates what elements such a policy must include.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

While this Model Workplace Violence Prevention Policy should work in every part of Canada, a few of the provisions are based on the laws of a particular jurisdiction and may need adaptation outside those jurisdictions, including:

- Some of the definitions in Section, including “violence” which is based on the broad definition that includes domestic violence that’s used in Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland ([click here](#) to see the definition of workplace violence in your jurisdiction)
- What workplace violence notification, instruction and training must consist of in Section 8;
- Whether time spent in training and post-incident counselling count as work time in Section 8.3, which is required in some but not all jurisdictions;
- The duty to make the Policy readily available to workers in Section 9; and
- How often the Policy must be re-evaluated in Section 11, which is based on Federal, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Terrs. and Nunavut requirements.

1. PURPOSE

The intent of this Policy is to ensure all workers are protected from acts or threats of workplace violence in accordance with the requirements of the [province] Occupational Health and Safety Act (“Act”), Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (“Regulations”), the ABC Company Occupational Health and Safety Program (“OHS Program”), and other applicable requirements and standards.

2. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy:

- **“Administrative controls”** means the provision, use, and scheduling of work activities and resources in the workplace, including planning, organizing, staffing, and coordinating, for the purpose of controlling risk;
- **“Competent”** means possessing knowledge, experience, and training to perform a specific duty safely and effectively;
- **“Discriminatory action”** means any action or threat of action by ABC Company or its representative(s) that does or would harm a worker with respect to any terms or conditions of employment or opportunity for promotion, including dismissal, layoff, suspension, demotion, or transfer, discontinuation or elimination of a job, change of a job location, reduction in wages, change in work hours, reprimand, coercion, intimidation, or imposition of any discipline or other penalty as a reprisal for reporting workplace violence or exercising any other right under the Act, Regulations or OHS Program;
- **“Engineering controls”** means the physical arrangement, design, or alteration of workstations, equipment, materials, production facilities, or other aspects of the physical work environment, for the purpose of controlling risk;

- **“Violence”** means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person, including but not limited to a co-worker, customer, client, contractor, vendor, visitor, member of the public, that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, including domestic or sexual violence. Examples:
 - Brandishing a weaponing, shaking fists in front of, or pushing a worker;
 - Any expression of intent, written or verbal, to inflict physical force that could cause physical injury;
 - Body language or behaviours that leave little doubt in the mind of the worker that the perpetrator intends to cause physical injury; and
 - Physical attacks like hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking, biting, pinching, or inciting an animal to attack.
- **“Workplace”** any location where worker is, or likely to be, engaged in work for ABC Company, including any vehicle or mobile equipment.

3. POLICY

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone. That includes those who work for ABC Company such as workers, supervisors and members of management, as well as others including customers, clients, visitors and strangers. Everyone at ABC Company is expected to behave in a professional, respectful manner and work together to prevent workplace violence. ABC Company is committed to providing all workers a workplace free from the risk of violence as required by the Act, Regulations and OHS Program. To make good on its commitment to ensure a violence-free workplace, ABC Company has adopted this Policy as part of a wider prevention program which includes measures and procedures to protect workers from workplace violence, a means of summoning immediate assistance and a process for workers to report incidents, or raise concerns.

4. SCOPE OF POLICY

4.1. Workers This Policy Is Intended to Protect

The intent of this Policy is to ensure that all workers engaged to work at ABC Company work sites are protected from workplace violence regardless of who pays or employs those workers, including:

- Full- or part-time workers employed by ABC Company;
- Temporary employees placed by an outside agency to work at an ABC Company site;
- Contract labourers engaged to perform work at the site;
- Volunteers who work at the site for free; and
- Workers employed by constructors, contractors, and subcontractors to perform work at the site under a contract with ABC Company

4.2. Individuals the Anti-Violence Provisions of This Policy Are Intended to Cover

The intent of this Policy is to protect workers from workplace violence coming from any person who that a worker is likely to encounter in the workplace, including:

- Co-workers, managers, supervisors and other ABC Company personnel;

- Abusive spouses, family members, friends or relations that may attempt to inflict violence on the worker in the workplace, where ABC Company is aware of should reasonably be aware of the threat;
- Non-ABC Company personnel that the worker encounters in the workplace, including customers, clients, vendors, visitors, members of the public and other persons the the worker does not know, including abusive spouses, family members, friends or relations of co-workers that may attempt to inflict violence on the worker, co-worker or other ABC Company staff member in the workplace, where ABC Company is aware of should reasonably be aware of the threat.

4.3. Workplaces This Policy Is Intended to Cover

The intent of this Policy is to protect workers from acts or threats of violence occurring anywhere in the workplace, which includes any location where the worker does or can be reasonably to carry out work for ABC Company, including but not limited to:

- Within ABC Company facilities, premises and work sites;
- Inside ABC Company vehicles; and
- At off-site locations where workers are required to perform their duties, including but not limited to client offices, sites of business conferences, and ABC Company-sponsored retreats, affairs, and social events.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Management

As “employer” under the Act, ABC Company and its officials and managers are responsible for providing the resources, support and oversight necessary to implement this policy and the Program in a fair, timely and consistent manner.

5.2. Supervisors

Supervisors will adhere to this Policy and are responsible for ensuring that required measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information they need to protect themselves.

5.3. Workers

Every worker must work in compliance with this Policy and report any incidents or threats of workplace violence they suffer or witness to their supervisors in accordance with Section 7.4. below. In addition, workers should notify their supervisor, manager or ABC Company official if they are threatened with or feel they are at risk of domestic or family violence and that their spouse, partner, family member, friend or other relation is likely to attempt to engage violence against them *in the workplace*.

5.4. Joint Health & Safety Committee/Health & Safety Representative

ABC Company will advise and consult with the joint health and safety committee (“JHSC”) or health and safety representative (“Rep”) for the workplace in carrying out the workplace violence hazard assessment and selecting the appropriate control measures provided for in this Policy, as well as in monitoring and reviewing the hazard assessment and control measures.

6. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE HAZARD ASSESSMENT

ABC Company will ensure that a violence hazard assessment is conducted by a competent person in consultation with the JHSC or Rep, or where no JHSC or Rep exists, directly with the workers at the work site and that it considers the following risk factors:

- **Previous Experience:** The history of violence in the particular workplace and the occupational experience in similar workplaces;
- **Vulnerability of Workers:** Which workers are at risk of violence based on personal characteristics such as gender, size, race, religion, etc., as well as duties, work location, etc.;
- **Sources of Threat:** What persons or groups of persons that workers come into contact with are likely to pose a threat of violence—members of the public, customers, clients, etc.;
- **Work Processes:** Whether the work involves an unusually high degree of risk, e.g., handling money or valuables, working with mentally unstable people, direct contact with irate customers, etc.;
- **Work Conditions:** Whether work conditions contribute to the danger of violence, e.g., working at night, working alone, working in dangerous neighbourhoods, etc.; and
- **Workplace Characteristics:** How physical conditions of the workplace affect the danger, e.g., are doors and windows secured, is security nearby, if workers deal with the public, are they in the open or behind secure barriers, etc.

The competent person will use, at a minimum, the following data to assess violence hazards:

- Internal reports of workplace violence submitted by ABC Company workers or other personnel;
- Police reports of violence in the neighbourhood of the particular work site;
- Workers’ perceptions of violence hazards as reflected in completed Surveys; and
- JHSC/Rep meeting minutes and recommendations pertaining to violence hazards.

7. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION MEASURES

Where the above hazard assessment identifies hazards of workplace violence to workers, ABC Company will implement procedures, policies, and work environment arrangements to eliminate, or where total elimination is not possible, minimize those hazards.

7.1. General Principles for Selecting Controls

In selecting appropriate controls for eliminating or minimizing risks of workplace violence, ABC Company will follow the hierarchy of controls, including use of:

- Engineering controls, including but not limited to physical barriers, alarms, panic buttons, surveillance cameras, and lighting;

- Administrative controls, including but not limited to safe work procedures for performing job tasks involving risks of violence, such as handling cash, working alone or in isolation, and dealing with irate customers; and
- Personal protective equipment and communications equipment.

7.2. System for Summoning Help

ABC Company will provide a system workers can use to summon immediate assistance in case an incident of workplace violence occurs.

7.3. Emergency Response

Administrative controls will include a system and set of procedures for responding to acts of workplace violence.

7.4. System for Reporting Workplace Violence

All workers are required to immediately notify their supervisor, manager or an ABC Company official if they suffer or witness workplace violence. ABC Company will provide a system that workers can use to report workplace violence.

No worker will suffer discriminatory action for reporting workplace violence in accordance with this Policy, provided that such reports are made in good faith and with a sincere belief that the allegations of workplace violence reported are true.

7.5. System for Investigating Reports of Workplace Violence

ABC Company will develop and implement a system to ensure that reports of workplace violence submitted by workers are taken seriously and investigated in a prompt, thorough, fair, and objective manner. ABC Company will take steps to protect the identity and personal information of the worker who reports workplace violence as well as of the individuals involved in the incident except where disclosure is necessary to perform the investigation or otherwise permitted or required by law.

7.6. Resolution & Discipline

Any ABC Company staff members found by the investigation to have engaged in workplace violence will be subject to discipline in accordance with ABC Company progressive disciplinary procedures and procedures and the terms of any applicable collective agreement. ABC Company will ensure that workers who report workplace violence are notified of the findings of the investigation as soon as reasonably possible and that necessary corrective actions are taken to ensure that problems that led to the incident are adequately addressed.

7.7. Support for Workers Victimized by Violence

ABC Company will take appropriate steps to provide support and counselling to workers who report incidents of violence and/or who suffer injuries or other adverse symptoms as a result of such incidents,

including advising them advised to consult a physician of the worker's choice for treatment or counselling and referral and referral to the ABC Company Employee Assistance Program.

8. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE NOTIFICATION, INSTRUCTION & TRAINING

Where the workplace violence hazard assessment finds that there are workplace violence hazards, ABC Company will ensure that workers are properly notified, instructed and trained.

8.1. Notification

Notification will consist of, at a minimum:

- Indication of workplace locations where workplace violence is likely to occur;
- Indication of job classifications or operations at high risk of workplace violence; and
- Warnings about co-workers with a history of violent behaviour that workers are likely to encounter at the workplace, subject to the privacy rights of those co-workers.

8.2. Instruction & Training

ABC Company ensure that workers exposed to workplace violence hazards receive proper notification and training necessary to protect themselves that covers, at a minimum:

- How to detect and respond to the warnings signs of workplace violence; the potential for violence;
- The procedures, policies, and work environment arrangements in place to eliminate or minimize those risks, including but not limited to:
 - The safe work procedures for carrying out jobs involving risk of workplace violence;
 - The emergency response procedures for workplace violence;
 - The methods of summoning immediate help in case of workplace violence;
 - The procedures for reporting incidents of workplace violence;
 - The procedures used to investigate and respond to reports of workplace violence; and
 - The support available to workers who report or are victimized by workplace violence.

New workers will also receive training in workplace violence as part of their safety orientation training.

8.3. Training & Treatment Time Credited as Work Time

As required by the Act and Regulations, the time a worker spends receiving training and instruction and/or post-incident treatment or counselling under this Policy will be credited as time at work and not result in the worker's loss of pay or benefits.

9. Availability of Prevention Program

ABC Company will make a copy of this Policy and the Prevention Program readily available to workers.

10. Prime Contractors, Contractors, & Subcontractors

ABC Company will ensure that any prime contractors, contractors, and subcontractors hired to perform work at any of its workplaces that are identified as being at risk of violence are notified of:

- The workplace violence hazards posed to the workers performing the contract work; and
- The terms of this Policy, the Prevention Program, and the controls in place to protect workers from risk of workplace violence.

Prime contractors, contractors, or subcontractors in charge of work at ABC Company workplaces that are identified as being at risk of violence will ensure that workers engaged in the work receive protection from workplace violence at least equivalent to that provided by this Policy and the Prevention Program that apply to the work by either:

- Directly applying the terms of this Policy and Prevention Program to the work and assuming the employer obligations the Policy and Prevention Program impose on ABC Company; or
- Implementing alternative policies and program that meet the requirements of the Act and Regulations, are coordinated with this Policy and the Prevention Program, suitable for the workplace, and provide at least equivalent protection against workplace violence to workers performing the contract work.

11. EVALUATION

ABC Company will review this Policy and the Prevention Program in consultation with the JHSC, Rep, or, if there is no JHSC or Rep, the workers at the workplace at least once every 3 years or more often in response to incidents of violence or changes potentially affecting workers' health and safety, including but not limited to:

- When incidents of workplace violence occur;
- When a new work process involving risks of workplace violence is introduced;
- When a work process or operation changes in such a way as to create new violence risks; and
- Before construction of significant additions or alterations to the work site.

Signed: _____ ABC Company President/CEO

Date: _____