

# THE TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

## Section: Health and Safety

### Policy: Workplace Violence

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#### 1. Intent

At the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances (“the Corporation”), the physical and mental health, safety, security, dignity, and well-being of all our employees is critical.

Employees, and those who are present in our workplace, have a right to a safe workplace. The workplace should be free of violence, and the threat of violence. Under no circumstance should employees fear reprisal for voicing a legitimate concern about workplace violence, or exercising their right to refuse unsafe work due to workplace violence, or the threat of workplace violence.

It is the responsibility of the Corporation, including all managers and employees to foster a healthy workplace environment, where dignity and respect are the foundation of all communication and interactions.

Violence, and intimidation are unacceptable in the workplace, and any such acts may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment for just cause. Clients, or members of the public who are present in the workplace who engage in such acts will be asked to leave. If required, law enforcement may be contacted for assistance.

The Corporation has an obligation to support and assist individuals who are experiencing violence or threat of violence in the workplace. The Corporation will investigate complaints and take appropriate action to ensure the safety of employees, and others who may be present in the workplace. The Corporation will not discriminate or retaliate against an employee because he or she voices concerns about workplace violence.

#### 2. Scope

All employees have the right to a safe workplace, free from violence, or the threat of violence. Protection from violent, intimidating, and aggressive behaviours extends to management,

colleagues, subordinates, clients, customers and other business contacts who are present in the workplace.

As such, this policy applies to all employees, management, elected officials, and members of boards and committees, referred to as “staff” and/or “employees”.

The workplace is not confined to the offices and buildings of the Corporation. It also includes washrooms, locker rooms, worksites, vehicles and equipment, and any other location where the business of the Corporation is conducted.

### **3. Definitions**

#### Workplace Violence:

Workplace violence is the exercising of (or the attempt to exercise) physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury. It also includes a statement or behaviour that may reasonably be interpreted as a threat to exercise physical force that could cause injury. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Threats of physical violence
- Intimidation
- Attempted and/or actual acts of violence
- Assault
- Acts of physical aggression
- Deliberate destruction of damage to property
- Violent actions that intimidate one or more individuals

### **4. General Guidelines**

The Corporation not tolerate violence, or the threat of violence in the workplace, and will make ongoing efforts to identify such hazards and take appropriate action through policies and procedures.

Our goal is to ensure a safe working environment for all employees, as per our legal obligations.

### **5. Prevention of Workplace Violence**

The Corporation has taken specific measures to prevent workplace violence. This includes procedures to control the hazard of workplace violence, as identified by workplace violence risk assessments.

#### **A. Workplace Violence Risk Assessment**

The Corporation conducts workplace violence risk assessments to identify and assess the risk of workplace violence specific to each department. The results of these assessments are communicated to the employees in those departments and to their health and safety

representatives (“HSR”), or joint health and safety committees (“JHSC”) in departments with a JHSC. When conducting these assessment, the Corporation considers the following factors:

- Circumstances specific to each workplace
- Circumstances specific to different roles within the organization
- Circumstances that would be common to similar workplaces

The Corporation will notify employees of the risk of violence specific to their work location, job or shift through their supervisors and general training programs. Employees are required to make their supervisors aware of risks that are not yet identified in our risk assessments.

## **B. Individuals with a History of Violence**

By law, The Corporation is obligated to warn employees of the identities and personal details of an individual with histories of violent behaviour where there is a risk of workplace violence being perpetrated by that person. Such information will only be provided where the employees concerned would reasonably be expected to encounter that person while at work, and where the risk of violence is likely to expose those employees to hazards in the workplace.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Information relating to potentially violent individuals will be shared with employees on a need to know basis. Employees are required to maintain confidentiality when they become aware of this information.

## **C. Workplace Violence Awareness Training**

The Corporation requires its employees to take workplace violence awareness training. When management becomes aware of risks specific to your position, work location, or shift; you will be provided with further guidance and instruction.

## **D. Domestic Violence**

The Corporation strives to respect the privacy of our employees and their personal lives. Its management does not intend to intrude on this privacy, but upon becoming aware of the risk of domestic violence affecting the workplace, the Corporation has a legal obligation to intervene in the interests of its workers.

The Corporation will fully support and assist our employees at risk of domestic violence in the workplace. Our zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence includes the risk of violence from current or former spouses/partners. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Actual or threatened physical violence or harm
- Assault (including sexual)
- The risk of homicide
- Stalking
- Threats of harm or actual harm to others, including personal property

The Corporation is obligated to take every precaution necessary to protect the health and safety of a worker regarding domestic violence. This may require us to warn other employees of the

identity and personal details of an individual with a history of domestic violence where there is a risk of violence in the workplace by any such individuals.

Information on potentially violent individuals may include the identities, personal histories, and descriptions of current or former partners of our employees. Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Information that relates to actual or suspected domestic violence, or violent individuals, must only be divulged to others when required by law or policy.

### **Actions Employees Can Take**

Employees who find themselves in the unfortunate position of being victims of domestic violence and abuse can take actions to protect themselves. You are not alone: help is available. Some the things you can do include:

- Talk to friends and family about your concerns;
- Inform your manager and / or Human Resources;
- Talk to your doctor;
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program or other support help line;
- Preserve evidence of instances of abuse and note dates and times of specific incidents.
- Call the police; and,
- Consider basic personal security measures such obtaining an unlisted telephone number, purchasing an alarm system, or avoiding isolated areas, etc.

### **E. Health and Safety Representative / Joint Health and Safety Committee Obligations**

1. To respond to concerns related to workplace violence, or threat of workplace violence.
2. To review the results of workplace violence risk assessments and make recommendations to management.
3. To make recommendations regarding policies and procedures to prevent workplace violence.
4. To participate in investigations of work refusal due to workplace violence.

Everyone is required to work together to uphold this policy, and to take all reasonable steps required to prevent Workplace Violence.

This Workplace Violence Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or more frequently, as required.