

**Program Title:** Workplace Violence Program

**Responsibility:** Human Resources

**Review Interval:** Annually

**Issue Date:** To be determined

## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this program is to support the Brock University Workplace Violence Prevention Policy by ensuring a safe learning and work environment. The purpose is accomplished through various parties carrying out their identified responsibilities in this program.

## 2.0 Scope

The Workplace Violence Program applies to employees, contractors, students, volunteers and visitors at all Brock University premises and at other locations where University employees, contractors and volunteers work, in recognition of the fact that workplace violence may be committed directly or indirectly by persons from any of these groups. Nothing in this program shall be interpreted as limiting or amending the provision of any Collective Agreement. If any provision of this program is found to be inconsistent with the provisions of a Collective Agreement, the Collective Agreement will prevail unless the contradiction resides in legislation of a provincial or federal level.

The program outlines strategies for workplace parties to:

- Perform risk assessments, to recognize and identify actual or potential risks of workplace violence.
- Implement measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance, reporting an act of workplace violence and investigation procedures for incidents or complaints of workplace violence.
- Implement reasonable control strategies to eliminate or greatly reduce the risk of workplace violence.

## 3.0 Definitions

- In keeping with the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), “**workplace violence**” means,
  1. The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
  2. An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,
  3. A statement or behaviour that 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 a worker in a workplace.
- **Domestic Violence** is also considered to be workplace violence, when there is a potential of physical injury to a worker in the workplace. Domestic violence is widely understood to be a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another person with whom he/she has or has had an intimate relationship. This pattern of behaviour may include physical violence, sexual, emotional, and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and using electronic devices to harass and control.
- The OHSA defines a **Supervisor** as a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Employees, contractors, students and volunteers shall:

1. Be responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that is free from workplace violence.
2. Recognize circumstances and behaviours that could be considered workplace violence.
3. Assist in preventing, mitigating and controlling any unfolding violent circumstance.
4. Summon for immediate assistance when experiencing or witnessing when workplace violence is imminent by contacting Campus Security Services (phone extension 3200).
5. The internal responsibility system requires employees and contractors who experience, witnesses or are concerned over a violent circumstance shall immediately report all circumstances to their Supervisor as soon as practicable. The reporting employee and the Supervisor are responsible to document the circumstances of the incident on the Brock University Injury/Incident Report and send the completed report to Health, Safety & Wellness (HSW) department. Students must advise their appropriate Department Head, Dean or Director of any incident of violence or threat of violence.

#### 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

6. Participate in applicable training and provide accurate/information in workplace violence surveys, assessments or investigations.
7. Contribute to the successful implementation of safety plans for the management and prevention workplace violence risks.

#### 4.2 Supervisors

##### **Risk Survey Assessment**

1. Identify and record applicable risk factors in their area through the workplace violence survey. The surveys are to be completed by the appropriate Supervisor of each area.
2. Should any of the risk factors be identified, a comprehensive risk assessment shall be completed for each separate risk. The assessment involves circumstances and behaviours that could be considered workplace violence that affect employees in areas in which they work. Risks shall be reassessed should there be any changes from the previous assessment to ensure continued protection to employees from workplace violence. Risk assessments are to be provided to and filed in the HSW office.

##### **Measures and Procedures**

3. Develop and implement measures, procedures and safety plans specific to their respective areas as warranted to eliminate or control the risks where the potential for workplace violence exists. These measures, procedures and safety plans communicate work practice, equipment, behaviour and environmental expectations to employees for workplace violence prevention and control. Ensure that measures and procedures are followed by employees.

##### **Reporting/Investigation/Action**

4. Encourage and facilitate employees in reporting circumstances considered to be workplace violence. The reporting employee and the Supervisor are responsible to document the circumstances of the particular incident on the [Brock University Injury/Incident Report](#) and send the completed report to HSW department.
5. Conduct investigations in conjunction with Health, Safety & Wellness to examine workplace violence incidents to uncover findings and develop recommendations for prevention and/or control of workplace violence risks.
6. Take all reasonable precautions to protect employees when aware or ought reasonably to be aware about workplace violence or domestic violence circumstances that could likely expose them to physical injury within the workplace. The reasonable precautions restrict the escalation and continuation of workplace violence circumstances.

##### **Communication**

7. If an incident of workplace violence were to result in a death or critical injury as defined in the Occupational Health & Safety Act, the Supervisor or Campus Security shall immediately notify HSW.
8. Notify and provide completed incident/injury reports to HSW in circumstances that involve workplace violence.
9. Communicate with all employees or others working in an area they oversee about workplace violence hazards and the responsibilities outlined in the program. Advise employees of and to recognize any actual or potential hazards related to workplace violence. Communicate procedures and/or measures specific to employees in their respective areas to eliminate or control the risks where the potential for workplace violence exists. Provide information, to an employee about a person with “a history of violent behaviour” if the employee could be expected to encounter the person during his/her work and there is a risk of workplace violence likely to expose the employee to physical injury. Assistance must be sought from the Human Resources prior to disclosing any information.
10. If a violent situation is reported, which involves a student the Supervisor should notify the Manager of Student Affairs in the Department of Student Life & Community Experience (phone extension 4041).

##### **Training**

11. Ensure that employees have the information they need to protect themselves through the completion of applicable training.

##### **Maintenance/Continuous Improvement**

12. Supervisors will monitor employee work practices and activities to identify indicators that could result in workplace violence risk.
13. Maintain records and/or documentation with respect to employee training, incident investigations, workplace inspections and safety/plans/written procedures pertaining to workplace violence.

### 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

14. Review department/unit's success in workplace violence prevention routinely, and change internal practices and procedures as warranted.

#### 4.3 Human Resources, Health, Safety & Wellness:

1. Develop, support and maintain the Workplace Violence Program.
2. Communicate the program and any applicable resources.
3. Organize, deliver and/or support employee training regarding the program.
4. Guide, facilitate and/or support University departments in their workplace violence program and other OHS responsibilities.
5. Make available appropriate risk assessments to departments based on their identified risk factors, retain all risk assessment information.
6. Provide notices as required by the OHSA; and Liaise with relevant external governmental agencies (e.g. Ontario Ministry of Labour) where required.
7. Advise the Joint Health & Safety Committee of the results of the assessments of the risk of violence.
8. If an incident of workplace violence were to result in a death or critical injury as defined in the Occupational Health & Safety Act, the Supervisor/ Campus Security shall immediately notify HSW, who will in turn notify the following: Ontario Ministry of Labour; Joint Health & Safety Committee. A written report with the circumstances of the occurrence and other prescribed information shall be prepared by HSW and sent to the above groups within two (2) working days of the occurrence.
9. If an incident of workplace violence causing injury occurs and the person is disabled from performing his or her usual work or requires medical attention because of an incident of workplace violence, but no person dies or is critically injured because of that occurrence, written notice shall be provided to the Joint Health & Safety Committee and within four (4) days of the occurrence from HSW.
10. Shall investigate and respond to any matter reported under the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy as soon as possible with the most responsible employee in the affected department, operation or area (i.e. Supervisor).
11. Review reported incidents, analyze for trends and facilitate affected stakeholders with targeted actions to prevent the reoccurrence of incidents.

#### 4.4 Campus Security Services:

1. Immediately respond to and mitigate/control reported circumstances of workplace violence.
2. Assist HSW and Supervisors in the workplace violence investigation process as required.
3. Assist Supervisors and HSW in workplace violence threat assessment.
4. Contribute to the successful implementation of safety plans for the management and prevention workplace violence risks. Assist departments with crime prevention, emergency response, and organizational plans for special events.
5. Assist in conducting risk assessments for workplace violence and crime prevention techniques.
6. Immediately notify HSW regarding incidents of violence causing injury that require medical attention or result in death or critical injury as defined in the OHSA.

#### 4.5 Joint Health & Safety Committee:

1. Review incident trends on a routine basis during their regularly scheduled meetings.
2. During workplace inspections, observe work activities, talk to employees, and report any indicators of workplace violence risk.

### 5.0 Measures and Procedures

#### 5.1 Recognizing and the Assessment of Workplace Violence Risks

In order to determine which areas are more susceptible to potential workplace violence risk, surveys/assessments will be conducted by departments across the campus. The survey/assessment will be completed by the appropriate Supervisor of each area. Initial contact to the appropriate Supervisor with respect to accessing and completing survey/assessment information will come from HSW.

The survey/assessment identifies the potential for workplace violence through the risk factors listed below:

1. Working alone or in isolation
2. Travel to remote/hazardous locations

### 5.0 Measures and Procedures (continued)

3. Dealing with sensitive personal matters
4. Providing services directly to the public
5. Handling or securing cash/valuables
6. Patrolling/providing protective services
7. Decisions on academic/employment status
8. Public/other events not assessed for risk
9. Dealing with unstable/volatile individuals
10. Transporting people and/or goods

The applicable Supervisor completing the survey/assessment will be automatically prompted through the online survey/assessment. Should any of the risk factors be identified, a risk assessment shall be completed for each separate risk. Survey/assessments will identify risks and outline existing controls, any further recommended controls or actions as well as who has been assigned to implement the controls and the date of completion.

If workplace violence risks change at any time, the applicable Supervisors shall conduct a re-assessment in order to ensure continued protection to employees. Information gathered from the survey/assessments will be maintained in the HSW office. Personnel from HSW will advise the Joint Health & Safety Committee of the results of the survey/assessments of the risk of violence.

Refer to the appendices for resources on workplace violence risks and assessments.

### 5.2 Summoning Immediate Assistance when Workplace Violence Occurs or is Likely to Occur

Anyone who experiences or witnesses that workplace violence is imminent, should immediately:

- **Request Assistance from People in close Proximity to you:** Notify anyone (i.e. manager, Supervisor, employees, students and others) in close proximity to you and request assistance in preventing, mitigating and controlling the unfolding violent circumstance. Departments can establish a code word to alert others.
- **Use a Telephone for Emergency Assistance:** Dialing the emergency telephone extension (ext. 3200) from any campus phone will immediately connect you to Campus Security Services personnel. Campus Security Services will immediately respond to the location from where the telephone call was made. Dialing 9-1-1 from any phone on campus will be received by Niagara Regional Police Service. Please note, that all 9-1-1 calls made from a Brock University phone automatically notifies Brock University Campus Security staff.
- **Activate Panic Devices (i.e. panic buttons):** If your area is equipped with these devices, press the panic button to notify Campus Security Services. Campus Security Services will immediately respond to the specific area.
- **Activate an Emergency Phone:** There are emergency phones located both indoors and outdoors across the campus. Press the button on the face of the emergency phone to be immediately connected to Campus Security Services personnel. Campus Security Services will immediately respond to the location of the activated emergency phone.

### 5.3 Procedures for Employees to Report Incidents of Workplace Violence

Employees who are concerned about the potential for violence affecting themselves or others at Brock should report their concerns to their Supervisor or Human Resources as soon as practicable.

All claims of sexual violence as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act shall be dealt with in accordance with the relevant University policy and administered by the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services.

Always use the internal responsibility system to report any act of violence. The internal responsibility system requires employees who experience or witnesses a violent circumstance shall immediately report the circumstances to their direct Supervisor. If the circumstances present immediate danger to anyone, contact Campus Security Services (ext. 3200).

Anonymous reporting of incidents can occur via phone at extension 7233 or email [besafe@brocku.ca](mailto:besafe@brocku.ca).

The Supervisor (or alternate from department management) shall immediately communicate the circumstances to safety personnel from the office of HSW. To contact HSW, the Supervisor can call telephone extension 7233 or email [besafe@brocku.ca](mailto:besafe@brocku.ca). The Supervisor is responsible to respond to the circumstances in a prompt and effective manner to ensure safety.

The reporting employee and the Supervisor are responsible to document the circumstances of the particular incident on the [Brock University Injury/Incident Report](#) and send the completed report to HSW department. Email the completed report to [besafe@brocku.ca](mailto:besafe@brocku.ca).

### 5.0 Measures and Procedures (continued)

If a violent situation is reported, which involves a student, the Supervisor should notify the Manager of Student Affairs in the Department of Student Life & Community Experience (phone extension 4041).

Students must advise their appropriate Department Head, Dean or Director of any incident of violence or threat of violence.

If the incident of violence or threat of violence occurs within their residence, students must advise their Residence Life staff.

If an incident of workplace violence were to result in a death or critical injury as defined in the Occupational Health & Safety Act, the Supervisor and/or Campus Security shall immediately notify HSW, who will in turn notify the following:

- Ontario Ministry of Labour;
- Joint Health & Safety Committee

A written report with the circumstances of the occurrence and other prescribed information shall be prepared by HSW and sent to the above groups within two (2) working days of the occurrence.

If an incident of workplace violence causing injury occurs and the person is disabled from performing his or her usual work or requires medical attention because of an incident of workplace violence, but no person dies or is critically injured because of that occurrence; written notice shall be provided to the Joint Health & Safety Committee and within four (4) days of the occurrence from HSW.

### 5.4 Work Refusals and Workplace Violence

Under the Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act, employees have the right to refuse unsafe work which they believe may endanger the health or safety of themselves or another employee. There are procedural guidelines which must be followed as per section 43 of the Occupational Health & Safety Act. Work refusals as they relate to workplace violence will be resolved based on an objective assessment of risk.

### 5.5 Investigation Procedures for Incidents or Complaints of Workplace Violence

Health, Safety and Wellness in Human Resources shall investigate and respond to circumstances reported under the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy/Program as soon as possible with the most responsible employee in the affected department, operation or area (i.e. Supervisor). The University may utilize a third-party investigator where appropriate. A parallel/simultaneous investigation of assault can be conducted as defined in the Criminal Code of Canada if warranted or required.

The investigation will include:

- Conducting interviews of the applicable parties
- Reviewing applicable documentation and maintaining a confidential file.
- Complete a comprehensive report following the investigation that will be provided to the employee complainant's Supervisor and Faculty/Labour Relations, where appropriate.

The goal is to complete any investigation and communicate the results to the complainant and respondent within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the investigation.

The purpose of the investigation is to:

- Examine and inquire about the circumstance to uncover facts on the specific sequence of events, language used and behaviours of the concerning incident.
- Determine if workplace violence occurred as per the definition of workplace violence in the Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act.

Actions or outcomes of the investigation could include:

- Developing and implementing specific safety plans and/or procedures to manage risk by restricting the escalation and continuation of workplace violence circumstances.
- The initiation of a workplace violence threat assessment in conjunction with staff from Campus Security Services to determine if there is a potential for an ongoing threat of violence. Those performing the threat assessment may invite a Brock community member to a meeting when there is a matter that relates to their position within the University or their expertise or knowledge is required.

### 5.0 Measures and Procedures (continued)

- Individuals who are found to have committed or threatened violence will be held accountable and may be subject to discipline and other sanctions, which could include:
  - Employee coaching, progressive discipline, referral to employee family assistance plan (where provided as a benefit), HSW health management facilitation. In doing so, the University will act in accordance with the rights and obligations established by Collective Agreements and University policy.
  - Expulsion
  - Trespass notices
  - Criminal and/or civil proceedings

The workplace violence policy prohibits reprisals or action being taken against anyone who, in good faith, reports an incident of real or potential violence.

### ***5.6 Measures and Procedures to Control Workplace Violence Risks (identified by the assessment as likely to expose a worker to physical injury).***

There are numerous steps that can be taken to control workplace violence risks. Risk assessment information outlines the various reasonable actions that can be taken to control identified workplace violence risks. Refer to the appendices which contain the information that identifies measures, procedures and resources to control identified risks.

### 6.0 Domestic Violence

When a Supervisor becomes aware or ought reasonably to be aware about a domestic situation that could likely expose an employee to physical injury within the workplace, they are required to take steps to protect the employee and co-employees. Supervisor should refer to seeking assistance of Campus Security Services and Health, Safety & Wellness for developing a safety plan.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, whatever their age, race, economic status, religion, sexual orientation or education. While men can be victims of domestic violence, women represent most victims of such violence. Domestic violence can have serious and even lethal consequences. Behaviours such as emotional and psychological intimidation and harassment can be disruptive and harmful to the victim and can quickly turn into physical violence. Treat warning signs seriously and take immediate action when violence threatens to affect the work area. Stalking has been identified as one of the primary risk factors for attempted and actual murder of female partners in intimate relationships. Recent separation is also an important flag, as many deaths related to domestic violence in Ontario have occurred when the relationship was ending or following separation.

Refer to the appendices for additional information/resources on domestic violence.

The university cannot guarantee privacy when individuals coming forward about potential domestic situations in order to protect potentially impacted employees.

### 7.0 Communication

- Employees are to communicate with their Supervisors about workplace violence hazards they encounter in their work.
- Supervisors have the duty to:
  - Communicate with all employees or others working in an area they oversee about workplace violence hazards and the responsibilities outlined in the program.
  - Advise employees of any actual or potential hazards related to workplace violence.
  - Develop and implement procedures and/or measures specific to their respective areas to eliminate or control the risks where the potential for workplace violence exists. These procedures will be communicated to the employees in their respective areas.
- Disclosure of Persons with a Violent History: Supervisors are required to provide information to an employee that is reasonably necessary to protect the employee from physical injury. Three (3) conditions must be present in order to trigger the duty to warn:
  1. An employee must be exposed to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a “history of violent behaviour”;
  2. The employee must be expected to encounter that person during his or her work; and
  3. The risk of violence must be “likely” to expose the employee to physical injury.

**7.0 Communication (continued)**

Assistance must be sought from Human Resources prior to disclosing any information. Since the OHS Act does not provide a definition of “a history of violent behaviour” a single incident could possibly constitute a history of violent behaviour. It may be difficult to determine the likelihood of physical injury which an employee may be exposed to. For this reason, each case will be investigated and assessed accordingly. All cases of violence are reported to a central location so that if a history of violent behaviour from an individual exists it will allow the University to provide reasonable precautions across the campus.

**8.0 Training and Education**

All employees will receive training on the University’s Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and Program. This training will be available in both in-class room sessions as well as through an on-line training program. Workplace Violence awareness training will be made available to all Brock employees.

**9.0 Evaluation & Continuous Improvements**

- HSW will review reported incidents, analyze for trends and facilitate affected stakeholders with targeted actions to prevent the reoccurrence of incidents.
- Supervisors will monitor employee work practices and identify potential circumstances that could result in workplace violence concerns.
- JHSC will review incident trends on a routine basis during their regularly scheduled meetings.
- During inspections; Supervisors and the JHSC will observe work activities, talk to employees, and look for indicators of workplace violence risk.

**10.0 Applicable Legislation**

The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, Part III.0.1 Violence and Harassment, Sections 32.0.1 to 32.0.5.

**11.0 Supporting Documents**

- Brock University Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Brock University Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
- Brock University Injury/Incident Report Form
- Appendix A-Workplace Violence Risk Survey and Assessment
- Appendix B-Measures and Procedures to Control Workplace Violence Risk
- Appendix C-Domestic Violence Resources

**12.0 Amendments**

Date Revised: No revision details.  
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