

Workplace Violence Policy

1. Statement of Commitment

Vector Institute (“the Corporation”) is committed to providing and maintaining a workplace that is free from violence. Any act of workplace violence is unacceptable conduct that will not be tolerated. No one shall subject any worker to workplace violence or allow or create conditions that support workplace violence. The Corporation therefore requires all persons to exercise behaviour that facilitates the creation of a working environment that is respectful and conducive to the achievement of excellence.

Workplace violence is prohibited by Canadian legislation, including Ontario’s *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (the “*OHSA*”). The Corporation will take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers. This includes protecting workers from the hazard of workplace violence.

The Corporation encourages the reporting of all incidents of workplace violence, regardless of who the offender may be. Any breaches of this policy will be addressed in a manner appropriate to the circumstances, and may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment for cause.

2. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this Workplace Violence Policy (the “Policy”) is to maintain a workplace that is free from acts and threats of violence. The Policy is a clear statement of the Corporation’s commitment to act promptly against any incident of violence or threat of violence and to create an environment where violence will not be tolerated. The objectives of the Policy are to:

- demonstrate and promote the commitment of the Corporation to protect the dignity and rights of its employees;
- alert and educate employees to the fact that violence is prohibited under the laws of Canada;
- confirm that the Corporation cannot condone behaviour that is likely to undermine the safety, security or productivity of any of its employees;
- demonstrate the Corporation’s commitment to protect employees from workplace violence;
- address violence from all possible sources (customers/clients, management, employees, strangers, domestic partners); and
- outline the roles and responsibilities of the workplace parties in supporting the Policy and Workplace Violence Program.

3. Scope

This policy applies to workers, which is broadly defined in the *OHSA* to include “a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.” This definition of workers includes all employees (permanent, temporary, part-time, full time), faculty, research scientists, secondees, students/trainees, and service providers. The Policy also applies to Board members and volunteers.

4. Definitions

4.1. Workplace violence

Workplace Violence is defined in the *OHSA* as follows:

- the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,
- a statement or behaviour that it 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 the worker.

4.2. Workplace Locations

The Policy will be enforced on the Corporation's premises and locations, where workers work, and where activities related to the business of the Corporation take place. These include:

- activities within offices, lunch rooms, and other Corporation property;
- events associated with the Corporation, including outside activities;
- work situations outside of Corporation-operated premises, including external work assignments, work-related conferences, and training sessions; and
- activities in other locations where violence or threats of violence may have a subsequent impact on the work relationship or environment.

5. Information

5.1. Information and Instruction with Respect to Workplace Violence

The Corporation will provide individuals with information and instruction that is appropriate for them on the contents of the Policy and program with respect to workplace violence.

The information provided to individuals may include personal information related to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour if,

- (i) the individual can be expected to encounter that person in the course of his or her work; and
- (ii) the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the individual to physical injury.

The Corporation will not disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary to protect the individual from physical injury.

5.2. Domestic Violence

If the Corporation becomes aware or ought reasonably to be aware that domestic violence is likely to expose an individual to physical injury in the workplace, the Corporation will take every reasonable precaution to protect that person. It is the responsibility of the individual in a relationship with the potential for domestic violence, which may affect the workplace, to inform the corporation, through the CEO, COO or Manager, Human Resources of the threat.

5.3. Assessment of the Risks of Workplace Violence

The Corporation will assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from the nature of the workplace, the type of work, or the conditions of work.

The Corporation will reassess the risks of workplace violence as often as necessary to ensure that this Policy and the related program continue to protect individuals from workplace violence.

The assessments and reassessments will take into account:

- (i) circumstances that would be common to similar workplaces;
- (ii) circumstances specific to the workplace; and
- (iii) any other elements prescribed by law.

The assessment and reassessment of risk of workplace violence will also take into account:

- (i) the existence of potential risks due to interactions with the public, employees and customers/clients; and
- (ii) the Corporation's safety plans.

The Corporation shall advise its Health and Safety Representative of the results of assessments and reassessments, and provide a copy, if the assessment or reassessment is in writing.

The Health and Safety Representative will communicate with Management regarding identification of risks and mitigate any risks identified.

6. Workplace Violence Program

The Corporation will develop and maintain a program to implement this Policy. Without limiting the generality of the paragraph above, the program will:

- (a) include measures and procedures to control the risks identified in the assessment described above as likely to expose a worker to physical injury;
- (b) include measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur;
- (c) include measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace violence to the employer or management;
- (d) set out how the Corporation will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints of workplace violence; and
- (e) include any elements prescribed by law.

7. Responsibilities

7.1. Duties of Management

Management will advise individuals employed and/or engaged by the Corporation of the existence of any potential or actual danger to health or safety of the individual of which management is aware, including personal information subject to the provisions above.

Management will take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect employees and other individuals.

Management will comply with all other duties applicable to it under the *OHSA*.

7.2. Duties of Employees and other individuals

The individual will advise the CEO, COO or Manager, Human Resources of any incident or risk of workplace violence of which he or she is aware.

8. Penalties

An employee who subjects another employee to workplace violence (including threats of workplace violence) may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of his/her employment for cause. Other individuals who subject any employee or other individual to workplace violence will be subject to penalties that are appropriate in view of their relationship to the Corporation.

9. Reprisal

This Policy prohibits reprisals against individuals, acting in good faith, who report incidents of workplace violence or act as witnesses. The Corporation will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent reprisals, threats of reprisal, or further violence. Reprisal is defined as any act of retaliation, either direct or indirect and includes confronting a complainant or witness about the fact that they have complained or given evidence. Reprisal is a serious violation of this Policy and should be reported immediately.

Any employee who engages in reprisal will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment for cause. Other individuals will be subject to penalties that are appropriate in view of their relationship to the Corporation.

10. Distribution of the Policy

This Policy will be posted at a conspicuous place in the workplace. This Policy will be provided to all workers, volunteers and board members and will be sent out to new hires. All workers and, volunteers will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the policy.

11. Amendment

This Policy will be reviewed as often as is necessary, but at least annually. This Policy may be amended by the Board.