

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PURPOSE

The Region of Queens Municipality is committed to providing a respectful, healthy and safe work environment. All employees are entitled to work in an environment free from violence, threats of violence and other disruptive behaviour.

This policy defines Violence in the Workplace, and identifies the roles of employees and management in preventing workplace violence. It establishes expectations about appropriate behaviour and clarifies the Municipality's commitment to addressing inappropriate behaviour.

The Region of Queens Municipality prohibits violence in the workplace, or at any work related and/or staff function, or in any other work-related circumstances.

The intention of this policy is to prevent violence from taking place, and, where necessary, to act upon incidents of violent behaviour promptly, fairly, and judiciously. The most effective element in preventing violence in the workplace is education. The Region of Queens Municipality will provide education, information and promote awareness of violence issues to foster a safe, secure and respectful workplace.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Region of Queens Municipality, including but not limited to regular, temporary, probationary, inclusive of all union and non-union and contract employees. Should violence occur, the Region of Queens Municipality will take all available steps to ensure a workplace free from violence.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Since all employees have the right to work in an environment free from violence, all employees share the responsibility to support a violence-free workplace. The roles of the employer, management, and employees are specified as follows.

EMPLOYER'S ROLE

The Council of the Region of Queens Municipality's role is to:

- a. Provide a workplace environment that minimizes and, to the extent possible, eliminates the risk of violence, threats of violence and other disruptive behaviour.
- b. Provide violence awareness education and information to employees, include training in violence prevention for managers and supervisors where appropriate.
- c. Create an environment that encourages victims of violence and witnesses to report all incidents of violence.

MANAGEMENT'S ROLE

Management staff are expected to provide employees with a safe work environment, free from violence, threats of violence and other disruptive behaviour. Management must ensure that violence is not tolerated, ignored or condoned.

Management staff are responsible for not only their own actions, but also for dealing with the actions of staff under their supervision. The following are steps which management staff will undertake to prevent violence in the workplace and to address violent behaviour:

- a. If violence occurs or if management staff becomes aware of violence in the workplace, or the threat of violence, management must take action in accordance with this policy. Management staff must approach an employee if violence or the threat of violence is suspected because some employees may be embarrassed or reluctant to report a violent incident, or threat of violence. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for management staff to report incidents of violence if the employee who is the victim of violence is reluctant, too frightened or otherwise unable to do so.
- b. Discipline those employees found to have violated the policy.
- c. Depending on the nature of the violent incident, management staff may advise those involved of their option to contact the Police, or alternatively, it may be necessary for management to contact the Police directly.

- d. Attend education and training sessions on violence prevention provided by the Region of Queens Municipality.
- e. Provide employees who have been subjected to workplace violence and their co-workers who witnessed the incident, with a debriefing. Employees shall be advised to consult a health professional of the employee's choice for treatment or counseling.

EMPLOYEE'S ROLE

Employees share the responsibility to ensure that their work environment is free from violence, threats of violence and other disruptive behaviour. Employees must not threaten violence or engage in any violent behaviour in the workplace, at any work related functions, or in any other work related circumstances. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. Engaging in or threatening violence and/or using any Region of Queens Municipality resources such as workplace phones, fax machines, mail, or email to perpetrate or threaten violence.
- b. Engaging in violence or threatening violence which has arisen out of a workplace incident or relationship while away from the workplace.

Employees shall report any incidents of violence or threatened violence in the workplace, to supervisors or managers. Employees covered under a collective agreement may also speak to a union representative. If a criminal act, or suspected criminal act has occurred, employees are to report the incident to the Police.

Employees are expected to co-operate fully in any investigation of a violent incident.

Employees are expected to treat all other employees and members of the public with respect and dignity.

VIOLENT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS

Workplace violence may be physical or psychological in nature. Examples of violent workplace behaviours may include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Assault or Battery (with or without a weapon) including shoving, hitting, pushing or kicking

- b. Destructive behaviour such as vandalism, arson, sabotage, or throwing objects;
- c. Displays of any kind of weapon;
- d. Verbal or written threats as follows:

- i. Direct Threats:

- Clear and explicit written or verbal communication (including emails, voicemails, textmessages, etc.) which clearly indicates that the perpetrator intends harm, e.g. “You’re going to pay for what you did.”

- ii. Conditional Threats:

- Implied, (written or verbal) involving a condition, e.g. “If you don’t stop bugging me, you will be sorry.”

- iii. Veiled Threats:

- Typically involve behaviours that suggest that the perpetrator intends harm, e.g. “This hammer could really do some damage.”

- e. Threatening messages transmitted through third parties;
 - f. Bullying.

COMPLIANCE

Any employee or member of management who has committed an act of violence in the workplace or has otherwise violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

REPRISAL

Any form of retaliation against employees exercising their rights under this policy will be considered a violation of this policy and will not be tolerated. Such retaliatory actions may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Any employee found to have lodged or otherwise supported a false accusation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Region of Queens Municipality will make every effort to ensure appropriate confidentiality where an incidence of violence has occurred.

DEFINITIONS

Assault:

Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury upon another person, when coupled with an apparent present ability to do so, and any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Battery: Occurs when a person:

- a. Actually and intentionally touches or strikes another person against the will of the other, or;
- b. Intentionally causes bodily harm to another person.

Bullying:

The misuse of power or position to persistently criticize and condemn; to openly humiliate and undermine an individual's ability. The bullying attacks on a person may be sudden, irrational, and unpredictable.

Management Staff:

Any individual responsible for directing the work of others, including but not limited to the Chief Administrative Officer, Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Team Leaders, Project Managers and Forepersons.

Perpetrator:

An individual who threatens or commits an act of violence.

Violence: Means any of the following:

- a. Threats including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives a person reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury.
- b. Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.

Weapon:

Anything used, or designed to be used, in destroying, defeating, threatening or injuring a person.

Approved by Council: January 21, 2008