



City Policy

Section: Human Resources

No: HR – RESP - 02

Reference: Respect in the Workplace (Part II)

Date: Jan. 26, 2026

**Next Review Date:
January 2027**

TITLE: Workplace Violence Policy & Program

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Corporation of the City of Dryden is committed to providing a workplace in which the respect for and safety of the employees is paramount. The risk or occurrence of violent acts involving employees requires particular attention, as violence undermines an employee's ability to work effectively and impacts quality of life. Threats or acts of violence against an employee are unacceptable and will, at no time, be tolerated. The City has zero tolerance for violence in the workplace.
- 1.2 All City employees have a responsibility to respect the safety of their co-workers and the public they serve. Managers and Supervisors have additional responsibilities; they are obligated to discourage violence in the workplace; to take reasonable steps to prevent it; and to take appropriate corrective action to deal with workplace violence if, and when, it occurs.
- 1.3 The City of Dryden will not discriminate or retaliate against employees because they are, or are perceived to be, victims of workplace violence.
- 1.4 Noncompliance with respect to this Program and policy will give rise to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.
- 1.5 When administering this Program, the City of Dryden shall do so in a fair and unbiased manner.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 The City of Dryden's Respect in the Workplace Program has been developed in order to institute measures of the City's commitment to:
 - (a) Demonstrate and promote a workplace that ensures employee safety, security and a violence free environment;

- (b) Ensure that all policies and practices comply with the provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and any other applicable law;
- (c) Respect the health, safety and dignity of all employees;
- (d) Ensure employees are aware of and follow safe practices to prevent and respond to violent incidents;
- (e) Empower employees to make and act on decisions regarding risk of violence;
- (f) Establish written practices to identify and address risks for each local worksite using input from all worksite employees; from there create action plans to minimize risk factors with the intent to prevent or lower the probability of violence to the Corporation's employees in the workplace;
- (g) Inform workers about the identity and/or details of an individual with a violent history where workers can be expected to encounter that individual in the course of their work;
- (h) Respond swiftly and appropriately to the threat of violence or actual incidents of violence; aid in the prevention of violence in the workplace. This includes, but is not limited to, calling for immediate Police assistance;
- (i) Develop a reporting procedure and provide an impartial and efficient investigation procedure;
- (j) Ensure that all incidents are dealt with confidentially and objectively and that the rights and dignity of all parties are respected; and,
- (k) Create training programs to support this program.

2.2 Nothing in this Program should be interpreted as denying or limiting access to other avenues of redress available under the law (e.g., a grievance or complaint under the applicable collective agreement, criminal complaint or a complaint with the Ministry of Labour or the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario), where applicable.

3.0 Application

- 3.1 This program applies to all employees of the City of Dryden, as well as to volunteers, co-op placement personnel, students, agents of the Corporation, consultants, contractors and Council in their dealings with employees, volunteers, co-op placement personnel, students, agents, consultants, and contractors of the Corporation.
- 3.2 Members of the public, visitors to City facilities, or individuals conducting business with the Corporation, are expected to adhere to this Program, including refraining from committing acts of violence against employees, members of Council, or persons acting on behalf of the Corporation. If such violence occurs, the Corporation will take any, and all, steps available to ensure a violence-free workplace, including barring the individual who is the subject of a report from its facilities, where appropriate, or discontinuing business with that individual.

4.0 Definitions and Examples

- 4.1 "Violence" as defined under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* as:
- a) the exercise of physical force by a person against an employee, in the workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to an employee, an attempt to use physical force against an employee that causes or could cause physical injury to the employee or a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for an employee to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the employee in the workplace , that could cause physical injury to the employee.

4.2 **Workplace Violence:**

Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Threatening behaviour such as shaking fists, destroying property, or throwing objects;
- (b) Property damage - theft, destroying property, vandalism, sabotage of equipment, or arson;

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- (c) Verbal or written threats - any expression of intent to inflict harm;
- (d) Wielding or carrying a weapon at work;
- (e) Intimidation;
- (f) Threatening language;
- (g) Psychological trauma - includes stalking;
- (h) Physical attacks or assaults - hitting, shoving, pushing, or kicking; and
- (i) Sexual assaults – unwanted sexual acts done by one person to another, or sexual activity without one person’s consent or voluntary agreement.

4.3 **Domestic Violence:**

- (a) For the purpose of this policy, domestic violence is any use of physical or sexual force, actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship including emotional/psychological abuse or harassing behaviour.
- (b) Domestic violence will be considered workplace violence when an employer becomes aware that domestic violence could likely expose an employee to physical injury in the workplace. Employees should report concerns where domestic violence may enter the workplace.
- (c) Intimate relationships include those between intimate partners. These relationships vary in duration and legal formality and include current and former dating, common law, and married couples.
- (d) For the purpose of this Program, the City will take every precaution reasonable to protect its workers if the employer is aware, or ought to be aware of domestic violence, that is likely to expose a worker to injury in the workplace.

5.0 Workplace Defined

- 5.1 The workplace includes all locations where business or social activities of the Corporation are conducted. This includes any physical locations on or off City property, as well as web-based locations such as social media platforms or webpages. Violence in the workplace may also include incidents that happen away

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from work (e.g., unwelcome phone calls or visits to a person's home) if it is connected to the victim's employment with the City.

6.0 Right to Refuse

- 6.1 Employees have the right to refuse unsafe work where workplace violence is likely to endanger them (with exceptions being where the danger is considered a routine aspect of employment i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance, etc.). While the work refusal is being investigated, the worker is to remain in a safe place that is as near as possible to their workstation, making them available for the purpose of an investigation.
- 6.2 Workplace refusals shall be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.1.
- 6.3 Investigations in a 'right to refuse' situation must include a representative from the site based Joint Health and Safety Committee. See HR-HS-13, Refusal to Work and Bilateral Work Stoppage.
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7.0 Responsibilities of Employees

- 7.1 All employees have a duty under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to report workplace violence promptly in order to protect themselves and their colleagues.
- 7.2 All employees shall:
- (a) Comply with this Program;
 - (b) Report any early warning signs of a potentially threatening situation which arouse concern and any instances of threatening statements or threatening behaviour which was directed at them or at any other employee of the Corporation to their immediate supervisor;
 - (c) Use appropriate stress-defusing behaviour, if the appropriate stress-defusing behaviours do not work, tactfully disengage from the situation;
 - (d) Co-operate fully in any fact gathering interviews or investigations which are designed to assess the risk of violence in the workplace;

- (e) Ensure that any investigation remains confidential. Employees must not disclose any information relating to a report, its investigation and/or resolution to anyone; and,
- (f) Call 911 if they feel they are in a situation that has the potential to or is actually violent.

7.3 Failure to comply with this Program will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

8.0 Responsibilities of all Supervisory Personnel

8.1 Supervisory personnel shall include all Supervisors and Managers. They are responsible for and shall:

- (a) Take all reasonable measures to prevent violence in the workplace from happening and to provide a workplace that is free from violence. This includes advising employees of any actual or potential occupational health and safety dangers of which the supervisor is aware of;
- (b) Ensure that all employees are aware of the contents of this zero-tolerance for violence policy and their role in helping to prevent workplace violence;
- (c) Conduct a Violence Risk Assessment for their workplace. The results are to be shared with the Joint Health and Safety Committee or the health and safety representative, as well as the workers in that department;
- (d) Support this Program and not ignore workplace violence, let their staff know that they take the issue of workplace violence seriously;
- (e) Promote enrolment in training courses in these areas that are available to employees (e.g., communication, problem solving, building effective working relationships, mediation, conflict resolution, stress management, approaches to managing violent and abusive behaviour);
- (f) Ensure that their own skills in these areas are current with the support of the Human Resources Department;
- (g) Be aware of, and use appropriate stress-defusing techniques;
- (h) Take immediate action when necessary, including, but not limited to: calling

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911 to request Police Services, Dryden Fire & Emergency Service, and/or Ambulance Services, and summoning employees certified in First-Aid as needed;

- (i) Immediately report to their Supervisor, and the Director of Human Resources, any direct or veiled threats of violence made to any employee, and any action taken;
- (j) Ensure that the proper procedures are followed when a report of an incident of workplace violence is received, that the report is investigated promptly and fairly, that confidentiality is protected to the fullest extent possible, that the rights, dignity, and privacy of all parties are respected, and shall keep a confidential record of all discussions. Managers/ Supervisors must consult with the Director of Human Resources; and,
- (k) Provide employees with information, such as personal information, of known persons with a history of violent behaviour.

9.0 Responsibilities of Human Resources Department

9.1 The Director of Human Resources shall:

- (a) Provide overall co-ordination of the 'Respect in the Workplace Program';
- (b) Ensure that managers and supervisors conduct risk assessments which will include input from their employees and the site-based joint health and safety representatives;
- (c) Collect all data from risk assessments in order to coordinate efforts for organization wide policies and department specific policies in consultation with site-based groups and the Operational Management Steering Committee, and assist in creating action plans as needed;
- (d) Work with managers, supervisors and site-based Joint Health and Safety Committees on how to minimize the risk of violence associated with performance appraisals, disciplinary measures, and terminations;
- (e) Monitor and report to the CAO on the effectiveness of the Program, review the Program at least annually or sooner if needed, or when violent acts occur;

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- (f) Coordinate an immediate investigation that is reasonable in the circumstances, potentially in cooperation with Police Services, when any incident or potential incident of violence is reported, in order to assess the risk or continued risk to employees. Investigations may include interviews with the employee, managers, and other employees, a review of previous incidents if available and consultations with the site-based Joint Health and Safety Committees representatives; and,
 - (g) Ensure that the proper procedures are/were followed when a report of an incident of workplace violence is received, including dealing with all reports in a confidential, timely, fair, equitable, constructive and respectful manner.
- 9.2 The staff in the Human Resources Department shall act as resource person, and shall provide guidance, and assistance in the administration of this Program.
- 9.3 Notify the Ministry of Labour of any workplace violence causing critical or non-critical injury as outlined in the Human Resources Standard Operating Procedure, Reporting Critical Incidents.

10.0 Reporting Process

10.1 Obligation to Report

- (a) All employees must report a situation that they believe is workplace violence under this Program. A report may be made by the actual victim of alleged workplace violence, by a coworker who witnessed the incident(s), or by a third-party reporting on behalf of the victim(s).
- (b) Employees who, with good intentions, provide information about behaviour or actions which they perceive as threatening or potentially violent, will not be subject to disciplinary actions or other form of reprisal if their perceptions are not substantiated. However, if it is learned that an employee intentionally made a false report or provided false information regarding the report, disciplinary action up to, and including, termination, may be taken against that employee.
- (c) A report should be made as soon as possible after the relevant action or behaviour occurred. Reports should be directed to the employee's immediate supervisor unless the supervisor is the subject of the report, in which case the report should be directed to the Human Resources Department. Employees can submit reports using the online incident report form.

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- (d) Although an employee may choose to make a verbal report, it is in the best interest of all concerned to provide a written report, which should contain as much information as possible, including the name(s) of the person(s) involved, the location of where the incident(s) happened, the date and time of incident(s), and the name(s) of any possible witnesses. The report should be signed and dated.
- (e) If the report is submitted to the Manager, it shall be referred to the Human Resources immediately. The Director of Human Resources may choose to investigate the complaint, and depending on the nature of the allegations, the Corporation may choose to use an external investigator to conduct the investigation. The Corporation will determine whether an external investigator is required.
- (f) The Human Resources Department will inform the CAO of the fact that a report has been made and that an investigation will be conducted.
- (g) All information about an incident or concern will be kept confidential unless disclosure is necessary for investigating, taking corrective actions or is otherwise required by law.
 - a. If an incident involves and assault or is a life-threatening situation, emergency services must be notified, and site-specific emergency protocols should be actioned. This includes but is not limited to violent acts, threats, or behaviours such as stalking, directed towards any person or child, and any threat of self-harm.

11.0 Employee Representation

- 11.1 If Employees are members of a bargaining unit, the individuals who made, and those that are the subject of, a report are entitled to union representation throughout the investigation process if they so choose.
- 11.2 If complainant or respondent is a non-union employee, they may also have a representative accompany them throughout the processed shall be advised of such entitlement.
- 11.3 The representative must ensure that the matter remains confidential, and not disclose any information relating to a report, its investigation and/or resolution to anyone who is not aware of the matter.

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12.0 Confidentiality

- 12.1 All persons involved with a complaint must ensure that the matter remains confidential. These persons include, but are not limited to witnesses, representatives, managers/supervisors, the Director of Human Resources and the Investigators. An employee who discloses confidential information except as allowed under this program may be subject to discipline.
- 12.2 A complaint shall be investigated and dealt with in a discreet and confidential manner, to the extent possible. All investigations, interviews and deliberations shall be conducted in strict confidence to the extent possible. The Corporation will endeavor to keep all complaints, notes of interviews or meetings, investigation reports, records of disciplinary action and other related records in strict confidence. The documents will be stored with the Human Resources Department. Except as otherwise outlined in the Program, information about a report of violence, its investigation and/or resolution shall be released only on a need-to-know basis, as determined by the Human Resources Department.
- (a) All information about an incident or complaint will be kept confidential unless disclosure is necessary for investigating, taking corrective actions or is otherwise required by law.
 - (b) Any violent acts, threats, or behaviours such as stalking, directed towards any person or child, must be reported to the police. This includes any threat of self-harm.
 - (c) Only the key findings of investigation reports shall be presented to complainants and respondents in writing in a summary format and the full investigation report will remain strictly confidential to protect the identity of third party witnesses.
 - (d) The Corporation cannot guarantee confidentiality if the complainant chooses to initiate proceedings or make comments outside the Corporation's internal compliant process. Information collected and retained is subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

13.0 Investigations

- 13.1 Upon receipt of a report, any written documentation will be reviewed, and an initial interview may be scheduled with the individual who made the report, the complainant, to clarify the scope of the allegations.
- 13.2 If there is uncertainty as to whether the complaint raises an alleged breach of this Policy, a formal preliminary assessment will be conducted to determine whether the allegations, if accepted as true, could establish a violation of this Policy or the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. If this threshold test is not met, no further steps will be taken to investigate the complaint. A summary report will be prepared outlining the scope of the allegations and the reasons for determining that the threshold to move forward with a full investigation was not met. The report will be based solely on the information gathered from the complainant and will not include input from the respondent or other witnesses. The complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment.
- 13.3 If it is determined that the allegations, if accepted as true, could constitute a violation of this Policy, an investigation shall be initiated as soon as reasonably practicable that is appropriate in the circumstances. The complainant shall be provided with written notification confirming the Corporation's receipt of their complaint and the commencement of an investigation into their allegations. For clarity, an investigation may be conducted by Human Resources or it may be assigned to an external investigator, at the discretion of the City.
- 13.4 The person assigned shall initiate the investigation by meeting with the complainant. The complainant has the right to be accompanied by another person of their choice in any meeting with an investigator(s). The investigator(s) shall confirm receipt of the complaint, clarify details, and apprise the complainant of the steps that will be taken.
- 13.5 To the extent possible, the investigator(s) shall ensure that the complaint is investigated promptly and fairly, in a discreet and confidential manner so as to minimize embarrassment to all parties, in accordance with the principles of natural justice (i.e.. respondent has the opportunity to respond to the complaint).
- 13.6 The investigation must be completed in a timely manner and generally within 90 days or less of the initial report, unless there are extenuating circumstances warranting a longer investigation.

- 13.7 The investigator(s) have the authority, subject to applicable laws, to speak to anyone, examine any documents and enter any work locations that are relevant to the complaint.
- 13.8 A person named in a complaint has the right to reply to the allegation(s) and the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice in any meeting with an investigator(s). The respondent(s) should be provided a written summary of the allegation(s) prior to the investigator(s) meeting with them.
- 13.9 Persons not named in the complaint who may have some personal knowledge about the incident may also be interviewed as witnesses.
- 13.10 After interviewing the relevant parties and documents, the investigator(s) must prepare a written report summarizing the investigation mandate, the steps taken during the investigation process, the complainant's allegations, the respondent's response to those allegations, the evidence of any witnesses, an analysis of the information, and the investigator(s)'s findings. The report must set out findings of fact and come to a conclusion about whether the allegations are substantiated or not.
- 13.11 Depending upon the circumstances, the Supervisor or Manager in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, may determine that it is appropriate to physically and/or operationally separate the employee and the alleged harasser until the investigation has been completed.

14.0 Findings and Recommendations

- 14.1 Once the investigation is complete, the investigator(s) will submit a confidential written report to the Director of Human Resources. Where the allegations relate to the Director of Human Resources, the CAO will receive the report. If the allegations relate to the CAO, the Mayor will receive the report. The investigator(s) will endeavour to submit a written report within ninety (90) days from the receipt of the complaint. The full report will detail the investigator's process, evidence, findings, analysis and conclusions.
- 14.2 The Human Resources Department will inform the CAO as well as the applicable Supervisor(s)/Manager(s), of the content of the report and the investigator(s)'s findings, conclusions, and recommendations made by the Director of Human Resources as a result of those findings.

- 14.3 The complainant(s) and respondent(s) will be provided with a summary of the investigator(s)'s findings and any corrective action that has been taken or will be taken as a result of the investigation in writing. The parties are not entitled to a copy of the full investigation report.

15.0 Discipline

- 15.1 Depending on the circumstances, if an employee is found to have engaged in violence under this program, such conduct will be considered a form of employee misconduct. As in any case of misconduct, corrective action may include counseling and/or disciplinary action, if required, shall be subject to the process outlined in the City's Discipline policy HR-DI-01.
- 15.2 The appropriate counselling or disciplinary action imposed, if any, shall be determined by mutual agreement of the Director of Human Resources and the affected Department Manager/Director or CAO or Council (for complaints involving the CAO, based on the circumstances of the case). For complaints involving a Member of Council the decision on a penalty will be determined by the remainder of Council.
- 15.3 In responding to the threat or incident of violence, actions that warrant consideration, the City may include changes to the physical workspace, changes to work schedules and/or patterns, changes to procedures to offer better support and protection, withdrawal of services, police intervention and the use of appropriate court orders.
- 15.4 Employees who are found to be at risk of engaging in violent conduct, or who have engaged in violent conduct, may be subject to discipline up to, and including, termination.
- 15.5 The appropriate disciplinary action imposed shall follow the City's Discipline Policy.

16.0 Trauma Support

- 16.1 Staff who have witnessed or experienced a traumatic event may need special support. These needs will be acknowledged and accommodated by the Corporation. The Corporation will encourage these employees to use the community agencies and/or the Employee and Family Assistance Program as appropriate.

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16.2 The Human Resources Department will advise affected staff of their support options and will coordinate any special assistance that may be required.

17.0 Employee Education and Training

17.1 All new employees shall be made aware of this policy through the employee orientation process.

17.2 Managers shall ensure that a copy of the policy is readily accessible in the workplace and shall ensure that all employees under their direction are aware of and comply with the Program. All supervisory personnel shall act as good role models.

17.3 The City of Dryden through the Human Resources Department will provide the appropriate, necessary, and on-going training in relation to this policy.

17.4 This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner as required, in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committees or health and safety representatives.

History			
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