



BRACEBRIDGE LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Number: OP-24
Title: Workplace Violence
Board Approval Date: June 2025

Category: Operational
Policy Replacing: OP-24: Workplace Violence (2024)
Year of next review: 2026

PURPOSE:

The Library Board recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and is committed to providing a workplace free from violence and ensuring that any complaint of workplace violence is resolved quickly and with fairness and confidentiality.

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone including Board members, employees, volunteers, family members and others who do business with the library. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from library property, and in the case of employees are subject to disciplinary action including termination.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Section 1: Workplace Violence

1. The Library recognizes the definition of violence as set out in the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***. Workplace violence means:
 - a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
 - b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,
 - c) 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. *Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, chapter O.1, s.1 (1)*
2. Violence in the workplace may include:
 - a) verbally threatening to attack a worker
 - b) leaving threatening notes or sending threatening e-mails to the workplace
 - c) shaking a fist in a worker's face
 - d) hitting or trying to hit a worker
 - e) throwing or kicking an object
 - f) sexual aggression against a worker
3. Violence in the library or on library property also includes:
 - a) intentionally or recklessly damaging of the property of another person
 - b) intentionally causing alarm
 - c) creating a risk by fighting
 - d) creating a hazardous condition or danger by recklessly engaging in conduct which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury

- e) intentionally placing or attempting to place another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury
- f) wielding any object or weapon that is intended to cause harm.

Section 2: Responsibilities and False Reports

1. The CEO or designate will develop and maintain a workplace violence program in consultation with the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative. See Appendix “A” of this policy for the current program.
2. The Workplace Violence Program will set out:
 - a) a process for assessing the risk of violence in the workplace
 - b) measures to control risk including those from domestic violence
 - c) procedures for reporting incidents of violence in the workplace including measures for reporting incidents to an outside source if necessary
 - d) the process for dealing with and investigating complaints including how parties involved will be made aware of the outcome and corrective action, and how confidentiality will be maintained
 - e) a formalized training program, and
 - f) a system for maintaining all associated records should an inspection by the Ministry of Labour or employee inquiries occur.
3. Employees are encouraged to report behaviour that they reasonably believe poses a potential for workplace violence as described above.
4. Anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call the police.
5. Workplace violence should be reported immediately to the most senior staff member available.
6. Physical or sexual assault or threat of physical violence can be reported to the police.
7. All reports will be thoroughly investigated by the CEO or designate.
8. The Library will provide staff with information on the risk of violence in the library and training workshops on a periodic basis, addressing concerns such as dealing with difficult people.
9. The Library, at the request of an employee or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing an employee on library property in cases where the employee suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individual(s).
10. This policy and the Workplace Violence Program (Appendix “A”) will be:
 - a) reviewed annually by the library board
 - b) posted on the employee bulletin board
 - c) provided to each employee for training on this policy and program annually, and employees will sign off that they have received this training
 - d) included with the employees’ sign-off in the training records for library staff

RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, chapter O.1

Bill 132: An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters (Statutes of Ontario, 2016, Chapter 2)

Bill 168: An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to violence and harassment in the workplace and other matters. (Statutes of Ontario, 2009, Chapter 23)

REVISIONS: OP-24: Workplace Violence (2024), OP-24: Workplace Violence (2023)

Appendix A

Program to Address Workplace Violence

1. Awareness of Workplace Violence Policy and Program

The Violence in the Workplace Policy (OP-24) will be included in the library's policy binder and will be posted in the staff area along with this Workplace Violence Program information.

2. Worksite Assessment

The library staff will conduct a worksite assessment as often as necessary to ensure measures for violence prevention are effective. The assessment will:

- a) identify jobs or locations with the greatest risk
- b) identify high risk factors
- c) include a physical workplace security audit
- d) evaluate the effectiveness of existing security measures

3. Annual Review of Past Incidents

The CEO or designate will annually review the history of past incidents to identify patterns or trends. The CEO, or designate will review the annually the previously recognized areas of higher risk in the library including but not limited to:

- a) ongoing contact with the public
- b) working alone or in small numbers
- c) the circulation desk where money is kept
- d) closing the library building at night
- e) monitoring of secondary entrances to the library

4. Measures for Reducing the Risk of Workplace Violence

Learn to recognize the signs of violence:

- a) Early identification and prevention of violence in the workplace is encouraged. Potential threats of violence that should be reported could include the following:
 - i. threatening statements to do harm to self or others
 - ii. reference to other incidents of violence
 - iii. confrontational behaviour
 - iv. major change in personality, mood or behaviour
 - v. substance abuse
 - vi. suspected domestic violence towards a coworkers

Institute general measures to reduce risk including:

- a) designate the CEO's office and staff room (rooms with doors that lock and with a telephone) as emergency safe rooms
- b) keep all secondary entrance doors locked, but with 'crash bars'
- c) keep the exterior lights around the building in good working order
- d) ensure staff will not work alone in the library without prior consent of the CEO

Staff procedures to increase personal safety:

- a) Notice your surroundings and report any unsafe or dangerous situation to the most senior staff member.

- b) If you feel uncomfortable about a person who has entered the library, trust your instincts. If you feel threatened, make a scene - YELL!
- c) Use a buddy system when leaving work.
- d) If you ever find you are working alone in the library, let the CEO or someone at home know the situation and tell him or her when you expect to leave.
- e) If you enter a bathroom or any area and suspect it is unsafe, do not call out. Back out, go to a safe, lockable place with a telephone and call for help.
- f) Always know the nearest exit or room with a lock.

Staff procedures for dealing with workplace violence/assault

- a) If you hear raised voices or sounds of a scuffle investigate.
- b) **If you witness violence or an assault, call the police and describe the situation.**
- c) Recruit other staff to move others out of the way to a safer location.
- d) Do not block exits to prevent a threatening/violent person from leaving the building.
- e) Do not invade the personal space of the threatening person.
- f) Do not get between two people fighting.
- g) Notice details so you can describe the situation to the police.
- h) Notify the CEO.

Domestic Violence: Steps to Increase Your Personal Safety

- a) Tell someone at work about your situation.
- b) Make up a "code word" for co-workers so they know when to call for help.
- c) Ask your co-workers to screen your calls and visitors.
- d) Ask a co-worker to call the police if your abuser is bothering you.

5. Reporting Incidents of Workplace Violence

Any employee or volunteer subjected to an incident of violence in the workplace should report the situation with the CEO. In the event that there is a complaint against the CEO or a conflict of interest, a complaint shall be filed with the board chair. The library board may conduct an investigation or designate an individual to investigate and issue a report.

At any time during a meeting or interview concerning a complaint, both the employee lodging the complaint and the person against whom the complaint has been lodged has the right to be represented and accompanied by a person of his or her choice.

Any related documents or materials having to do with the complaint are to be made available and the employee with a complaint must provide written notes about the events leading up to the complaint which include:

- a) What happened – a description of the events or situation
- b) When it happened – dates and times
- c) Where it happened
- d) Who saw the incident, if anyone

Information about the incident or complaint, including identifying information about any individual involved will be kept confidential unless disclosure is necessary for the purpose of investigation or taking corrective action, or as required by the law.

6. Complaint Investigation and Resolution Procedures

An investigation that is appropriate in the circumstances will be conducted into incidents and complaints of workplace violence. The CEO will advise the person against whom the complaint has been lodged of the investigation. The CEO, or their designate, initiates a confidential investigation immediately and finishes within 30 days. Throughout the process, the investigator keeps all parties informed; interviews the employee concerned and witnesses; collects evidence; prepares a report; and informs the parties, in writing, of the decision and the underlying reasons for the decision.

The CEO is responsible for imposing any disciplinary or corrective measures.