


Policy Title: Respectful Workplace Policy
Policy #: H-005-001A
Effective Date: May 13, 2014
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Resolution #: 218.05.12
Supersedes: H-005-001 Discrimination & Sexual Harrassment
Signature: 

Policy Statement

The Town of Sylvan Lake believes in the prevention of violence, harassment and sexual harassment and promotes a positive environment in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals.

Any act of violence, harassment, or sexual harassment committed by or against any Town employee or member of the public is deemed unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

The Town of Sylvan Lake is committed to:

- (a) Investigating reported incidents of violence, harassment or sexual harassment in an objective and timely manner;
- (b) Taking necessary action; and
- (c) Providing appropriate support for victims of harassment, sexual harassment and/or violence.

This policy applies to all activities where Town of Sylvan Lake employees are involved in work-related activities, regardless of location. This includes, but is not limited to, work-related activities while on Town of Sylvan Lake property, during travel, at social functions, and while using the telephone or computer/social media devices.

Purpose of the Policy

- a) To ensure the Town provides a positive, safe and harassment-free workplace environment for all employees
- b) To reinforce our commitment to preventing disrespectful behavior of any type and to deal quickly and effectively with any incident that may occur.
- c) To reflect the Town of Sylvan Lake's recognition that workplace violence is a workplace hazard, as codified in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and regulations thereunder, and the principles reflected in Alberta's *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*.



1. **Definitions**

a. **Employee:**

Means any person/individual on the Town of Sylvan Lake payroll in an active working capacity, any person who volunteers with the Town of Sylvan Lake, including members of a committee or board, independent contractors and consultants, and elected officials.

b. **Manager**

Means the Chief Administrative Officer, Senior Managers, Managers, Supervisors, and any other person responsible for leadership relating to Town of Sylvan Lake employees, workplace projects, contracts or volunteer operations

c. **Town**

Means the Town of Sylvan Lake.

d. **Harassment**

Means an occurrence where an employee is subject to any unwelcome written, physical or verbal conduct. Harassment includes discrimination prohibited by the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act and can be based on, but not restricted to race, religious beliefs, colour, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, ancestry, marital status, family status, mental or physical disability, pardoned conviction, sexual orientation, or source of income.

Harassment is behavior (conduct or comments) that is unwelcome, and has the purpose or effect of humiliating an individual, substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Harassment includes verbal or physical abuse, threats, denial of employment opportunities or advancements, derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendos or taunts about any employee's appearance, religious beliefs, colour, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, ancestry, marital status, family status, mental or physical disability, pardoned conviction, sexual orientation, or source of income. The Town of Sylvan Lake prohibits the display of pornographic, racist or offensive signs or images; practical jokes that result in awkwardness or embarrassment; unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit

It does not matter if the harasser did not intend to offend the recipient. The test is whether the harasser knew or reasonably ought to have known that the comments or actions were unwelcome.

Harassment should not be confused with legitimate management actions, including measures designed to assess or improve Employee performance or impose discipline.

e. **Sexual harassment**

Is any behavior that is sexual in nature and is unwelcome. Unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- i. submission to such conduct is made, implicitly or explicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- ii. submission to or rejection of, such conduct is threatened to be used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment, promotion or movement within the



- organization;
- iii. such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment;
- iv. such conduct intimidates, embarrasses, coerces or humiliates the victim, and may interfere with an individual's work performance

Specific examples of sexual harassment may include conduct such as:

- a) Verbal abuse or threats of a sexual nature
- b) Unwelcome remarks or ridicule about a person's body, clothing or marital status
- c) Displaying of pornographic or other offensive pictures
- d) Practical jokes of a sexual nature which cause awkwardness or embarrassment
- e) Unwelcome sexual invitations or suggestive staring at a person's body
- f) Demands for sexual favours.
- g) Also includes pinching, patting, rubbing, leering, dirty jokes, comments, suggestions, innuendoes, requests or demands of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment can also include conduct or comments that are not sexual in nature, but which are directed at a person because of his or her gender. Both men and women can be the victims of sexual harassment and someone of the same or opposite sex can sexually harass someone else.

f. Violence

As defined by the *Occupational Health and Safety Code* means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury. It may include, but is not restricted to:

- i. any act, gesture or statement that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that there is a risk of injury to themselves, other persons or Town property
- ii. bullying or coercion
- iii. verbal assault, taunting, or ostracizing
- iv. direct or indirect threat to assault, injure, cause bodily harm of any kind or a direct or indirect threat to cause property damage
- v. intimidation – a statement or action, other than direct or indirect threat, that makes you afraid for your own or another person's safety
- vi. physical assaults of any degree
- vii. any incident where a weapon of any kind is used, displayed or alluded to
- viii. stalking; and
- ix. acts of vandalism committed against company property or the property of others.

2. Responsibilities

- a. Council:
 - i. Approves policy
- b. Chief Administrative Officer:
 - i. Ensures the policy and procedures are known and adhered to;
 - ii. Advises departments in the correct application of policy and procedures;
 - iii. Initiates investigations and delegates responsibility for investigations.
 - iv. Ensures appropriate follow-up of any recommendations related to any investigation under this policy.

(NOTE: If a complaint related to this policy is made against the CAO the Manager of Human Resources will advise Council and, in conjunction with Council, assume responsibility for iii and iv above).



- c. Managers are responsible to:
 - i. Create and sustain a respectful workplace environment by, including but not limited to, ensuring the following occurs:
 - a. Facilitating the education of this policy to all Town employees;
 - b. Ensuring compliance of this policy by all Town employees;
 - c. Acting as a role model for all Town employees;
 - d. Ensuring that no person suffers a reprisal as a result of making a complaint, or for providing information under this policy and any related procedures;
 - e. Supporting all involved parties to a complaint made under this policy and any related procedures;
 - f. Ensuring that any Town employee reporting an injury or adverse symptom as a result of an incident of violence is advised to consult a physician of the employee's choice for treatment or referral; and
 - g. Regular review of this policy and any related procedures and amendments thereof.
- d. Employees are responsible for, but not limited to
 - i. Understanding and adhering to this Policy and any related procedures;
 - ii. Ensuring that the behaviour shown by each individual is respectful and appropriate at all times;
 - iii. Immediately informing a supervisor, the Human Resources department, and the appropriate policing agency if there is an imminent threat or risk of violence that could compromise an individual's or group's safety.
 - iv. Cooperating fully with any investigation related to this policy.
- e. Manager of Human Resources is responsible for, but not limited to:
 - i. Providing resources to assist employees in achieving a positive and respectful work environment;
 - ii. Assisting with investigations as appropriate and identifying required external resources
 - iii. Assessing issues that are brought forward and provide advice;
 - iv. Assisting with follow-up on recommendations arising from interventions and investigations as directed by the CAO.

3. **Discipline**

- a. Acts of workplace harassment by Town employees will not be tolerated and will be responded to with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, based on a thorough investigation of the incident and the surrounding circumstances.
- b. If members of the public, visitors to Town facilities or individuals conducting business with the Town act inappropriately as per this policy the Town will take appropriate action. This could include barring the person from facilities or discontinuing business with contractors or consultants.
- c. Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence the Town will refer these matters to the appropriate policing agency for further investigation.



4. Retaliation

- a. Every employee has the right to report, in good faith, violations to this policy and any related procedures without fear of retaliation.
- b. Retaliation by any person against anyone involved in the complaint process will not be tolerated and will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal or denial of Town service.

5. Bad Faith Complaint

Complaints that are found to be false, frivolous, or made in bad faith will not be tolerated and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action or denial of service.

6. Respectful Workplace Procedures

The Town will have in place a Workplace Respect Procedure that implements this policy, which includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Measures and protocols to protect workers and public from workplace violence,
- b. A process for workers and public to report incidents, or raise concerns.

These measures are designed to ensure that this policy and the supporting procedure are implemented and maintained and that all workers and supervisors have the appropriate information and education to protect them from workplace violence.

Related Information

Town of Sylvan Lake Respectful Workplace Procedures & Information



TOWN OF SYLVAN LAKE

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY

PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION

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RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE PROCEDURES

1. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

- Prior to filing a formal report of the incident a person subjected to workplace abuse (the Complainant) should let their objections to the behaviour be known to the alleged offender (the Respondent), directly or with the assistance of a third party (Human Resources, a manager, or supervisor, etc.).
- A Complainant may ask for support from Human Resources to communicate their objections to the incident and/or to prepare and submit a formal complaint if they choose.
- The Complainant should carefully record details of the incident including the date and time of the incident, the nature of the incident and names of people who may have witnessed the incident. This document is the Complainant's personal record and property.
- The Complainant may choose to file a formal complaint (Appendix A) that documents their concerns and request an investigation.

2. REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION OF INCIDENTS

In order for an investigation to take place, allegations of abuse against staff must be reported on the Incident Report Form, Appendix A.

3. INVESTIGATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Upon receipt of a formal written complaint of workplace abuse:

- The Manager of Human Resources will
 - a) advise the CAO;
 - b) advise the Respondent in writing of the investigation and nature and specifics of the complaint; and
 - c) advise the Complainant of the investigation.
- The CAO will
 - d) assign the investigation to an internal or external person(s) to investigate. This may be a member of Human Resources, Health & Safety, a Manager or a contracted external party.
- The Investigator will
 - e) conduct the investigation in accordance with this Procedure; and
 - f) explore all allegations by interviewing the Complainant, the Respondent, and others who may have knowledge of the incident(s) or circumstances that led to the complaint, or are responsible for the workplace.
- The Investigator may make a finding of
 - a) sufficient evidence to support a finding of violation of the policy,
 - b) insufficient evidence to support a finding of violation of this policy,
 - c) no violation of this policy.

The Investigator must prepare a written report of the investigation's finding and forward that report to the Chief Administrative Officer within 15 working days from the Respondent being advised of the complaint.

4. CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT AN INVESTIGATION SHOULD PROCEED

- Other avenues to resolve the problem are unsuitable or unsuccessful.

- Whether line management has been afforded the opportunity to address the issues directly.
- The complaint is timely (must be filed within 1 year).
- The complaint is complete. The complaint identifies behaviour which contravenes the policy.
- It is not possible to determine whether or not the complaint is founded without an investigation.
- Impartial third party view deemed necessary by key stakeholders
- Specialized expertise required to assess situation
- Allegations, if true, would likely warrant disciplinary intervention.

5. CORRECTIVE ACTION AND DISCIPLINE

If information supports corrective action and discipline, the following conditions will be considered when determining the corrective action:

- The impact of the incident on the complainant;
- The nature of the incident;
- The degree of aggressiveness and physical contact;
- The period of time and frequency of the incidents;
- The vulnerability of the Complainant;
- The impact of the incident on coworkers;
- The impact of the incident on the reputation of the corporation.
- Previous incidents involving the respondent.

One or more of the following corrective actions may be considered depending on the particular incident and the factors in the previous paragraph:

- Apology;
- Training;
- Mediation between the two parties;
- Referral to an assistance program;
- Reassignment or relocation;
- Report to a professional body;
- Discipline, up to and including termination;
- Legal action

6. FORMAL INVESTIGATION PRINCIPLES

- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and will respect confidentiality requirements.
- The complaint is investigated as quickly as possible, involving as few people as necessary.
- Both investigators and Decision-Making Authorities are impartial.
- Investigations focus on determining what areas or issues need to be addressed to eliminate a policy violation and/or create a respectful workplace.

Please read the policy and procedures prior to completing this form. Please use a pen. Be sure to complete all sections of the form that apply to you. Contact Human Resources if you need help to complete the form.

Respectful Workplace Incident Form

Town of Sylvan Lake

A. Your name (You are the Complainant.)

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| First name | Last name |
|------------|-----------|

B. Name of Respondent (Person you are reporting about)

| | | | |
|---|----------|-------------|---|
| Name of business, organization, association or person. | | | |
| Street or mailing address (not necessary if it is an employee) | | | |
| Town or City | Province | Postal code | Telephone number (<i>include area code</i>) |
| If there is more than one respondent, check this box <input type="checkbox"/> . Be sure to add the name and contact information of additional respondents on an attached page. | | | |

C. Identify the grounds of workplace abuse.

| |
|--|
| <p>Please check (x) only those grounds that apply to this complaint</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Physical assault or aggression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mental abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsolicited and unwelcome conduct, comment, gestures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Threats or statements either verbal or written that gives reasonable cause to believe that there is risk of injury either physically or emotionally</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contact which causes offence or humiliation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Physical harm to an individual which engenders fear or mistrust or which compromises and devalues the individual</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bullying, violence, coercion, intimidation, persecution, humiliation, ridiculing or mocking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination and any form of harassment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p> |
|--|

D. Write a statement to support your complaint. Please include all of the following information:

- Where did the incident take place?

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

10

- When did the incident take place? What other incidents happened in the last year? Provide dates (day, month and year) and details.

- Is the incident still occurring? Give examples including dates and places. Has it had an impact on any one else in the workplace? Describe.

- Have you spoken with the complainant to express your concern or asked that the behaviour stop? Provide dates, times and details of the conversation.

- What made you believe you were the victim of workplace abuse? How were you treated differently from the way others were treated? Who treated you this way? For each ground that you checked in section C, please give details. For example, if you checked mental abuse, explain how you were abused based on each ground.

If you need more space, please add additional pages, and remember to sign, date and number each page.

E. Complete section E only if you are making a complaint because you believe:

- Someone retaliated against you because you participated in a Respectful Workplace Environment complaint, or
- Someone made a frivolous or vexatious Respectful Workplace Environment complaint about you with malicious intent.

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Do not complete this section until you have read the information about retaliation and frivolous and vexatious complaints.

Please check (x) only the item that applies to this complaint.

- ☐ retaliation
- ☐ a frivolous or vexatious complaint made with malicious intent

Write a statement to explain what happened. Answer the questions that apply:

1. What has made you believe someone is retaliating against you because you participated in a Respectful Workplace Environment complaint? What events have occurred to make you believe this?
2. What has made you believe that someone made a frivolous or vexatious Respectful Workplace complaint about you with malicious intent? What events have occurred to make you believe the complaint was frivolous or vexatious? What makes you think there was malicious intent?

If you need more space, please add additional pages, and remember to sign, date and number each page. After you have written your statement, please proceed to **section F** at the end of this form and sign and date the declaration. Please contact Human Resources if you have questions.

F. Please read the statement below and sign and date this form.

I am making a complaint under the Town of Sylvan Lake Policy #H-005-001A, Respectful Workplace Policy. I have read and I understand the policy and the procedure guidelines. I declare the information I have provided in this form is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if my complaint is accepted, Human Resources will send a copy of the accepted complaint to the respondent.

Complainant's signature

Date

Your form cannot be processed if information is missing or if you do not sign this form. **Please remember to sign, date and number each page you add to the form.**

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation requirements are met.

Give the completed and signed form to the Human Resources Manager or directly to the Chief Administrative Officer.

IF YOU ARE THE COMPLAINANT

What's expected of me, as a Complainant?

You will be asked to complete a written statement of your complaint (Appendix A) providing:

- a specific instance of disrespectful behaviour, discrimination or harassment;
- possible options for resolving the situation from your perspective.

You will be interviewed in some depth by an assigned investigator. They may need to meet with you several times as they learn more from others they also interview.

Support

It is perfectly normal for you to want to feel that you have the support of others during this process. At the same time, you are expected to keep the investigation private and not discuss it with colleagues or clients. Other sources of support are available to you at this time. You can contact the Employee and Family Assistance Program (1-866-331-6851) directly, you can call Human Resources, or you can let the investigator know you need some support.

Retaliation

It is a violation of the Respectful Workplace Environment Policy to retaliate against someone who has, in good faith, laid a complaint or provided information in the course of the investigation. If you feel that you are experiencing retaliation, let the investigator know immediately.

Time

There will be stages in the investigation where you may well feel like nothing is happening (e.g., you haven't heard from the investigator in some time; you don't observe anything happening as it relates to your concern, etc.). This is not uncommon. Please know that the investigator is continuing their work and that much that is going on is not visible to you and others. Consider asking the investigator when you first meet with them what kind of feedback you can expect with regard to this process as it unfolds.

What do I tell other people?

It is important that information about the complaint and the investigation are maintained by as few people as is necessary for the issue to be addressed. Your colleagues or others may ask what is going on. You are advised to tell them that it is confidential for now. If a supervisor asks what is going on, you also should tell them that it is a confidential matter. If pressed, refer those asking questions to the investigator.

Participation

Your role does not end with your participation in the investigation. You may well have a key role to play in helping make the decision which is reached really work. You are encouraged to play an active role in making the action plan for resolution a reality in your workplace. If you need assistance in fulfilling those responsibilities Human Resources or your manager/supervisor are there to help you identify the appropriate resources.

How do I work with the person about whom I've complained?

If you and this person, called the Respondent, need to work together during the investigation or after, this is a key aspect of the investigation and the resolution. Raise any concerns you have with the investigator.

What happens with any documents associated with a complaint?

Once the complaint has been investigated and a decision rendered, all documentation associated with a complaint, regardless of where or by whom it is generated, is returned to Human Resources for storage. The documentation is filed separately from any personnel documents. The files are subsequently destroyed in accordance with the document retention and destruction schedules. Access to that documentation is restricted and is controlled by the relevant staff of HR. You are entitled to see any information which would constitute your personal information (anything which is about you).

What if my complaint does not have merit?

The information collected by the investigator may show that your complaint does not have merit. You can withdraw the complaint, and the complaint will be closed. The complaint is still confidential.

If you do not withdraw the complaint, the investigator will make a formal report explaining why your complaint does not have merit, and your complaint will be dismissed.

IF YOU ARE THE RESPONDENT

What are my rights?

If you have been named as someone whose personal behaviour and/or an area for which you are responsible constitutes a major part of that allegation you are entitled to know the substance of the allegations made against you and by whom. Because the Town of Sylvan Lake is responsible for the actions of its employees as they relate to the workplace, we are responsible to respond to the allegations and your input is necessary to determine the response.

What is expected of me?

You will be interviewed in some depth by an assigned investigator. They may need to meet with you several times as they learn more from others they also interview.

Support

It is perfectly normal for you to want to feel that you have the support of others during this process. At the same time, you are expected to keep the investigation private and not discuss it with colleagues or clients. Other sources of support are available to you at this time. You can contact the Employee & Family Assistance Program (1-866-331-6851) directly, you can contact Human Resources, or you can let the investigator know you need some support. They will contact Human Resources.

How do I deal with the person who has complained?

Do you have to deal with this person, called the complainant, during or after the investigation? Do you have to deal with other people who are being interviewed? This is a key aspect of the complaint investigation and the resolution. It is important that you know that retaliation against the complainant, you, or any witness is also a violation of the Respectful Workplace Environment Policy. Where a complaint is laid under human rights law, retaliation also constitutes a violation of that law. Raise any concerns you have with the investigator.

Participation

Your role does not end with your participation in the investigation. You may well have a key role to play in making the decision work which is reached on this investigation. You are encouraged to play an active role in making the action plan for resolution a reality in your workplace. If you need assistance in fulfilling those responsibilities your Human Resources Manager or supervisor are there to help you identify the appropriate resources.

IF YOU ARE A WITNESS

What is expected of me?

You have been identified as having important information to share with regard to a complaint alleging a violation of the Respectful Workplace Environment Policy.

You will be interviewed by an investigator to get the information you have which can help in resolving the issue. You are required to meet with that person and provide the information.

It is not uncommon to want to discuss this unusual experience with others. Please know that all parties to an investigation are required to keep confidential both the information they have shared and the information they gain as a result of the investigation. If you are pressed by others to reveal information, refer them to the investigator. Also advise the investigator if you are feeling pressured by anyone.

If you require support the Town does have resources available to you. You can contact the Employee and Family Assistance Program (1-866-331-6851) directly, or you can let your Human Resources Manager know you need some support, without going into the details of the issue. They can refer you as well.

What if I have to work with both the person who complained and the other person about whom they are complaining?

This is a difficult situation. You, naturally, have certain perspectives and loyalties. At the same time, you, and they, are expected to work effectively together during, and after, the investigation. If you need support in helping you make that happen please let your Human Resources Manager know.

You may well have a key role in making the resolution to the problem work. You are expected to work actively to help make the workplace a respectful and healthy one. Again if you need support in doing that, please talk to your Human Resources Manager.

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Persons who work for or act on behalf of the Town of Sylvan Lake, and persons granted access to Town of Sylvan Lake services or sites are expected to take responsibility for their actions and treat each other with courtesy and respect.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Education and training will be provided to assist individuals that have been assigned to investigate a complaint.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

The management personnel responsible for each service or site shall use appropriate means to inform customers, clients and members of the public that the Town of Sylvan Lake will not tolerate abuse or mistreatment of any member of staff or any other person.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Town of Sylvan Lake management and staff shall protect the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information given in connection with a reported incident.

Strict confidentiality is required to properly investigate an incident and to offer appropriate support to all parties involved. Any individual who becomes aware of an incident of abuse shall not disclose the details of the incident to any third party without prior consultation and approval from the Complainant. Gossiping about an incident seriously undermines the privacy of all parties involved and will not be tolerated. Those with questions or concerns about an incident should speak to Human Resources or their Manager/Supervisor.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Within this Policy, support shall be provided to staff that have been subjected to abusive behavior. Such support may include debriefing, physical and psychological support, assistance in liaison with appropriate services and information about their rights that exist under legislation, collective agreements and other legal options.

ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISK

Within this Policy, risk assessments of Town of Sylvan Lake workplaces shall be carried out by the Managers and the Health and Safety Coordinator in order to identify potential hazards, and actions or strategies will be developed to reduce the risk of abuse against staff.

RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT IN GOOD FAITH

The Town of Sylvan Lake will not tolerate misuse of this Policy by any person. Allegations of abuse must be made in good faith. A person, who submits a complaint in good faith, even where the complaint cannot be proven, has not violated the Policy.

If an investigation results in a finding that the Complainant falsely accused the Respondent of workplace abuse knowingly or in a malicious manner, the Complainant will be subject to appropriate discipline up to and including termination. False accusations are considered a violation of the Policy, and the investigation results and any discipline will be recorded on the Complainants employee file.

RIGHT TO SEEK CORRECTIVE ACTION

Persons who believe that the actions of others are inappropriate, disrespectful or harmful have the right to bring their concerns forward and to have them addressed by the appropriate level of authority without fear of recrimination or reprisal.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION ALTERNATIVES

An individual affected by workplace abuse has the right to pursue their concern through alternative forums such as mediation, or other forms of dispute resolution. These options will be explained to Complainants by Human Resources. Nothing in this Policy prevents an individual from pursuing other remedies to an incident of workplace abuse such as a criminal or civil action, or a complaint to the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission. Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, the Town of Sylvan Lake will refer these matters to the RCMP for further investigation.

AFTER THE INVESTIGATION IS DONE AND THE ACTION PLAN HAS BEEN DEVELOPED.

Usually both Complainant and Respondent have important roles to play in seeing that whatever resolution has been deemed appropriate is put into place and made to work. They are responsible for providing their active support to the resolutions identified. Given their key roles, they are provided such documentation which arises from an investigation that is mandated as their personal information under Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation. Additional support for them is available through Human Resources

Managers have key roles in seeing that behaviour and expectations adjust to create and maintain a respectful work environment during the investigation and after the investigation is closed. They are ultimately accountable for ensuring respectful workplaces. The Managers will be provided information from the investigation, sufficient to help them and their work teams to move forward. Support is available through Human Resources to assist them in their responsibilities in this area.

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE EDUCATION

SIGNS & PREVENTION

Preventing Workplace Abuse

1. Common Mistakes

- Believing that the organization is immune from workplace abuse.
- Not taking threats seriously.
- Not documenting threats.
- Ignoring warning signs.
- Not providing appropriate counseling
- Not following disciplinary procedures.

2. Warning Signs

Physical Signs of a Potentially Violent Person:

Use caution if someone exhibits one or more of the following non-verbal signs or body language:

- Red-faced or white-faced
- Sweating
- Pacing
- Restless or repetitive movements
- Trembling or shaking
- Clenched jaws or fists
- Facial grimacing
- Exaggerated or violent gestures
- Change in voice

Exercise caution if you notice these signs:

- Loud talking or chanting
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Scowling, sneering or use of abusive language
- Glaring or avoiding eye contact
- Violating your personal space (they get too close)

Warning Signs of a Troubled Employee

It is extremely important to understand that these behaviours do not necessarily predict violence, but may indicate that an employee is experiencing periods of high stress. Each situation is unique.

Take Particular note if:

- there is a change in the employee's behaviour pattern
- the frequency and intensity of the behaviours, rather than just a few
- crying, sulking or having temper tantrums
- excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- disregard for the health and safety of others
- increased operating errors
- increasingly unsatisfactory work quality
- faulty decision making
- testing of limits to see how much he or she can get away with

- swearing or emotional language
- overreacting to criticism
- making inappropriate statements
- forgetfulness
- inability to focus
- confusion and/or disorientation
- disrespect for authority
- refusal to acknowledge job performance problems
- blaming of others for mistakes
- complaints of unfair treatment
- talking about the same problems repeatedly, without resolving them
- insistence that he or she is always right
- misinterpretation of communications from supervisor or co-workers
- social isolation
- personal hygiene is poor or ignored
- sudden and/or unpredictable change in energy level
- complaints of unusual and/or non-specific illnesses
- signs of substance abuse, such as alcohol on the breath

Common Characteristics of Violent Incidents Between Employees

Violence usually begins as a verbal dispute and almost always involves people who know each other.

Disputes often appear to have relatively trivial causes.

The dispute pattern is usually not random and unique, rather; it builds, intensifies and continues.

3. Personal Safety

Emergency Preparedness

- Know your emergency exits and procedures, including safe places or rooms.
- Know where to access telephones, including local pay telephones.
- Imagine appropriate responses to various situations you may find yourself in.
- Decide ahead of time how you will respond to various situations.
- Compare procedures with your co-workers.

Trusting your Instincts

- Keep personal information at a minimum when talking with anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable (e.g. vacation plans, hours of work, where you live).
- DO NOT engage in conversations that make you feel uncomfortable.
Excuse yourself and walk away.
- Be firm and confident and do not permit any kind of harassment, sexual, racial, or otherwise.
- Be alert for anger and hostility. De-escalate arguments wherever this is appropriate.
- If you feel you are being harassed, threatened, or intimidated:
 - tell the person to stop,
 - document the incident, and
 - Inform you supervisor.
- Report any inappropriate behaviour toward yourself or your co-workers to your supervisor.

Dealing with Strangers

- Adopt a non-threatening, “May I help you?” attitude toward visitors in your office, building, or work area. The underlying question is “What are you doing here?”
- Escort “strangers” to the location or person they identify as their destination.
- Note the appearance of people who are not familiar to you, in case something does happen.
- Report “stranger” to building security or your supervisor.
- Build a rapport with customers so that you can distinguish stranger from repeat customers.
- DO NOT open the door to strangers before or after regular business hours.

TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Responding To Workplace Violence

1. Dealing with a Potentially Violent Person

Tips for Verbal Communication

- Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.
- Remain calm and try to calm the other person. DO NOT allow the other person's anger to become your anger.
- Remain conscious of how you are delivering your words.
- Speak slowly, avoid complex terminology.
- Listen carefully. DO NOT interrupt or offer unsolicited advice or criticism.
- Encourage the person to talk. DO NOT tell the person to relax or calm down.
- Try to understand. Ask questions like; "Help me understand why you are upset."
- Once you think you understand, repeat it back to the person so they know you understand.
- Remain open-minded and objective.
- Use silence as a calming tool.
- Use delaying tactics to give the person time to calm down, e.g.; offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup).
- Acknowledge the person's feelings. Indicate that you can see he or she is upset

Tips for Non-Verbal Communication and Behaviour

- Use calm body language – relaxed posture with hands unclenched, attentive expression.
- Arrange yourself so that your exit is not blocked.
- Position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person.
- Give the person enough physical space; normally 2-4 feet is an adequate distance
- DO NOT pose in a challenging stance, such as:
 - Standing directly opposite someone,
 - Putting your hands on your hips,
 - Pointing your finger,
 - Waving your arms, and
 - Crossing your arms.
- DO NOT glare or stare, as it may be perceived as a challenge.
- DO NOT make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening.

Tips for Problem Solving

- Try to put yourself in the person's shoes, so that you can better understand how to solve the problem.
- Ask for his or her recommendation.
- Repeat back to the person what you feel he or she is asking of you, to clarify what you are hearing.
- Accept criticism in a positive way.
- Be honest. DO NOT make false statements or promises you cannot keep.
- Remain professional and take the person seriously. Be respectful.
- Break a problem or an issue down into smaller units and offer step-by-step solutions so that the person is not overwhelmed by the situation or issue.
- Be reassuring and point out choices.
- Try to keep the person's attention on the issue at hand.

- DO NOT take sides or agree with distortions.
- DO NOT reject the person's demands or position from the start.
- DO NOT attempt to bargain with a threatening individual. If necessary, terminate the interaction.
- DO NOT make promises you cannot keep.

2. Tips for Terminating a Negative Interaction

- Interrupt the conversation firmly, but politely
- Tell the person that you:
 - Do not like the tone of conversation,
 - Will not accept abusive treatment, and
 - Will end the conversation if necessary.
- Tell the person that you will ask him or her to leave the building, or that you will leave (if working off-site).
- If the behaviour persists, end the conversation.
- Ask the person to leave the building, or leave yourself.
- If the person does not agree to leave, remove yourself from the scene and inform your supervisor immediately.
- DO NOT return to the meeting if you believe the person poses a physical threat.

3. Tips for Responding to an Abusive Telephone Call

- Interrupt the conversation firmly, but politely.
- Advise the caller that you will end the call if the caller does not stop using abusive language.
- Advise your supervisor of the incident.
- If the caller calls back, interrupt the conversation firmly, but politely.
- Advise the caller that you will transfer the call to your supervisor, if necessary.
- Remind the caller that you will not accept abusive treatment or language.
- Put the caller on hold and contact your supervisor.
- Advise your supervisor that the caller is on hold.
- Transfer the call to your supervisor.
- The supervisor should take appropriate action to resolve any misunderstanding and reinforce with the caller that abusive language or behaviour toward employees will not be tolerated.

4. Tips for Responding to a Physical Attack

If you are attacked,

- Make a scene, yell or scream as loud as possible. Try shouting words like STOP, FIRE, or HELP.
- If you are being pulled along or dragged, fall to the ground and roll.
- Give bystanders specific instructions to help you. Single someone out and send them for help, e.g. "You in the yellow shirt, call the police."
- If someone grabs your purse, briefcase, or other belongings; DO NOT resist. Throw the item to the ground several feet away from the thief and run in the opposite direction, yelling "help" or "fire."
- DO NOT chase a thief.
- Run to the nearest safe place, a safe office, or an open store.
- Call police.
- If the attack does not warrant calling the police, inform your supervisor of the incident.

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TYPICAL BEHAVIOURS

Typical Appropriate Workplace Behaviours

Typical types of behaviours that support and create a respectful workplace and its related business objectives include but is not limited to the following:

- a) Being polite, courteous and respectful of others
- b) Using common greetings, farewells or brief enquiries about others' wellbeing which are seen as an acknowledgement of others as unique individuals
- c) When reviewing others' ideas, suggestions or work, identifying what is positive or good about the proposal as well as where it can be improved
- d) Treating others equitably and fairly
- e) Listening to what others have to say
- f) Being open-minded to others' ideas, comments and suggestions
- g) Seeking input and the active involvement of appropriate people in planning, decision-making and implementing initiatives
- h) Ensuring that decision-making takes into account relevant factors, is fair and is seen to be fair
- i) Recognising and valuing the diversity among workgroup members, the customers and citizens
- j) Willingly and sincerely apologising to people when something you said or did may have offended them.

Typical Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour is that which is objectionable and/or unwelcome to an individual. Such behaviour serves no valid work related purpose. When inappropriate behaviour in the workplace is allowed to persist a "poisoned work environment" may be created over time. There are three categories of inappropriate behaviour addressed in the Policy. They are:

- Discrimination/Harassment
- Damage to People or Property
- Disrespectful Behaviour

Examples of disrespectful behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- i) written or verbal comments, behaviours or 'jokes' which are rude, degrading, offensive, demeaning, embarrassing or insulting
- ii) bullying or intimidation
- iii) abuse of authority
- iv) yelling or shouting (except where intended to alert another to danger)
- v) deliberate exclusion of an employee from relevant work activities or decision making
- vi) decision-making which is influenced by factors which have no work-related purpose
- vii) attempting to discredit an employee by spreading false information about him/her