

# Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
RICHARD BUTTS  
ON NOVEMBER 2, 2014**

<b>Business Unit:</b> Human Resources <b>Division:</b> Corporate Safety	<b>Effective Date:</b> November 2, 2014
<b>Approval Date:</b> November 2, 2014 <b>Approved By:</b> Richard Butts, CAO	<b>Replaces Issue Dated:</b> August 18, 2008 <b>Signature:</b>
<b>Scope:</b>	This corporate procedure applies to all Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) employees and volunteers under HRM oversight. This corporate procedure also applies to all contractors and suppliers conducting work for HRM and all other persons present in a HRM workplace.

## 26.01 Workplace Violence Prevention Statement

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is committed to working with employees to provide a workplace free from violence. Violence in the workplace is an occupational health & safety hazard that may result in physical and/or emotional harm.

Any form of violence is unacceptable and Halifax Regional Municipality is committed to minimizing/eliminating the risk of violence. Halifax Regional Municipality will not tolerate any act of violence committed by or against employees, contractors, suppliers, volunteers or other persons present at Halifax Regional Municipality workplaces.

All employees are responsible to help minimize violence and support HRM's Workplace Rights policies.

## 26.02 Purpose

This Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure is developed to minimize/eliminate the risk of violence at HRM workplaces and to provide guidance regarding the handling of violent situations should they occur.

This Corporate Procedure is in addition to and does not limit the authority of any person to contact the police at any time (Emergencies 911; Non-Emergencies 490-5020).

## 26.03 Definitions

a) "**Violence**" includes but is not limited to any of the following:

- Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behavior that gives an individual reasonable cause to believe that the individual is at risk of physical injury.
- Conduct or attempted conduct that endangers or is intended to endanger the physical or mental health, or the physical or mental safety of an individual.

- b) “**Criminal Conduct**” means behaviours prohibited under the Criminal Code, including but not limited to:
- assault (s. 265);
  - criminal harassment (s.264);
  - intimidation (s. 423); and
  - uttering threats (s. 264.1).
- c) “**Management**” means HRM’s Senior Management Team, Directors, Managers, Superintendents and Supervisors.
- d) “**Workplace**” means the physical worksite, washrooms, locker rooms, lunchrooms, training sessions, business travel locations, conferences, work sponsored social gatherings, and vehicles, whether on HRM property or otherwise.

#### **26.04 Violence Prohibited**

Violence is prohibited in the workplace and at any HRM work related or sponsored events.

No employee or other person shall bring weapons of any kind into the workplace unless issued by the Municipality to the employee for a bona fide employment purpose (i.e. police officers)).

#### **26.05 Violence Risk Assessment**

Violence Risk Assessments shall be conducted by each Business Unit in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee for each type of workplace.

Each Violence Risk Assessment shall:

- Identify violence that may arise from the nature of work and type of work conditions; and
- Review the nature, impact and probability of any risks.

#### **26.06 Violence Prevention Plan**

Each Business Unit is required to complete a Violence Prevention Plan for each type of workplace.

Violence Prevention Plans address any significant risks identified in the Violence Risk Assessment process with an aim to document reasonable measures to minimize, and to the extent possible, eliminate the risk of violence. Violence Prevention Plans shall be prepared in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee. The controls, measures and procedures in each Violence Prevention Plan will be communicated to the employees in that Business Unit.

## 26.07 Responsibilities

**Management** shall communicate this Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure and take the necessary and appropriate steps to advance the goal of providing a workplace free of violence by:

- posting the Corporate Procedure to HRM's Intranet and health and safety communication boards for HRM's employees and making the Corporate Procedure available to any contractor, supplier or volunteer engaged by HRM;
- completing Violence Risk Assessments and Violence Prevention Plans;
- communicating measures & procedures to minimize risks to employees contractors, suppliers, volunteers or other persons present at HRM workplaces;
- informing employees, contractors, suppliers, volunteers or other persons present at HRM workplaces of any significant risk of violence in the workplace (when known) with information on the nature and extent of the risk, including information related to a risk of violence from a person who has a history of violent behavior;
- promptly investigating reports of violence and notifying the Director of the Business Unit and the Manager of Corporate Safety of the results of all investigations;
  - the Director of the Business Unit shall notify the CAO if criminal conduct is suspected;
  - the CAO, in consultation with the HRM Solicitor, shall contact the police where it appears that criminal conduct may have taken place;
- cooperating with any police investigation relating to an incident of violence arising in the workplace;
- completing an applicable Workers Compensation form if medical aid is sought;
- addressing any conduct that contributes to violence;
- taking corrective actions where necessary to support this Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure; and
- providing training or information to employees on this Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure.

**Employees** shall:

- act respectfully towards other individuals while at work and/or while participating in any work related activity;
- contact police in the event of emergencies (911);
- report any incidents of workplace violence either experienced or observed, to their immediate supervisor, any other supervisor, and/or Human Resources;

- follow established corporate procedures and practices for the prevention of incidents of violence;
- cooperate with any police investigation relating to an incident of violence arising in the workplace;
- cooperate with any Management investigation and/or resolution of matters involving violence in the workplace; and
- participate in training and be knowledgeable of what types of potential acts of violence they may encounter in the workplace as per the risk assessment for their area of work.

**Corporate Safety** shall provide support, advice and recommendations in relation to this Corporate Procedure. Supporting documentation and training will be reviewed and an audit performed to review program implementation among the Business Units.

**Human Resources** shall provide assistance with communication of this Corporate Procedure and assist with the completion of investigations on a case by case basis.

**Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee** shall be consulted for feedback and/or recommendations on:

- Violence Risk Assessments;
- Violence Prevention Plans; and
- Updates to this Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure.

A summary on incidents of violence will be shared with the JOHSC to communicate corrective actions.

**Workplace Health Services** shall assist any employee who has been exposed to or affected by violence in the workplace with appropriate critical incident support/debriefing and advise the employee that he/she may consult a health professional of their choice for treatment or counseling. Employees may also use the employee assistance services provided by HRM.

<b>Employee Assistance Services</b>		
HRM Corporate Program	Homewood Health	902-466-3327 800-663-1142
Halifax Regional Police for HRPAs employees	EFAP Coordinator	902-490-5414
Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency for IAFF employees and Volunteer Firefighters	FFAP Coordinator	902-490-6271

## **26.08 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is needed to properly investigate a workplace violence incident and to offer proper support to those who may be adversely affected.

Any individual who becomes aware of a workplace violence incident should not disclose any information to a third party other than to his or her Supervisor or Director, Human Resources, the HRM Solicitor, the CAO or the investigating police, or otherwise as required by law or as directed by any of the foregoing individuals.

Nothing in this Corporate Procedure shall limit or interfere with the authority of any person to contact the police for any reason (Emergencies 911; Non-Emergencies 490-5020).

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process to the extent possible and will be dealt with under the provisions of relevant collective agreement(s), Human Resource Policies and/or applicable legislation such as the *Criminal Code*.

#### **26.09 Incident Reporting**

Any employee who witnesses an act of violence, is a victim of violence, or is reasonably aware of violence, shall contact the police in the event of an emergency (911) and immediately report the incident to their supervisor, any other supervisor and/or Human Resources.

#### **26.10 Managing the Scene of Workplace Violence**

The on-site supervisor will ensure that the area where the incident of violence occurs is properly managed by:

- immediately calling 911 for medical attention and other emergencies;
- removing personnel from the scene;
- ensuring the area is secured so that it may be adequately investigated; and
- cooperating with any police investigation.

#### **26.11 Incident Investigation**

Management shall investigate all reports of violence as soon as possible after a reported incident has occurred in order to prevent similar incidents in the future. The following steps shall be followed:

- cooperate with any police investigation;
  - a police investigation will take priority over any HRM internal investigation (i.e. police will conduct the scene investigation and interview witnesses) and Business Units will concentrate their investigation on preventing similar acts.
- complete the Workplace Violence Incident Investigation Form.
- notify the Director of the Business Unit and the Manager of Corporate Safety of the results of all investigations.

A designate from Human Resources may be assigned to assist with the investigation and the interview process on a case by case basis.

**26.12 Non-Retaliation/Non-Retribution**

No employee shall retaliate against any other employee for reporting violence in the workplace. Furthermore, no employee shall be disciplined for reporting any violence in the workplace, provided such reporting is done in good faith.

**26.13 Discipline**

The following non-exclusive list of factors will be considered when deciding on disciplinary action related to a workplace violence incident:

- the severity of the incident;
- the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- the prior workplace violence history of the employee(s) involved; and
- applicable provisions of other Acts (i.e. the Police Act).

**26.14 Reference Documents**

Nova Scotia Occupational Health & Safety Act  
Nova Scotia Workers Compensation Act  
Violence in the Workplace Regulations  
Workplace Violence Prevention Guidebook  
Violence Risk Assessment & Violence Prevention Plan  
Workplace Violence Incident Investigation Form

**26.15 Review**

This Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure shall be reviewed annually by Corporate Safety in consultation with Management and the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees.

Violence Risk Assessments & Violence Prevention Plans shall be reviewed:

- every 5 years;
- if an incident of violence occurs that is not identified in the current Violence Risk Assessment; or
- if there are significant changes or renovations in the workplace.

**Corporate Procedure Revision Summary**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Corporate Procedure Section</b>	<b>Changes</b>
November 2, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title</li><li>• Whole document</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy replaced by Corporate Procedure.</li><li>• Replaces Workplace Violence Policy dated August 18, 2008. Section 26 of the Corporate Occupational Health &amp; Safety Manual.</li></ul>

## **Records Retention**

In accordance with HRM's Municipal Record Centre User Procedures, records must be stored and maintained to satisfy legal, statutory and regulatory provisions before final disposition.

Documents listed below are to be held for the periods listed and may not be destroyed or deleted unless authorized by Corporate Safety who will obtain clearance from legal on behalf of the business unit.

<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Violence Risk Assessments	Current plus 10 years
Violence Prevention Plans	Current plus 10 years