

# Harassment and violence in the workplace

## OHS requirements for workers and employers

### Key Information

- Harassment and violence are workplace hazards
- Employers must develop harassment and violence prevention plans
- Employers and supervisors must ensure workers are not subject to nor participate in workplace harassment or violence
- Workers must refrain from causing or participating in harassment or violence

Harassment and violence can take place at any work site and may range from disrespectful remarks to physical aggression. Addressing issues early on can prevent acts of bullying and harassment from progressing to acts of physical violence. Alberta's Occupation Health and Safety (OHS) legislation includes requirements to help prevent workplace harassment and violence and address incidents when they do occur.

This publication explains what is required under the Alberta OHS legislation as it relates to harassment and violence. The purpose of this guide is to help employers, supervisors and workers understand everyone's role in ensuring health and safety at the workplace and how to comply with OHS rules.

Employers in the retail fuel and convenience sector must meet additional requirements when develop and implement violence prevention plan. More details are described in the publication: [Workplace violence prevention plan for retail fuel and convenience stores - employer guide](#).

### Workplace harassment

The *OHS Act* defines harassment as any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety, and includes



- conduct, comments, bullying or actions because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and
- a sexual solicitation or advance,

but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor related to the normal management of workers or a work site.

Source: *OHS Act*, section 1(q)

### What is workplace harassment?

The definition of harassment in the *OHS Act* includes a broad range of harassing behaviours workers can be subjected to, or participate in.

Workplace harassment is behaviour intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group.

It is a serious issue and creates an unhealthy work environment resulting in psychological harm to workers. Harassing behaviour can include:

- unwelcome conduct, comments, gestures or contact which causes offense or humiliation (e.g. name calling, harassing phone calls, spreading rumours);
- deliberate misgendering (i.e. referring to a person using terms or pronouns that do not align with the person's affirmed gender);

- physical or psychological bullying which creates fear or mistrust or which ridicules or devalues the individual (e.g. fist shaking, yelling);
- exclusion or isolation of individuals;
- intimidation (i.e. standing too close or making inappropriate gestures/comments);
- cyber bullying (e.g. posting or sending offensive or intimidating messages through social media or email);
- deliberately setting the individual up to fail (e.g. making unreasonable demands, setting impossible deadlines, interfering with work);
- intentionally withholding information or giving the wrong information;
- taking away work or responsibility without cause; and
- displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form.

Harassment is a workplace hazard. It must be addressed during a hazard assessment.

### What isn't workplace harassment?

Reasonable actions taken by an employer or supervisor while managing and directing workers are not considered harassment. Reasonable actions considered to be part of a manager's or supervisor's work functions include changing work assignments, scheduling, assessing and evaluating work performance, inspecting workplaces, implementing health and safety measures, and taking disciplinary action such as dismissing, suspending, demoting, or reprimanding with just cause. Done reasonably and fairly, these actions should not be considered to be workplace harassment.

Differences of opinion or minor disagreements between co-workers are also not generally considered to be workplace harassment but can turn into harassment if no steps are taken to resolve the conflict. Similarly, difficult conditions of employment such as professional practice limitations, organizational changes, or financial restrictions are not considered harassment. Work-related stress, on its own, does not constitute harassment. However, an accumulation of stress factors resulted from harassing behaviours such as those described earlier may result in a harassment situation.

## Workplace violence

Violence, whether at a work site or work related, is defined by the *OHS Act* as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence.



Source: *OHS Act*, section 1(yy)

### What is workplace violence?

Violence in the workplace could put worker at risk of physical or psychological harm. Workplace violence can include:

- physical attack or aggression (e.g. hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking a worker; throwing an object at a worker; kicking an object the worker is standing on, such as a ladder);
- threatening behaviour (e.g. shaking a fist in a worker's face, wielding a weapon at work, trying to hit a worker, trying to run down a worker using a vehicle or equipment such as a forklift, destroying property or throwing objects);
- verbal or written threats (e.g. verbally threatening to attack a worker, leaving threatening notes or sending threatening emails to express an intent to inflict harm on a worker);
- domestic violence; and
- sexual violence.

Violence is a workplace hazard. It must be addressed during a hazard assessment.

### Domestic violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom a person has or has had a personal relationship. This can range from subtle, coercive forms to violent acts that result in physical harm or death. Examples of behaviour may include physical violence, sexual abuse, financial control, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and using electronic devices to harass and control.

When an employer is aware that a worker is or is likely to be exposed to domestic violence at a work site, the employer must take reasonable precautions to protect the worker and any other persons at the work site likely to be affected.



Source: OHS Code Part 27, Section 390.3

Domestic violence becomes a workplace hazard, and is no longer limited to a personal issue, when it occurs or spills over into the workplace. It may put the targeted worker at risk, and may pose a threat to co-workers.

Domestic violence can occur between, but not limited to:

- current or former intimate partners;
- people of all ages;
- family members;
- people of all racial, economic, educational and religious backgrounds; and
- people in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Nature of the relationships could be:

- living together or separately;
- married or unmarried; or
- in short- or long-term relationships.

## Sexual violence

Sexual violence as a workplace hazard refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a worker's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in a workplace or work related setting.

Sexual violence exists on a continuum from obscene name-calling to rape and/or homicide, and includes on-line forms of sexual violence (e.g. Internet threats and harassment) and sexual exploitation.

## Obligations of work site parties

Social expectations about what constitutes workplace health and safety have changed over time. Issues such as psychological health (particularly workplace harassment and bullying) are now considered by the OHS legislation. As part of the changing roles of individuals at the work site, the *OHS Act* and OHS Code have specific duties employers, supervisors, and workers must follow to address harassment and violence at the workplace.

The *OHS Act* states that **employers** must, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure their workers are not subject to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site. **Supervisors** must, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure workers under the supervisor's supervision are not subject to harassment or violence at work site. Workers also have responsibilities. **Workers** must refrain from causing or participating in harassment or violence.

## Hazard assessment

The hazard assessment and control process is a documented approach to prevent work-related illness or injury.

**Workplace harassment and violence are hazards under the OHS Code.**

Employers must identify situations that could put workers at risk of harassment or violence at the workplace. Recognizing these real and potential hazards, employers can take steps to eliminate or control them to prevent harm to workers.

A team approach is necessary when doing hazard assessments. The employer must involve the joint work site health and safety committee (HSC) or health and safety (HS) representative, if there is one. If your work site is exempt from having a committee or representative, the employer must involve workers affected by the hazards.

In addition, the employer must ensure that all workers who may be affected by the hazards are familiar with the necessary health and safety measures or procedures to keep themselves and others healthy and safe on the job.

Find more information on the hazard assessment process and templates in: [Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers](#) (BP018).

More details about HSC and HS representative are described in the publication: [Joint work site health and safety committees](#) (LI036) and [Health and safety representatives](#) (LI040).

## Harassment prevention plan and violence prevention plan

Every employer must develop and implement a harassment prevention plan and violence prevention plan at the workplace.

The plans must be in writing readily available for reference by workers at the work site. They can be in paper or downloaded electronically. Both formats are acceptable as long as they are readily accessible by workers at the work site.

A **harassment prevention plan** must include a harassment prevention policy and harassment prevention procedures. A **violence prevention plan** must include a violence prevention policy and violence prevention procedures.

When developing and implementing the plans, the employer must consult with the joint work site health and safety committee (HSC) or a health and safety (HS) representative if one exists. If your work site is exempt from having a committee or representative, the employer must involve workers affected by these hazards when set up and implement the prevention plans.

### Review of plans

In order to protect workers from workplace harassment or violence, the employer is required to review the plans every three years, or more often as necessary. The review should focus on whether the policy and procedures are current and if there are any deficiencies or gaps that need to be addressed. As a result of the review, the plans may or may not need to be revised. If revision is necessary, the plans must be revised to ensure they adequately address the prevention of harassment or violence and that the policies and procedures are current.

The harassment prevention plan and/or violence prevention plan would need to be reviewed more often when a HSC or HS representative recommends a review.

An incident of harassment or violence also triggers a review of the plan. The harassment prevention plan would need to be reviewed more often if there is an incident of harassment at the work site within the three years of the latest review. The violence prevention plan would need to be reviewed more often if there is an incident of violence at the work site within the three years of the latest review.

Employers must consult the HSC and HS representative, if one exists, when reviewing and revising the plans. The employer must consult affected workers if there is not a HSC or HS representative.

## Policies and procedures

Harassment prevention and violence prevention policies form an important framework for the proactive prevention and management of harassment and violence in the workplace. Clear policies set overall expectations that harassment and violence are not tolerated in the work environment.

Procedures, as distinguished from the policy itself, outline the methods or processes required to make the policy work on a day-to-day basis. The procedures establish a way of doing things that the employer and workers are to follow.

When developing the policies and procedures, refer to part 27 of the OHS Code for the requirements.



## Harassment prevention policy

A harassment prevention policy must state that:

- the employer is committed to eliminating the hazard of harassment, or if the hazard cannot be eliminated, it must be controlled;
- the employer will investigate all incidents of harassment and take corrective action to address the incidents;
- the employer will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of harassment or the names of the parties involved (including the complainant, the person alleged

to have committed the harassment, and any witnesses) except where necessary:

- to investigate the incident or to take corrective action,
- to inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken, or
- as required by law;
- the harassment prevention policy is not intended to discourage a worker from exercising rights pursuant to any other law, including the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

For a sample policy, see the samples and templates section of this publication.



### Harassment prevention procedures

The harassment prevention procedures must include:

- the procedure for workers when reporting harassment;
- the procedure for employers when documenting, investigating and implementing controls to prevent harassment;
- the procedure, in line with the established harassment prevention policy, for employer when informing the parties involved (including the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the harassment, union officials who make the complaint) in an incident of harassment of the results of the investigation and corrective action to be taken.

For a procedures template, see the samples and templates section of this publication.



### Violence prevention policy

A violence prevention policy must state that:

- the employer is committed to eliminating the hazard of violence, or if the hazard cannot be eliminated, it must be controlled;
- the employer will investigate all incidents of violence and take corrective action to address the incidents;

- the employer will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of violence or the names of the complainant, the individual alleged to have committed the violence, and any witnesses, except where necessary:
  - to investigate the incident or to take corrective action,
  - to inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken,
  - to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence, or
  - as required by law;
- the employer will disclose only the minimum amount of personal information required that is necessary to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence;
- the violence prevention policy is not intended to discourage a worker from exercising rights pursuant to any other law.

For a sample policy, see the samples and templates section of this publication.



### Violence prevention procedures

The violence prevention procedures must include:

- the measures the employer will take to eliminate or if the hazard cannot be eliminated, it must be controlled;
- information about the nature and extent of the hazard of violence, including information related to specific or general threats of violence or potential violence;
- the procedure for employers when disclosing information relating to circumstances of an incident of violence, names of parties involved and personal information;
- the procedure for workers to obtain immediate assistance when an incident of violence occurs;
- the procedure for workers when reporting an incident;
- the procedure for employer when documenting and investigating an incident and implementing any measures to eliminate or control the hazard of violence; and
- the procedure, in line with the established violence prevention policy, for employer when informing the



parties involved (including the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the violence, union officials who make the complaint) in an incident of violence of the results of the investigation and corrective action to be taken.

For a procedures template, see the samples and templates section of this publication.



### Flexibility – it's your work site

An employer may organize information for the harassment and violence prevention policies and procedures in a manner that suits the organization. For example, the employer may combine the two prevention policies into one document. The OHS legislation establishes general principles along with specific provisions. As long as all the legislative requirements are met, an employer has flexibility.

For the purpose of explaining the requirements of each element within a plan, individual policy samples and procedures templates are provided in this guide.

### Worker training

An employer must instruct workers on the hazard of workplace harassment and violence, how to recognize the signs of danger, what to do about it, and how to report it.

An employer must ensure that workers are trained in

- (a) the recognition of violence and harassment;
- (b) the policies, procedures, and workplace arrangements that effectively eliminate or control violence and harassment;
- (c) the appropriate response to violence and harassment, including procedures for obtaining assistance; and
- (d) the procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidents of violence and harassment.



Source: OHS Code, Part 27, Section 391

### Investigation and reporting of incidents

An employer must carry out an investigation of any incident of harassment or violence and take action to address the incident and prevent it from happening again. The employer must prepare an investigation report, outlining the circumstances of the incident and the corrective action. This report must be retained for at least two years after the incident. The employer must ensure the report is readily available and provide a copy of the report to Alberta OHS on request.

An Alberta OHS officer may also conduct an investigation of the incident. The officer may conduct interviews and gather evidence to determine what happened. Work site parties are required to cooperate with the officer.

#### OHS officers

OHS officers carry out inspections and investigations to enforce OHS legislation. If officers believe a work site is unhealthy or unsafe, they can call for a variety of corrective measures that may include issuing compliance orders stopping work at the work site(s) or ordering shut down of equipment. Officers can help guide employers and workers to ensure that the OHS rules are followed and provide resources to help employers and workers educate themselves about OHS rights and responsibilities.

Officers, however, do not do dispute resolution among work site parties (e.g. employers, supervisors, workers). Advocating for any work site parties is also not part of an officer's duties. In addition, the officers do not have the authority to impose disciplinary action (e.g. reprimand, termination) on work site parties; dictate how an employer manages their work schedule, placement of workers and staff training; or obligate an employer to compensate (e.g. pay worker for pain and suffering, provide worker with time off with or without pay) workers affected by an incident.

In some circumstances where there may be lost wages associated with an incident, the officer does have authority to require the employer to compensate the worker.

To ensure confidentiality and protection of personal information, the OHS legislation does not require the participation of HSC or HS representative when employer carries out investigation of incidents of harassment or violence.

Refer to sections 40(5)(b, c, d), 40(7-8) and 53 of the *OHS Act* for requirements that apply to investigation and reporting of incidents of harassment or violence.



### Worker support

An employer must offer support to workers who are affected by an incident of harassment or violence.

An employer must ensure that a worker reporting an injury or adverse symptom resulting from an incident of

harassment or violence is advised to consult a health professional (of the worker's choice) for treatment or referral.

Some employers provide an employee assistance program (EAP) at the workplace. An EAP is a confidential, short term, counselling service for employees to offer help in resolving personal problems that are affecting work. If a workplace has an EAP, workers could consider accessing services and resources through the program when seeking support dealing with personal issues from workplace harassment or violence.

When a worker is treated or referred by a physician for treatment relating to harassment or violence that occurred at the work site, and if the treatment sessions occur during regular work hours, the employer cannot make any deduction from the worker's wages and benefits.

## Samples and templates

### Sample workplace harassment prevention policy

The management of insert company name is committed to providing a work environment in which all workers are treated with respect and dignity. Harassment will not be tolerated from any person at or outside of the work site including list who this policy applies to, especially if it applies to people other than workers such as customers, clients, other employers, supervisors, workers and members of the public, etc.

insert company name as the employer is committed to eliminating or, if that is not reasonably practicable, controlling the hazard of harassment. Everyone is obligated to uphold this policy and to work together to prevent workplace harassment.

Workplace harassment means any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows, or ought reasonably to know, will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety. It includes conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and a sexual solicitation or advance.

Reasonable action taken by the employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or a work site is not workplace harassment.

In support of this policy, we have put in place workplace harassment prevention procedures. It includes measures and procedures to protect workers from the hazard of harassment and a process for workers to report incidents, or raise concerns. *(Consider specifying and expanding upon the components of the harassment prevention procedures here.)*

insert company name will ensure this policy and the supporting procedures are implemented and maintained. All workers and supervisors will receive relevant information and instruction on the contents of the policy and procedures.

Supervisors will adhere to this policy and the supporting procedures. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information they need to protect themselves.

Every worker must work in compliance with this policy and the supporting procedures. All workers are required to raise any concerns about harassment and to report any incidents to the appropriate person. *(Consider providing more information about how to report incidents and other procedures here.)*

Employer will investigate and take appropriate corrective actions to address all incidents and complaints of workplace harassment in a fair, respectful and timely manner. *(Consider providing more information about how incidents and complaints will be investigated and/or dealt with here.)*

Employer pledges to respect the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. Employer will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of harassment or the names of the parties involved (including the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the harassment, and any witnesses) except where necessary to investigate the incident, to take corrective action, to inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken, or as required by law.

No workers can be penalized, reprimanded or in any way criticized when acting in good faith while following this policy and the supporting procedures for addressing situations involving harassment. This harassment prevention policy does not discourage a worker from exercising the worker's right under any other law, including the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Signed: *(Signature of the highest management level)*

Date:

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.



## Workplace harassment prevention procedures - template

This worksheet may help to develop the harassment prevention procedures for your workplace.

<b>Company name:</b> <b>Date:</b>	
<b>Elements of harassment prevention</b>	<b>Procedures</b> <i>(Use the questions and tips below to help develop effective procedures)</i>
<b>Hazard identification and assessment</b> <i>(Hazard identification and assessment is at the foundation of preventing injuries and illness - it is also a requirement under the Alberta OHS Code, part 2)</i>	<i>(Is the health and safety committee or representative involved in the hazard assessment and control process? If your work site is exempt from having a committee or representative, are workers involved in the process? As part of the company's hazard assessment process, are existing and potential hazards relating to harassment identified?)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>review the hazard assessment and control forms completed for each job or position, while considering the hazard of harassment)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Identify controls to prevent workplace harassment</b> <i>(Using the results of the hazard assessment, determine possible controls for the hazards identified)</i>	<i>(Are measures put in place to eliminate or control each hazard identified in the company's hazard assessment?)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>refer to the hazard assessment and identify measures to eliminate or control each hazard</i></li> <li>• <i>information of hazards and controls can be used to develop safe work procedures for each job or position)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Develop safe work procedures</b> <i>(Detailed work procedures provide workers information they need relating to harassment at the workplace)</i>	<i>(Do the safe work procedures address the hazards and controls identified for each job or position?)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>refer to the company's hazard assessment and control when developing or updating safe work procedures)</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>Report incidents</b> (Procedure for how, when and to whom)</p>	<p>(Do the procedures include details for workers to know how to report an incident, when they should report and to whom they report?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include information such as the company's incident reporting form or other reporting mechanisms (e.g. verbal)</li> <li>• the type of information to be collected (e.g. details of the incident including date(s), frequency, location(s), name(s) of the worker and others involved in or witness(es) to the incident, any supporting documents)</li> <li>• designate the reporting contact person of incidents or complaints</li> <li>• the person designated as the reporting contact should not be under the direct control of the alleged harasser</li> <li>• the person designated as the reporting contact should not be the alleged harasser of the worker</li> <li>• advise the worker to report to the police as appropriate)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Investigate and document incidents</b> (Who is responsible for follow-up and what that entails)</p>	<p>(Are all reported incidents of workplace harassment documented and investigated? Do the procedures include guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of information?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify who is responsible to conduct the investigation (e.g. internal or external investigator)</li> <li>• set target timeline to complete an investigation (e.g. within 90 days)</li> <li>• detail the investigation process (e.g. interviewing parties involved, opportunity for alleged harasser(s) to respond to the allegations, collect and review any relevant documents, etc.)</li> <li>• how are the corrective actions being implemented</li> </ul>
<p><b>Informing parties involved</b> (Procedures for how, when, what and to whom)</p>	<p>(How and when will the parties involved be informed of the results of the investigation and corrective action to be taken? Who will be informed? What information will be disclosed? Do the procedures include guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify who are the parties involved (e.g. the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the harassment, union officials who make the complaint)</li> <li>• employer will not disclose the circumstances related to the incident or the names of the parties involved (including the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the harassment, and any witnesses) except where necessary to investigate the incident or to take corrective action, to inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken, or as required by law</li> <li>• include guidance on what can be disclosed that is in line with the established policy)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Worker support</b> <i>(Assistance to worker after an incident)</i></p>	<p><i>(What supports are available to workers?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>advise worker to consult a health professional of the worker's choice for treatment or referral</i></li> <li>• <i>information about the employee assistance program (EAP) as a source of support</i></li> <li>• <i>workers are entitled to wages and benefits for the time they receive treatment)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Worker communication and training</b> <i>(Who gets what training, when?)</i></p>	<p><i>(How are the workers trained? Does the training include policy and procedures, recognizing hazards, controlling hazards, reporting incident, obtaining worker assistance/support, investigating and documenting incident?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>workers may be trained during orientation in the company's workplace harassment prevention policy and procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>ongoing training is provided, as new work processes or conditions arise, or when new hazards are identified)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Program administration and continuous improvement</b> <i>(Document, review and revise of the harassment prevention plan)</i></p>	<p><i>(Are all aspects of the harassment prevention plan tracked and maintained? What is the process for reviewing and revising of the plan?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the harassment prevention plan is readily available to workers</i></li> <li>• <i>record-keeping of incidents, investigations, worker training, etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>have a process to review and revise the plan</i></li> <li>• <i>involve the health and safety committee or representative when review and revise the plan</i></li> <li>• <i>if the work site is exempt from having a committee or representative, involve workers in the process</i></li> <li>• <i>consider monitoring trends for continuous improvements to the plan)</i></li> </ul>

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## Sample workplace violence prevention policy

The management of insert company name is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and is ultimately responsible for worker health and safety. We will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect our workers from the potential hazards associated with workplace violence. Violent behavior or threat of violence in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone. This policy applies to list who this policy applies to, especially if it applies to people other than workers such as visitors, clients, delivery persons and volunteers, etc..

insert company name as the employer is committed to eliminating or, if that is not reasonably practicable, controlling the hazard of violence. Everyone is obligated to uphold this policy and to work together to prevent workplace violence.

Violence, whether at a work site or work-related, is the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence.

In support of this policy, we have put in place workplace violence prevention procedures to protect workers from workplace violence, a means of summoning immediate assistance and a process for workers to report incidents or raise concerns. *(Consider specifying and expanding upon the components of the workplace violence procedures here.)*

insert company name will receive relevant information and instruction on the contents of the policy and procedures.

Supervisors will adhere to this policy and the supporting procedures. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information they need to protect themselves.

Every worker must work in compliance with this policy and the supporting procedures. All workers are required to raise any concerns about workplace violence and to report any violent incidents or threats. *(Consider providing more information about how to report incidents and other procedures here.)*

Employer will investigate and take appropriate corrective actions to address all incidents and complaints of workplace violence in a fair and timely manner. *(Consider providing more information about how incidents and complaints will be investigated and/or dealt with here.)*

Employer pledges to respect the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. Employer will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of violence or the names of the complainant, the individual alleged to have committed the violence, and any witnesses, except where necessary to investigate the incident or to take corrective action, to inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken, to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence, or as required by law. Employer will disclose only the minimum amount of personal information required that is necessary to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence.

No workers can be penalized, reprimanded or in any way criticized when acting in good faith while following this policy and the supporting procedures for addressing situations involving workplace violence. This violence prevention policy does not discourage a worker from exercising the worker's right under any other law.

Signed: *(Signature of the highest management level)*

Date:

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Workplace violence prevention procedures - template

This worksheet may help to develop the violence prevention procedures for your workplace.

<p>Company name:</p> <p>Date:</p>	
<p>Elements of violence prevention</p>	<p>Procedures <i>(Use the questions and tips below to help develop effective procedures)</i></p>
<p><b>Hazard identification and assessment</b></p> <p><i>(Hazard identification and assessment is at the foundation of preventing injuries and illness - it is also a requirement under the Alberta OHS Code, part 2)</i></p>	<p><i>(Is the health and safety committee or representative involved in the hazard assessment and control process? If your work site is exempt from having a committee or representative, are workers involved in the process? As part of the company's hazard assessment process, are existing and potential hazards relating to violence identified?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>review the hazard assessment and control forms completed for each job or position, while considering the hazard of violence</i></li> <li>● <i>include all forms of workplace violence, such as physical assault/aggression, threat of violence, domestic violence, sexual violence.</i></li> <li>● <i>include information related to the risk of violence presented by members of the general public which is likely encounter by the workers</i></li> <li>● <i>include information related to specific or general threats of violence or potential violence)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Identify controls to prevent workplace violence</b></p> <p><i>(Using the results of the hazard assessment, determine possible controls for the hazards identified)</i></p>	<p><i>(Are measures put in place to eliminate or control each hazard identified in the company's hazard assessment?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>refer to the hazard assessment and identify measures to eliminate or control each hazard</i></li> <li>● <i>information of hazards and controls can be used to develop safe work procedures for each job or position)</i></li> </ul>



<p><b>Disclosing information</b> <i>(Procedure for employer on what information can be disclosed)</i></p>	<p><i>(Do the procedures provide details on what can be disclosed? Do the procedures include guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of information in line with the established policy?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of violence or the names of the complainant, the individual alleged to have committed the violence, and any witnesses, except where necessary to investigate the incident or to take corrective action, to inform the involved parties of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken, to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence, or where it is required by law.</i></li> <li>• <i>will disclose only the minimum amount of personal information required that is necessary to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop safe work procedures</b> <i>(Detailed work procedures provide workers information they need to stay safe in a violent workplace situation)</i></p>	<p><i>(Do the safe work procedures address the hazards and controls identified for each job or position?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>refer to the company's hazard assessment and control when developing or updating safe work procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>how to respond in a violent workplace situation</i></li> <li>• <i>include measures and procedures for workers to summon immediate assistance when an incidents occurs (e.g. alarms, cell phones, positioning workers within distance to readily offer each other assistance)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Report incidents</b> <i>(Procedure for how, when and to whom)</i></p>	<p><i>(Do the procedures include details for workers to know how to report an incident, when they should report and to whom they report?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>include information such as the company's incident reporting form or other reporting mechanisms</i></li> <li>• <i>the type of information to be collected (e.g. the details of the incident, name(s) of the worker and others involved in or witness(es) to the incident, date of incident)</i></li> <li>• <i>advise the worker to report to the police as appropriate)</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>Investigate and document incidents</b> <i>(Who is responsible for follow-up and what that entails)</i></p>	<p><i>(Are all reported incidents of workplace violence documented and investigated? Do the procedures include guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of information?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>identify who is responsible to conduct the investigation</i></li> <li>• <i>set timeframes for investigations</i></li> <li>• <i>detail the investigation process</i></li> <li>• <i>how are the corrective actions being implemented)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Informing parties involved</b> <i>(Procedures for how, when, what and to whom)</i></p>	<p><i>(How and when will the parties involved be informed of the results of the investigation and corrective action to be taken? Who will be informed? What information will be disclosed? Do the procedures include guidance on confidentiality and disclosure of information)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>identify who the involved parties (e.g. the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the harassment, union officials who make the complaint)</i></li> <li>• <i>will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of violence or the names of the complainant, the individual alleged to have committed the violence, and any witnesses, except where necessary to investigate the incident or to take corrective action, to inform the involved parties of the results of the investigation and corrective action taken, to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence, or where it is required by law.</i></li> <li>• <i>will disclose only the minimum amount of personal information required that is necessary to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence.</i></li> <li>• <i>include guidance on what can be disclosed that is in line with the established policy)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Worker support</b> <i>(Assistance to worker after an incident)</i></p>	<p><i>(What supports are available to workers?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Advise worker to consult a health professional of the worker's choice for treatment or referral</i></li> <li>• <i>information about the employee assistance program (EAP) as a source of support</i></li> <li>• <i>workers are entitled to wages and benefits for the time they receive treatment)</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>Worker communication and training</b></p> <p><i>(Who gets what training, when?)</i></p>	<p><i>(How are the workers trained? Does the training include policy and procedures, recognizing hazards, controlling hazards, reporting incident, obtaining worker assistance/support, investigating and documenting incident?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>workers may be trained during orientation in the company's workplace violence prevention policy and procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>ongoing training is provided, as new work processes or conditions arise, or when new hazards are identified)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Program administration and continuous improvement</b></p> <p><i>(Document, review and revise of the violence prevention plan)</i></p>	<p><i>(Are all aspects of the violence prevention plan tracked and maintained? What is the process for reviewing and revising of the plan?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the violence prevention plan is readily available to workers</i></li> <li>• <i>record-keeping of incidents, investigations, worker training, etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>have a process to review and revise the plan</i></li> <li>• <i>involve the health and safety committee or representative when review and revise the plan</i></li> <li>• <i>if the work site is exempt from having a committee or representative, involve workers in the process</i></li> <li>• <i>consider monitoring trends for continuous improvements to the plan)</i></li> </ul>

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

## Contact Us

### OHS Contact Centre

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

### Website

[work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact us](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us)

### Get Copies of *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer  
[qp.gov.ab.ca](http://qp.gov.ab.ca)

Occupational Health and  
Safety

[work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation)

## Acknowledgment

Portions of this publication have been adapted from Ontario Ministry of Labour, [Health and Safety Guidelines – Workplace Violence and Harassment: Understanding the Law](#)

## For more information

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety

- [Do I need a joint work site health and safety committee or a health and safety representative?](#) (LI037)
- [Hazard assessment and control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers](#) (BP018)
- [Health and safety representatives](#) (LI040)
- [Joint work site health and safety committees](#) (LI036)
- [Workplace violence prevention plan for retail fuel and convenience stores - employer guide](#)

Alberta Human Rights Commission

- [Alberta Human Rights Commission: Harassment as a form of discrimination](#)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

- [Bullying in the workplace](#)
- [Violence in the workplace](#)

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