

POLICY No. 2024-01

Abuse, Violence and Harassment Policy

Originating Department Haldimand O.P.P. Detachment Board

Board Approval: Click here to enter a
date.

Resolution Number:

Revision History: [Click here for revision history](#)

Policy Statement

The Haldimand O.P.P. Detachment Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board) recognizes the potential for abuse, violence and harassment in the workplace. The Board is committed to providing an inclusive, safe and non-discriminatory work environment by treating others with dignity, courtesy and respect. It will make every reasonable effort to identify all potential sources of such risk to eliminate or minimize them through a workplace abuse, violence and harassment prevention program. The Board will not tolerate any form of abuse, violence or harassment within the workplace or during work-related activities. The Board is committed to allotting whatever time, attention, authority and resources necessary to ensure a safe and supportive working environment for all individuals.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Maintain an environment that is free from harassment or abuse;
- Identify the behaviours that are unacceptable;
- Establish a mechanism for receiving complaints; and
- Establish a procedure to handle complaints.

Scope

This policy applies to all appointed Board members, employees, independent contractors, visitors, and volunteers.

Definitions

Emotional Abuse

This is defined as, but not limited to, a chronic attack on an individual's self-esteem. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing, habitual scapegoating, and blaming.

Employee

This is defined as any person who performs work for the Board.

Harassment

This is defined as, but not limited to, any unwanted physical or verbal conduct that offends or humiliates, including gender-based harassment. It can be a single incident or several incidents over time. It includes threats, intimidation, display or racism, sexism, unnecessary physical contact, suggestive remarks or gestures, offensive pictures or jokes. Harassment will be considered to have taken place if a reasonable person ought to have known that the behaviour was unwelcome.

Neglect

This is defined as, but not limited to, any behaviour that leads to a failure to provide services which are necessary such as withdrawing basic necessities as forms of punishment, failing to assess and respond to changes in health status, and refusing or withdrawing physical or emotional support.

Physical Abuse

This is defined as, but not limited to, the use of intentional force that can result in physical harm or injury to an individual. It can take the form of slapping, hitting, punching, shaking, pulling, throwing, kicking, biting, choking, strangling or the abusive use of restraints.

Psychological Abuse

This is defined as, but not limited to, communication of an abusive nature, sarcasm, exploitive behaviour, intimidation, manipulation, and insensitivity to race, sexual preference or family dynamics.

Sexual Abuse

This is defined as, but not limited to, any act of sexual contact that a person suffers, submits to, participates in, or performs as a result of force or violence, threats, fear, or deception or without having legally consented to the act.

Verbal Abuse

This is defined as, but not limited to, humiliating remarks, name calling, swearing at, taunting, teasing, continual put downs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board members are responsible for:

- Fostering a work environment free from discrimination, harassment and violence, and setting an example about appropriate workplace behaviour;
- Communicating the process for investigating and resolving complaints made by Board members or others;
- Acting quickly, effectively, and fairly to prevent and address risks or incidents of discrimination, harassment or violence, whether or not a complaint has been made;
- Taking appropriate action during an investigation, including providing regular updates to all parties;
- Ensuring that the complainant does not experience retaliation;
- Ensuring that situations are handled in a respectful and confidential manner;
- Ensuring compliance by all who have a relationship with the Board, such as employees, independent contractors, visitors, and volunteers; and
- Making a copy of this policy publicly available.

Employees are responsible for:

- Reviewing and adhering to this policy;
- Reporting all incidents, injuries or threats of discrimination, harassment or violence to the Board Chair or designate immediately; and
- Seeking support and/or medical attention when confronted with incidents, injuries or threats of discrimination, harassment or violence.

Reporting

The Board recognizes that individuals who have experienced harassment or violence may be reluctant to come forward. The Board is committed to maintaining a workplace free from harassment and violence in which members feel as safe as possible in reporting concerns.

An individual can report workplace harassment or violence by contacting the Board Chair or designate. This report can be made confidentially at the complainant's request. However, sharing information to ensure the safety of others and prevent recurrence may be necessary (e.g., contents of a police report).

Individuals can make a complaint of workplace harassment or violence verbally or in writing. If the complaint is made verbally, the individual to whom the complaint is made will record the details provided such as what happened, when it happened, where it happened, how often it occurred, and who else was present (if applicable).

Response Procedures

In response to a reported incident, the following procedures will be followed:

- The Board Chair or designate will document all reports of workplace harassment or violence, hazards, and measures taken to address them.
- If the resolution of the incident is beyond the authority of the Board Chair or designate, they must make the Board aware of the report. The Board may require outside assistance to have the matter investigated (e.g., when the incident involves a member of the Board).
- The Board reviews all incident reports, monitors trends and reviews recommendations for prevention and enhancements to the workplace violence and harassment prevention program and training program.
- The Board or party who investigates the reported incident, warns any persons who might be affected about dangerous situations. They also tell the complainant about the outcome of the investigation to help minimize the chance of similar incidents.
- If a violent incident results in a critical injury, the Board reports the incident or injury to Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) and to the Ministry of Labour (MOL).

Investigation

After receiving the report, the Board Chair or designate will arrange for an investigation and ensure that measures are taken to safeguard employees and curtail the harassment or violence. No report of workplace harassment, violence or risks of violence may be the basis of reprisal against the complainant.

The Board Chair or designate will report all injuries to the MOL and WSIB as required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.

Reprisals

A reprisal is when an individual retaliates or threatens to retaliate against another individual because they have filed a harassment or violence complaint, assisted someone in filing a complaint, is a witness in an investigation or has otherwise tried to claim or enforce a right under this policy.

Direct and indirect reprisals by and against any member will not be tolerated.

For the purpose of this policy, some examples of reprisals include:

- Treating a person with hostility;
- Excluding or isolating;
- Making negative remarks;
- Assigning demeaning duties;
- Engaging in discriminatory, harassing or violent behaviour; and

- Demoting, disciplining or dismissing a person because they exercised their rights or responsibilities under this policy.

Support

For those affected by workplace harassment or violence, the Board will respond promptly, assess the situation and ensure that these interventions are followed:

- Facilitation of medical attention;
- Debriefing (by skilled professional);
- Referrals to community agencies or treating practitioner;
- Completion of incident reports, WSIB reports, reports to MOL (critical injury or fatality); and
- Reporting to police (as required).

Education

All workplace parties are responsible for reviewing and adhering to this policy.

Any training developed, established and provided will be done in consultation with, and in consideration of any recommendations arising from investigation reports.

Records

All records of reports and investigations of workplace harassment and violence will be kept for three (3) years following the resolution of the complaint.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Board and all individuals involved in a harassment or violence complaint are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all other persons involved while the complaint is being addressed under this policy. Confidentiality is intended to ensure the integrity of the complaint process, not to conceal allegations of harassment or violence.

Importantly, the confidential nature of the complaint process does not prevent an individual involved from seeking medical, psychological or social support services. It does not prevent sharing the information necessary to protect others from harassment or violence, taking appropriate interim or other corrective action, or compliance with any legal obligations.

The Board will not disclose the name of the complainant, the circumstances related to the complaint, or information related to disciplinary measures or sanctions imposed on a responding party to any person except where doing so is necessary for the purposes of investigating the complaint or taking disciplinary measures.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

REVISION HISTORY			
REPORT (IF APPLICABLE)	BOARD MEETING		DETAILS
	Date	Res#	
	Date	Res#	
	Date	Res#	

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