

Policy: Workplace Violence and Harassment

Policy # 20 **Number of Pages:** 3 **Date of Approval:** April 2006

Approved By: Board of Directors, Management **Review Date:** April 2017

References: General Personnel Policy #2
 Health and Safety Policy # 4

Statement:

The Society is committed to working with its employees to provide a safe and secure working environment. The Society will not tolerate any acts of violence, harassment or sexual harassment and will take all reasonable measures to protect its employees.

Policy:

This policy applies to all employees, Vincentians and volunteers, residents.

For the purpose of this policy, acts of workplace violence include the following:

- the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker
- an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker
- a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker or that could cause physical injury to the worker

For the purposes of this policy acts of workplace harassment and sexual harassment include the following:

- engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.
- Any actions, words or inferences that can be construed as sexual in nature; either challenging or degrading a person based on their sex or sexual orientation.

Some types of behaviours that may be defined as workplace harassment include:

- teasing
- intimidating or offensive jokes or innuendos
- displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials
- offensive or intimidating comments or phone calls
- bullying
- comments or actions of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact

Procedures:

The following responsibilities and process for investigating reported and suspected incidents of violence and harassment will be implemented and followed at each worksite:

Responsibilities:

Employees:

- Are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of violence or harassment that threaten a safe working environment.
- Must not engage in behaviour that is violent, threatening or intimidating as defined in this policy.
- Must report promptly to their manager any incident where an employee is subject to, witness to, or has knowledge of workplace violence or harassment.
- Must report to their manager any potential occurrences which may result from domestic violence incidents.
- Must follow all established procedures and policies to ensure their safety.
- Shall call 911 should emergency assistance be required.

Management:

- Conduct workplace violence and harassment hazard assessments to determine if employees may be at risk due to the working environment and review annually.
- Work with the Health and Safety Committee to ensure hazards have been appropriately identified and controlled and take all reasonable precautions to reduce the risk.
- Respond immediately to all reports of violence and harassment, ensuring the immediate safety of the employee; contacting the police and emergency services as required and contacting the Executive Director for the purposes of launching an investigation.
- Persons who report incidents of domestic violence which may impact the work place will be provided with the contact information for the Society's Violence Against Women (VAW) and Domestic Violence Program coordinator.

Investigation of incidents:

- The Executive Director will be responsible for the initial investigation. The Board of Directors and the Ministry of Labour will be notified as necessary.
- An investigation will be directed by the Executive Director who may request assistance from the program manager, VAW coordinator, or operating committee chairperson. Statements will be obtained from all witnesses and all evidence will be secured.
- A written report of the investigation will be prepared and will include all actions taken and the reasons for the actions.
- During the course of the investigation, the alleged perpetrator or victim of the act may be asked to not attend the workplace.
- In the event that the act of violence or harassment is blatant, the perpetrator may be immediately suspended of duties pending a full investigation into their actions.
- A decision pending the outcome of the investigation will be made by the Executive Director; the President, or the Committee chair may be involved as appropriate. In the event that an individual is proven to be responsible for acts of violence or harassment, consequences may range from verbal warnings to termination of service, position or employment.
- All incident reports and investigations relating to actions under this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. This will be done in conjunction with the annual hazard assessment and will provide for the opportunity to make adjustments or improvements to ensure an optimal safe working environment