
POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Responsible Unit	Safety & Security
Last Reviewed/Updated	31 January 2019
Approving Sector Head	Vice-President Finance & Administration and CFO
Policy	Violence Prevention in the Workplace

Purpose

Workplace violence is not common; however, it is important to acknowledge that violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard that can cause both physical and emotional harm. The University views any act or threat of violence in the workplace as unacceptable and is committed to working to prevent workplace violence and to responding appropriately if workplace violence does occur. All members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students and visitors, are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment.

Definition of Violence

- (i) threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury,
- (ii) conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.

Risk Assessments and Prevention Plans

In consultation with its Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee, Acadia has developed and implemented a [Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tool](#). Risk factors such as workplace design and layout, various tasks and activities, and historical indicators are considered. A similar tool was used to conduct a baseline assessment of our University community, and information gained from that assessment formed the foundation of this policy and the prevention plans.

As time goes on, changes occur within our community that impact the risk of violence. Departmental managers and supervisors are responsible for recognizing new risks and completing a new Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tool whenever there is a significant change in:

- the circumstances in which work takes place,
- the interactions that occur in the course of performing work, or
- the physical location or layout of the workplace (including construction of new facilities or renovation of existing facilities).

New Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tools must be completed every 5 years. The Department of Safety & Security is responsible for initiating and coordinating that process.

Completed Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tools must be submitted to the Director of Safety & Security for review and must be made available for review by employees.

Preventing Workplace Violence

Effective workplace design and layout plays an important role in preventing acts of violence. Departmental managers and supervisors should contact the Department of Safety & Security to assist in assessing the risks associated with design and layout and recommending improvements.

Work situations and interactions such as working alone, working late, and working with troubled persons are critical factors in many cases of workplace violence. Based on the circumstances, departments may need to implement administrative controls such as work procedures, scheduling and communication methods that will minimize the risk. When necessary, departmental managers and supervisors should contact Safety & Security for assistance in determining appropriate administrative controls.

Reporting

All faculty, staff, students, contractors and visitors have a duty to report all incidents of workplace violence so that corrective and preventive actions can be taken.

(a) Emergencies

All employees should familiarize themselves with Acadia's Emergency Procedures, which are posted in all departments, and are also available on the web at: <https://www2.acadiu.ca/safety-security/emergencies.html>

(b) Non-Emergencies

Behavior that causes one to believe there is potential for workplace violence must also be reported to one or more of the following, as appropriate: immediate supervisor/director of unit; Equity Officer; Safety & Security. Identifying patterns of potential violence may assist in preventing the situation from escalating. Immediate supervisors are advised to consult with/seek direction from either the Equity Officer or the Director of Safety & Security.

(c) Investigation

All reports will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. The form of investigation will depend on the circumstances and may involve resources from both on and off campus (such as law enforcement officials).

(d) Confidentiality Statement

All reports of workplace violence and subsequent investigations, are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone except to the extent required by law. The University will do everything it can to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure that complainants and respondents are treated fairly and respectfully. The University will protect this privacy so long as doing so remains consistent with the enforcement of this Policy and adherence to the law.

Support Services

Faculty, staff and students who have been exposed to or affected by violence at Acadia's workplace will be provided with an appropriate debriefing. Arrangements will be made to consult health practitioners for treatment and/or counselling. In cases where other support services may be necessary, there shall be consultation with Human Resources and/or the Equity Officer.

Training

Training on preventing workplace violence will be provided by Safety & Security.

Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee Shall:

- a) The University's JOHSC shall conduct an annual review, in January of each year, of this policy and its effectiveness. This shall include a review of any outstanding risk assessment/prevention plans and subsequent recommendations.
- b) Review all reports forwarded to the JOHSC regarding workplace violence and other incident reports as appropriate pertaining to incidents of workplace violence that result in personal injury or threat of personal injury.