

Model Policy on Domestic Violence

Draft October 2009



_____ believes everyone should be able to work without fear of violence in a safe and healthy workplace. As a significant type of workplace violence, domestic violence is of particular concern and _____ is committed to responding effectively should a co-worker have domestic violence concerns. _____ treats all employees fairly and ensures privacy and confidentiality within legal limits. This policy is a key component of _____'s integrated, coordinated approach to employee wellness and safety.

The purpose of this policy:

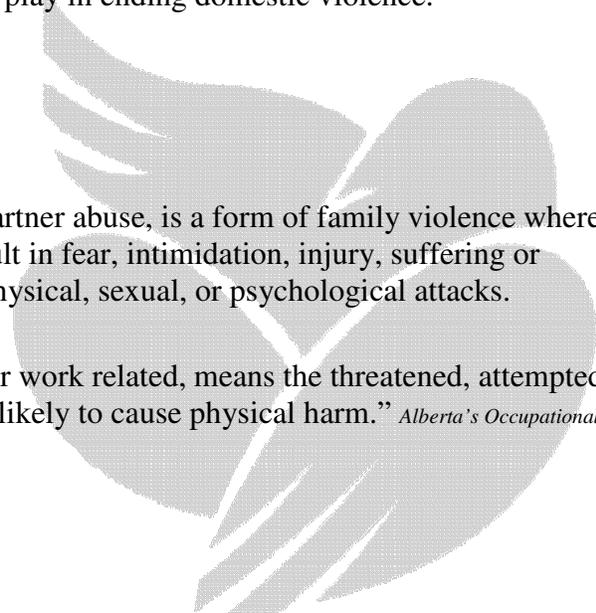
1. To meet our legal obligations:
 - a. "to take reasonable steps to prevent harm to employees" (Criminal Code Sec 217.1)
 - b. to "develop a policy and procedures respecting violence in the workplace." (Occupational Health and Safety Code, Province of Alberta, Section 390, Part 27-1)
2. To follow informed practices in risk management by developing a consistent approach and clear procedures if employees are experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence;
3. To eliminate or reduce potential losses to productivity and service delivery as a result of domestic violence.
4. To show leadership within our community and among our clients/customers/stakeholders by ensuring that all _____'s employees understand the important role they can play in ending domestic violence.

Definitions:

Domestic violence (DV), also referred to as partner abuse, is a form of family violence where patterns of assault and coercive behaviors result in fear, intimidation, injury, suffering or death. These behaviors can take the form of physical, sexual, or psychological attacks.

(From Government of Alberta, Child and Youth Services)

Workplace Violence "whether at a work site or work related, means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical harm." *Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code (2009)*



Responsibilities of all staff of _____:

1. Participate in workplace training on domestic violence.
2. As required by law, report any situation in which children are at risk to Alberta Children and Youth Services: 1-800-387-KIDS
3. Observe non-violent principles and standards.

Management Responsibilities:

_____ understands the need for balance between creating an open workplace community and respecting people's privacy. While the primary objective of this policy is to provide a safe workplace, _____ **management** believes that an individual's right to confidentiality is paramount.

Management will:

1. Ensure this policy is explained to all employees.
2. Give a consistent message to all employees that help for domestic violence issues is available.
3. Provide informed, supportive, and coordinated responses to employees experiencing or witnessing domestic violence.
4. Identify and meet training/awareness needs regarding domestic violence among employees.
5. Develop an emergency procedure to be implemented should an incident occurs at the workplace related to domestic violence.
6. Ensure proper procedures are in place to monitor and/or to act on a complaint should an employee appear to be using workplace resources to perpetrate domestic abuse.
7. Protect employee confidentiality within limits needed for safety.*
8. Review protocols, security measures, and policy on a regular basis as they apply to all staff as well as to an individual experiencing DV.
9. Offer the same accommodations to employees experiencing domestic violence as employees dealing with life-threatening or other serious concerns. This may include taking time for medical appointments or court appearances. This may also involve modifying a schedule to ensure safety and alerting designated security personnel to assess and possibly modifying a worksite for safety.

* "Limits needed for safety" means that information may need to be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis if an employee's safety at work is jeopardized.

Employee Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of employees witnessing signs of domestic violence:

1. Ensure your own immediate safety in the event of a domestic violence incident in the workplace.
2. Report any such incident immediately to a designated supervisor or manager or call the police.
3. Report any information or incident you are privy to which may compromise safety of any employee within the workplace (including parking areas).*
4. Report any situation to a designated supervisor or manager in which you have witnessed a co-worker use workplace resources to harass, intimidate, or threaten an intimate partner or otherwise perpetrate domestic violence from the workplace.*
5. Apart from the above situations, maintain confidentiality regarding a co-worker experiencing domestic violence.

** Management understands reporting individuals are in a highly-sensitive position and respect their privacy. The intent of this policy is to relieve employees of the stress and potential liability caused by being solely aware of information of this nature.*

Employee experiencing domestic abuse:

_____ recognizes that an employee experiencing domestic abuse may be reluctant, for safety and other reasons, to disclose the problem to a supervisor or manager.

_____ encourages disclosure in order to ensure the employee's safety: threats or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Disclosure also enables _____ to support the employee and provide links to appropriate community resources.

1. Although _____ respects employees' need for confidentiality and self-determination, *an employee is responsible for disclosing any situation which threatens the safety of the workplace.* This includes threats an intimate partner or ex-partner has made to harm the employee at work or on work property.
2. An employee must inform a designated manager if they have applied for, or obtained, a restraining order that lists the _____ location as being a protected area.

Employees perpetrating abuse:

1. Employees who disclose they are perpetrating domestic violence will be linked with community supports and resources for themselves and their families.
2. In cases in which _____ has found that an employee has used work time, workplace telephones, FAX machines, mail, e-mail or other workplace resources to threaten, harass, or abuse an intimate partner, the employee will be subject to an investigation to determine any disciplinary action, which may include but is not limited to dismissal.