

Complete Policy Title:

Violence in the Workplace, Policy on

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:

Senate / Board of Governors

Date of Most Recent Approval:

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June 2, 2010

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:

Reviewed for Compliance (OHSA):

December 6, 2023

Responsible Executive:

Director - Security and Parking Services

Enquiries:

[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

DISCLAIMER: *If there is a discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

1. In support of the McMaster University Workplace Environmental Health and Safety Policy, the University is committed to the prevention of workplace violence. All acts of workplace violence are strictly prohibited. Every worker must work in compliance with this policy and the supporting program. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information they need to protect themselves.
2. McMaster University is committed to fostering, creating and maintaining a violence-free environment for all members of the University community. Focus of the Violence Prevention Policy and Program include:
 - a. identifying appropriate means and resources for assessing risks to violence in the workplace;
 - b. promoting awareness of the McMaster University Policy on Violence in the Workplace through training and communication; and
 - c. informing the University community about response protocols for dealing with a violent or potentially violent situation.
3. McMaster University will hold workers, students and visitors accountable by imposing discipline and other sanctions (up to and including discharge, expulsion and trespass notices). In doing so, the University will act in accordance with the rights and obligations established by collective agreements and University policy.

Criminal or civil proceedings may be initiated against individuals who engage in workplace violence.
4. McMaster University recognizes that the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act* applies to all instances of violence in the workplace. Work Refusals relating to violence in the workplace, or direct threats of violence, shall be governed by the Risk Management Manual #114 Work Refusal Program.
5. The commitments in this Policy are intended to ensure that reasonable precautions are taken to prevent violence within the University community.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

6. This Policy provides a framework within which established protocols are identified for assessing the risk of violence in the workplace, dealing with violent situations, specific threats of violence, and emergency responses to violent behavior.

7. The scope of this policy includes all:
- McMaster University employees;
 - McMaster University students;
 - Visitors and volunteers; and
 - Contractors and subcontractors engaged by McMaster University.

DEFINITIONS

8. **Worker:** Any person providing services for the employer for monetary compensation, as defined for the application of this Policy under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
9. **Workplace Violence:** is defined by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, to mean:
- 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 workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker,
 - A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that causes physical injury to the worker.

Workplace violence includes domestic violence that could cause physical injury to a worker in a workplace.

TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

10. The Workplace Violence Policy and Program will be communicated to the University community and the University will make the Policy publicly available on its website.
11. Violence in the Workplace information and awareness training will be provided to all employees as appropriate, based on the risk assessment outcomes.

SPECIFIC RISKS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE

12. In the case of a direct threat or act of violence, all University workers are expected to activate emergency response procedures. For the main University campus, Security and Parking Services should be contacted by dialing ext. 88 or activating a Red Emergency Pole. For most off site locations excluding the hospitals, the local emergency number must be dialed (i.e. 911).

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13. The University recognizes domestic violence as a potential risk to employees, and will take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect any workers subject to the threat of domestic violence.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

14. Threats or incidents of workplace violence should be reported to the supervisor, a person in authority or Security and Parking Services.
15. The University has an established Accident/Incident form that employees are required to fill out in conjunction with their supervisor for any Health and Safety related issue. Specific responsibility lies with the supervisor and departmental management to review the incident and provide effective corrective measures to address the incident.

PROGRAM AND GUIDELINES

16. McMaster University provides a Program and Guidelines with respect to the application of this Policy. The Program and Guidelines will be updated as required by Security and Parking Services in consultation with Environmental & Occupational Health Support Services.