

WORKPLACE SAFETY

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT AWARENESS

According to Statistics Canada, there are hundreds of thousands of cases of “workplace violence” each year.

The management of Cabra Consulting Ltd. maintains a zero-tolerance view towards harassment, discrimination and workplace violence and expects every worker, at all levels of the company, to promote and comply with our "Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy". The company is committed to eliminating or, if that is not reasonably practicable, control the hazards of harassment, discrimination and violence.

Harassment, discrimination and violence will not be tolerated from any person at or outside of the worksite including all contractors, suppliers, visitors, and clients. Any behavior that intimidates, threatens, harasses, abuses, injures or otherwise victimizes the above-mentioned workplace parties will not be tolerated.

In support of this policy, the company has put in place procedures to protect workers and a process for workers to report incidents or raise concerns. Workplace violence is deemed to include “workplace sexual harassment”.

All reported incidents of harassment, discrimination and workplace violence shall be considered seriously and will be diligently and promptly investigated.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

Harassment and violence can take place at any work site and may range from disrespectful remarks to physical aggression. Abuse can victimize both men and women, and may be directed towards workers, clients and member of the public. Workplace Harassment is a serious issue and creates an unhealthy work environment resulting in psychological harm to workers. Harassing behavior can include:

- Unwelcome conduct, comments, gestures or contact which causes offense or humiliation (e.g. name calling, harassing phone calls, spreading rumours);
- Deliberate misgendering (i.e. referring to a person using terms or pronouns that do not align with the person's affirmed gender);
- Physical or psychological bullying which creates fear or mistrust or which ridicules or devalues the individual (e.g. fist shaking, yelling);
- Exclusion or isolation of individuals;
- Intimidation (i.e. standing too close or making inappropriate gestures/ comments);
- Cyber bullying (e.g. posting or sending offensive or intimidating messages through social media or email);

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ The OHS Act states that employers must, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure their workers are not subject to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site.

- Deliberately setting the individual up to fail (e.g. making unreasonable demands, setting impossible deadlines, interfering with work);
- Intentionally withholding information or giving the wrong information;
- Taking away work or responsibility without cause; and
- Displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form.

Reasonable actions taken by an employer or supervisor while managing and directing workers are not considered harassment. Reasonable actions considered to be part of a manager's or supervisor's work functions include changing work assignments, scheduling, assessing and evaluating work performance, inspecting workplaces, implementing health and safety measures, and taking disciplinary action such as dismissing, suspending, demoting, or reprimanding with just cause. Done reasonably and fairly, these actions should not be considered to be workplace harassment.

Differences of opinion or minor disagreement between co-workers are also not generally considered to be workplace harassment but can turn into harassment if no steps are taken to resolve the conflict.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Violence in the workplace could put workers at risk of physical or psychological harm. Workplace violence can include:

- Physical attack or aggression (e.g. hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking a worker; throwing an object at a worker; kicking an object the worker is standing on, such as ladder);
- Threatening behavior (e.g. shaking a fist in a worker's face, wielding a weapon at work, trying to hit a worker, trying to run down a worker using a vehicle or equipment such as a forklift, destroying property or throwing objects);
- Verbal or written threats, (e.g. verbally threatening to attack a worker, leaving threatening notes or sending threatening emails to express an intent to inflict harm on a worker);
- Domestic violence; and
- Sexual violence.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior used by one person to gain power and control over another person who has had a personal relationship. This can range from subtle, coercive forms to violent acts that result in physical harm or death. Examples of behavior may include physical violence, sexual abuse, financial control, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse; stalking and using electronic devices to harass and control.

Domestic violence becomes a workplace hazard, and is no longer limited to a personal issue, when it occurs or spills over into the workplace. It may put the targeted worker at risk, and may pose a threat to co-workers.

Domestic violence can occur between, but not limited to;

- current or former intimate partners;
- people of all ages;
- family members;
- people of all racial, economic, educational and religious backgrounds; and
- people in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Nature of the relationships could be:
 - living together or separately;
 - married or unmarried; or
 - in short-or long-term relationships.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence as a workplace hazard refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a worker's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in a workplace or work related setting. Sexual violence exists on a continuum from obscene name calling to rape and/or homicide, and includes on-line forms of sexual violence (e.g. Internet threats and harassment) and sexual exploitation

OBLIGATIONS OF WORK SITE PARTIES

Social expectations about what constitutes workplace health and safety have changed over time. Issues such as psychological health (particularly workplace harassment and bullying) are now considered by the OHS legislation. As part of the changing roles of individuals at the work site, the OHS Act and OHS Code have specific duties employers, supervisors, and workers must follow to address harassment and violence at the workplace. The OHS Act states that employers must, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure their workers are not subject to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site. Supervisors must, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure workers under the supervisor's supervision are not subject to harassment or violence at work site. Workers also have responsibilities. Workers must refrain from causing or participating in harassment or violence.

To read the complete 17 page article from AB Occupational Health and Safety click on link:

[Harassment and Violence in the Workplace](https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/OHS-workplace-violence-harassment.pdf) or <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/OHS-workplace-violence-harassment.pdf>