

Workplace Violence Policy

Policy Category: Health and Safety

Approved By: Priorities and Planning Group (PPG)

Effective Date: November 2010

1. Policy Statement

Lakehead University is committed to workplace health, safety, and security for all employees. The University will not tolerate any acts of violence and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent violence and protect employees from acts of violence.

2. Scope

The Workplace Violence policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, students, clients of the University, any persons engaged in business with the University, and visitors to University properties.

Lakehead University's Harassment and Discrimination Policy should be consulted regarding issues of personal harassment and discrimination.

3. Definition

In conformity with the Occupational Health and Safety Act "workplace violence" is defined as:

- *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 behavior that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, that could cause physical injury to the worker*

4. Policy Guidelines

All University employees have the right to study, work, and live in an environment free from violence. All members of the University community are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of violence that threaten or perceive to threaten a safe work environment. To promote a violence free environment, the University has developed the following guidelines:

- The University will not tolerate violent behaviour directed at its employees.

- All members of the University community, contractors, visitors and guests (where possible) shall be made aware of this policy. The University will make every attempt to communicate its commitment to a violence free environment
- The University will conduct hazard assessments as appropriate to review specific conditions and circumstances and assess whether the nature of the work or the work environment places employees at risk of violence
- The University will take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or eliminate risks identified through hazard assessment, workplace inspections, or employee and student concerns/reports.
- Every supervisor who becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence that would likely expose a University employee to physical injury may occur in the workplace, shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstance for the protection of the employee.

The Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) will be actively involved in conducting hazard assessments, and developing practical steps to minimize or eliminate identified risk.

5. Consequences

Violence is a serious offence. Any individuals found to have perpetrated an act of violence may be subject to appropriate remedial, disciplinary, and/or legal action.

6. Reporting Procedures

- Acts of violence must be reported immediately to a supervisor, security staff, a Human Resources Officer or the Director of Human Resources. Complaints can be made in person, through e-mail or by telephone. When complaints are brought forward it is imperative that all parties involved maintain confidentiality in an attempt to protect the privacy of all individuals. However, confidentiality may be compromised in cases where it is perceived that imminent danger exists or in cases where disclosure is required. No reprisals will be made against reporting employees when such reports are made in good faith.
- All incidents of violence or threatening behaviour shall be investigated immediately after the report is made. Investigation may involve management, local Police or other appropriate parties.
- The University is committed to providing support services to victims of violence.

Confidential counselling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) shall be available to employees who are victims of violence and to those who are experiencing personal problems in relation to violence.

7. Training

Violence prevention training shall be offered to managers, supervisors and employees. This training shall include workplace violence prevention strategies including conflict resolution, listening and communications skills, identifying problematic behaviour characteristics, anger management and any other topics that may be deemed necessary.

8. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Priorities and Planning Group.