
TITLE: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY
SECTION: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
POLICY NO.: 04500-02

APPROVAL DATE: September 22, 2025

CAO Signature: _____

PURPOSE

The Town of Amherst is committed to providing a safe and respectful workplace that promotes the physical and psychological well-being of all employees. This policy outlines our commitment to preventing workplace violence, harassment, and psychological harm, and to fostering a psychologically safe environment in compliance with the *Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Amherst recognizes that workplace violence, harassment, and psychological harm are serious occupational health and safety hazards. We are committed to:

- Preventing workplace violence, harassment, and bullying.
- Protecting employees from psychological harm.
- Promoting psychological safety.
- Responding promptly and effectively to incidents.
- Providing training and resources to support a respectful and psychologically safe workplace.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and visitors at all Town of Amherst workplaces, including municipal buildings, vehicles, remote work settings, and off-site locations where Town activities occur.

DEFINITIONS

Workplace Violence: as per the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, workplace violence includes the attempted, threatened, or actual conduct of a person that endangers the health or safety of another person.

Harassment: Defined by the *Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act*, harassment includes any vexatious behavior or comment that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome, and includes bullying, intimidation, threats, and unwanted behavior that causes harm.

Bullying: Repeated, unreasonable behavior directed at an employee or group that creates a risk to health and safety. Examples can include verbal abuse, spreading malicious rumors, or deliberately undermining a person's work.

Psychological Harm Any mental or emotional injury, distress, or adverse impact on an employee's psychological well-being resulting from workplace violence, harassment, bullying, or other unsafe or threatening work conditions.

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Psychological Safety: A workplace environment in which employees feel safe to speak up, contribute, and participate without fear of humiliation, intimidation, or negative consequences to their dignity, health or career.

Workplace: Any location where an employee is engaged in work on behalf of the Town, including municipal buildings, community sites, vehicles, and virtual/remote work settings.

OBJECTIVES

1. Prevent and eliminate workplace violence, harassment, and psychological harm.
2. Ensure all reports of workplace violence and harassment are taken seriously and addressed promptly, confidentially, and without retaliation.
3. Conduct regular risk assessments of worksites and job functions.
4. Maintain clear reporting, documenting, and investigation processes.
5. Provide appropriate support and accommodations to employees impacted by workplace violence.
6. Provide regular training to employees and managers on violence prevention, harassment awareness, psychological safety, and reporting procedures.

REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

Employees shall report incidents of violence or harassment in accordance with 04500-02-P Workplace Violence Procedure.

All complaints, investigations, and outcomes will be documented and retained in accordance with privacy and legislative requirements.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

All managers and supervisors will receive training on preventing workplace violence, harassment, bullying, and promoting psychological safety. Training records will be maintained, and refresher training will be provided every three years, or after significant policy or legislative changes.

NON-RETALIATION

Employees who report incidents or participate in investigations in good faith will be protected from retaliation. Retaliation of any kind is strictly prohibited and will result in corrective action.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Chief Administrative Officer	The CAO will: a. Provide resources for training, risk assessment, and support b. Promote a safe and respectful workplace
Council	Members of Council will: a. Promote a safe and respectful workplace by endorsing and upholding the policy b. Approve updates as required.
Directors/Managers/Supervisors	Directors, Managers and Supervisors will: a. Maintain a safe and respectful work environment b. Respond promptly to reports of violence, harassment, or bullying
Human Resources	Human Resources staff will: a. Support reporting, investigations, and resolution b. Ensure appropriate confidential record keeping and manage training programs.
Employees	All Employees will: a. Follow the policy and report incidents b. Cooperate with investigation and support a safe workplace

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I, (Employee Name), acknowledge that I have read and understood the Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention Policy. I agree to adhere to this policy and will ensure that any employees working under my direction adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth in this policy, I may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Amended: added harassment, bullying, & psychological harm; scope broadened to include employees, contractors, volunteers, & visitors in all work settings; new definitions added for harassment, bullying, psychological harm, & psychological safety; objectives expanded to include prevention, risk assessment, support for affected employees & regular training, introduces reporting, record-keeping & non-retaliation language to ensure accountability and confidentiality.	Director, Human Resources	Council	September 22, 2025

Minutes Reference Date: September 22, 2025 May 26, 2008