

Manual of Administration

TOPIC: Health and Safety	SUBJECT: Workplace Violence	Code: HS300
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PURPOSE:

It is Avenue II's goal to provide a safe and secure workplace for all Avenue II employees, volunteers and students.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for responding to situations involving serious threats and/or acts of violence against employees by other employees or the general public.

This policy is to also raise awareness of workplace violence and to emphasize the importance of communicating all violence-related incidents, in order to provide a healthy, safe, and violence-free workplace.

Definitions:

- **Workplace violence** - A threat or an act of aggression resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain, or injury to an employee. Workplace violence includes: physical attacks, threats of violence, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse, harassment, assault, and poisoned environment caused by workplace violence to an employee and/or group of employees.
- **Verbal abuse** - The use of vexatious (annoying) comment(s) that are known or that ought to be known, to be unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening, intimidating or degrading to another person. This includes swearing, insults, or condescending language.
- **Threat (verbal or written)** - Communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on any person or to property by some unlawful act. A **direct threat** is clear and explicit communication indicating the intention to do harm. A **conditional threat** involves a condition, for example, "If you don't leave me alone, you'll regret it." **Veiled threats** usually involve body language or behaviours that leave little doubt in the mind of the victim that the individual intends to harm. For example, "If you don't do it, you know what could happen to you".
- Harassment/Sexual harassment- see Policy HR030 for definitions.

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- Physical attacks are any unwanted physical contact intended to do harm, which include hitting, punching, shoving, pushing, biting, pinching, or kicking.
- Psychological abuse is an act that provokes fear or diminishes an individual's dignity or self worth that intentionally inflicts psychological trauma on another.
- Assault is any intentional injury of another; any intentional display of force that causes the victim to fear immediate bodily harm.
- Sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or sexually explicit statement, such as jokes, displays of pornographic material, pinching, brushing against, touching, patting, or leering that makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated, or uncomfortable, thus interfering with work performance.
- Sexual assault is the use of threat or violence to force one individual to touch, kiss, fondle, or have sexual intercourse with another.
- Poisoned work environment is a hostile and abusive work environment resulting from harassment by comment or conduct that ridicules or demeans an individual or specific group of employees.

Policy:

1. Acts of harassment, abusive behaviour, assaults, serious threats, or acts of violence by employees or the general public, against employees, will not be tolerated at Avenue II. Please note application to the general public can be limited due to a lack of control by Avenue II. Every reasonable effort will be made by Avenue II to protect employees in this situation.
2. Consequences of non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, as well as legal action including criminal charges.

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3. Should an act of violence occur, the Manager will immediately review the incident, and depending on the situation, the Executive Director may call for an investigation. This may also include the Executive Director or police taking action with respect to the incident. These actions are geared towards minimizing the impact of an incident and to prevent further violence.
4. All information regarding the incident and individual is to be kept confidential.

Responsibilities:

Employee:

1. Report acts of violence and serious threats which any reasonable person would consider potentially harmful, made against them or witnessed by them to another employee. Employees must report the incident to the individual's Supervisor. If the violent act is being performed by the individual's Supervisor, a report should be made to that person's Supervisor. In the case of the Executive Director, they should report it to the Chair of the Personnel Committee (of the Board of Directors of Avenue II).
2. If comfortable, the employee should address the person about their concerns and report the outcome to a Supervisor.
3. Any individual may take immediate action when the safety of another employee is threatened and the event poses immediate harm to a person. Such action may include notification to the police.
4. Where necessary seek medical treatment.
5. Write an Incident Report describing the incident to the appropriate Supervisor.
6. Follow the direction of management and comply with the investigation.

Manager:

1. The Manager will review the incident report immediately and report to the Director of Support Services and the General Manager. All recommendations and actions that affect individuals involved will comply with existing policies, procedures, and laws.

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2. Ensure the safety of all parties.
3. Offer First Aid or medical treatment if required.
4. Ensure documentation by self and parties involved (Incident Reports, witness statements, WSIB forms).
5. Offer debriefing and/or contact with EAP.

Director of Support Services/General Manager:

1. As required, assist with the investigation and in making recommendations on action to be taken.
2. Ensure debriefing has been arranged for victim, if required.
3. Recommend any further action for prevention of similar incidents.

Executive Director:

1. Initiate an investigation with an investigation team, which may include the Management Team or anyone else that might provide relevant information or support.
2. Evaluate recommendations and ensure appropriate action is taken.
3. Inform Board of Directors as appropriate.

