

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY
October, 2008

Date of approval: October 22, 2008

Policy Manual Reference

4.3.1 With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the executive director may not cause or allow conditions that are inaccessible, unsafe, unfair, undignified or in violation of any laws (labour codes, human rights, occupational health and safety).

Introduction

During 2007-8, following provisions of the reference guide produced by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour, Independent Living Nova Scotia Association (ILNSA) conducted a risk assessment for violence in the workplace.

David Wareing, the organization's Occupational Health and Safety Representative, led the assessment process, which involved all staff from both worksites: the Bloomfield Centre in Halifax, and the Akerley campus, Nova Scotia Community College, Dartmouth. Mr. Wareing attended a workshop on workplace violence prevention planning, held by the Province of Nova Scotia.

The risk assessment identified two activities that showed a risk of workplace violence; namely, the information and referral service, and job coaching as part of the Access to Community Education and Employment (ACEE) program.

Policy Statement

ILNSA acknowledges that violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard that can cause physical and emotional harm. We view any acts of violence or threats of violence in the workplace as unacceptable. We are committed to working to prevent workplace violence and to responding appropriately if workplace violence does occur. All persons associated with ILNSA are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment.

Scope

This policy applies to ILNSA and its worksites, includes sites outside its main office, its employees, volunteers and program participants. For the purpose of this policy, the term "employees" means both paid and volunteer workers.

Definition

As defined by the Province of Nova Scotia, violence means any of the following:

1. Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury;
2. Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.

For more information, go to
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsviolence.htm>

Violence in the Workplace Prevention

Following the risk assessment, ILNSA has taken/is taking these steps to prevent violence in the workplace:

- Discussed the issue at staff meetings
- Will provide training in non-violent crisis resolution
- Installed door viewers on its doors at the Bloomfield Centre
- Advised ILNSA staff at the Bloomfield Centre to keep doors locked when alone and after 4:30 p.m.
- Advised ACEE staff to follow the security arrangements at Akerley campus, NSCC
- Discussed security with Bloomfield Centre manager, Claudette Levy, Area Co-ordinator, Community Development, HRM
- Posted the policy statement at worksites (subsequent to policy approval) and on the Centre's website.

Incident Reporting and Follow-Up

If there is a workplace violence incident, those persons affected must report the incident to their supervisor and/or the Executive Director (ED). If the ED is one of the persons involved in the incident, the incident must be reported to board co-chairpersons. The ED or board co-chairpersons is/are responsible to

- Record the incident and report it to the board of directors
- Investigate the incident promptly and document the findings
- Advise the Occupational Health and Safety Representative of the incident and the investigation
- Take any necessary action to prevent similar incidents in the future
- Advise affected employees of the actions taken
- Provide incident debriefing
- Offer affected employees counselling as resources permit, and encourage them to consult a health professional or counsellor of their choice
- Grant reasonable time away from work, if needed, for employees to consult a health professional or counsellor.