

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Category:	General Corporate
Application:	All employees, volunteers and directors
Responsible Office:	Human Resources

Let's Talk Science is committed to building and preserving a safe working environment for its employees and volunteers. In pursuit of this goal, Let's Talk Science does not condone and will not tolerate acts of violence against or by any Let's Talk Science employee or volunteer. Let's Talk Science will take every reasonable precaution and implement measures to prevent violence and protect all employees and volunteers from potentially violent situations. As such, this policy prohibits physical or verbal threats – with or without the use of weapons – intimidation, or violence in the workplace to minimize risk of injury or harm resulting from violence to Let's Talk Science employees and volunteers.

Specifically, if Let's Talk Science is aware that domestic violence is likely to expose an employee or volunteer to a workplace physical injury, every reasonable precaution will be implemented to protect the individual.

It is also a violation of Let's Talk Science's Workplace Violence Policy for anyone to knowingly make a false complaint of violence, or to provide false information about a complaint. Individuals who violate this Policy are subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action, up to and including termination of their employment or volunteer agreement.

Let's Talk Science strictly prohibits violence in the workplace, including on volunteer assignments.

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation and disruptive behaviour for all our employees and volunteers. Weapons are strictly prohibited from all company property; violators are subject to discipline and may be reported directly to the police. Let's Talk Science firmly believes that by working together with our employees and volunteers, the risk of workplace violence can be minimized.

Application of this policy

This policy applies to all those working for the organization including front-line employees, managers, volunteers, officers and directors. The organization will not tolerate violence whether engaged in by fellow employees, managers, volunteers, officers, directors, service providers, or program participants of the organization.

All Let's Talk Science employees and volunteers are personally accountable and responsible for enforcing this policy and must make every effort to prevent and eliminate violence in the work environment and to intervene immediately by advising the President, relevant Vice President or Human Resources if they observe a problem or if a problem is reported to them.

This policy prohibits reprisals against individuals, acting in good faith, who report incidents of workplace violence or act as witnesses. Management will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent reprisals, threats of reprisal, or further violence. Reprisal is defined as any act of retaliation, either direct or indirect.

Definitions

“workplace violence” means but is not limited to:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker or volunteer in a workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker or volunteer.
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker or volunteer in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker or volunteer.
- A statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker or volunteer to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against a worker or volunteer in a workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker, or volunteer.
- Physical acts (e.g., hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking, sexual assault).
- Any threat, behaviour or action which is interpreted to carry the potential to harm or endanger the safety of others, result in an act of aggression, or destroy or damage property.
- Disruptive behaviour that is not appropriate to the work environment (e.g., yelling, swearing).

“the workplace” may include, but is not limited to, the following locations:

- Let's Talk Science Offices, washrooms, common areas, meeting rooms, parking lots, vehicles, etc.
- In any location that can be reasonably regarded as an extension of the workplace, for example offsite business meetings, festivals, classrooms and company social gatherings.

Risk of Violence

Let's Talk Science recognizes its duty to provide information, including personal information, related to a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour if:

- The worker (including volunteers) can be expected to encounter that person in the course of his/her work; and
- The risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker (including volunteers) to physical injury.

Let's Talk Science will only disclose personal information that is deemed reasonably necessary to protect the worker (including volunteers) from physical harm.

Roles & Responsibilities in Maintaining a Positive & Safe Work Environment

Responsibilities of Let's Talk Science

Let's Talk Science shall ensure that all known incidents of workplace violence are investigated and to the extent appropriate based on the nature of each incident and the actual or potential threat it posed to worker safety:

- Consult with other parties (e.g. Legal Counsel, Health & Safety consultants, JHSCs, Employee Assistance Provider, Human Rights office, Local Police Services).
- Take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or address risks identified by the incident.
- Document the incident, its investigation, and corrective action taken.

- Take all reasonable and practical measures to protect workers (including volunteers), acting in good faith, who report workplace violence or act as witnesses, from reprisal or further violence.
- Submit a report of the incident to the Ministry of Labour or other government body as provincial legislation requires when an employee incurs a lost-time injury as a result of violence in the workplace.
- Review this policy and hazard assessments annually, or as changes to job responsibilities or environments occur, and revise the assessment as needed.
- Review annually, in conjunction with review of hazard assessments, the effectiveness of actions taken to minimize or eliminate workplace violence and make improvements to procedures, as required.

Role of Manager/Supervisor

- Legally, management is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace free from violence.
- Managers must be sensitive to the climate in the workplace and address potential problems before those problems become serious.
- If a manager becomes aware of violence in the workplace and chooses to ignore it, that Manager and the Company risk being named co-respondent in a complaint and may be found liable in legal proceedings brought about by the complainant and/ or government representatives.

Role of Employee/Volunteer

As an employee or volunteer of Let's Talk Science, you have the following responsibilities to our workplace:

- We trust that all of our employees and volunteers will help us eliminate the threat of violence from our workplace.
- All employees and volunteers are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of violence that threaten or perceive to threaten a safe work environment. This includes reporting any violent incident the employee or volunteer has been involved in that may come into the workplace.
- As all employees and volunteers have the right and responsibility to refuse unsafe work, this shall include circumstances where the employee or volunteer believes workplace violence is likely to endanger them.

Role of Co-worker/Co-Volunteer

If you are a co-worker or co-volunteer who has witnessed an action related to violence in the workplace:

- Immediately report the incident to the President, relevant Vice President or Human Resources.

If you are a co-worker or co-volunteer who suspects an employee or co-volunteer may be in danger with regard to workplace violence:

- Immediately report your concerns to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Human Resources.

Responsibilities of the Joint Health & Safety Committee

The Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) will:

- Review the Workplace Violence Hazard Assessment results and provide recommendations to management to reduce or eliminate the risk of violence

- Review all reports forwarded to the JHSC regarding workplace violence and other incident reports as appropriate pertaining to incidents of workplace violence that result in personal injury or threat of personal injury, property damage, or police involvement
- Participate in the investigation of critical injuries (e.g., incidents that place life in jeopardy, result in substantial blood loss, fracture of leg or arm, among others)
- Recommend corrective measures for the improvement of the health and safety of workers (including volunteers)
- Respond to employee or volunteer concerns related to workplace violence and communicate these to management

In addition, the JHSC may participate in the investigation of reported incidents that result in personal injury or have the potential to result in injury.

Workplace Coordinator

For the purposes of this policy, the Coordinator, Human Resources shall act as a Workplace Coordinator with respect to workplace violence and harassment issues. This includes responsibility for the development and implementation of workplace violence and harassment policies, procedures and programs.

Risk Assessment

Let's Talk Science will conduct a risk assessment of the work environment to identify any issues related to potential violence that may impact the operation and will institute measures to control any identified risks to employee and volunteer safety. This information will be provided to the Joint Health & Safety Committee.

The risk assessment may include review of records and reports (e.g. employee and volunteer incident reports), staff and volunteer perception surveys, health and safety inspection reports, first aid records or other related records. Specific areas that may contribute to risk of violence may include: contact with public, exchange of money, working alone or at night or in the early morning hours etc. Research may also include a review of similar workplaces with respect to their history of violence.

Complaint & Resolution Process

In the event that an employee or volunteer is either directly affected by or witness to any violence in the workplace, it is imperative for the safety of all Let's Talk Science employees and volunteers that the incident be reported without delay. This is also the case if an employee or volunteer is witness to potentially violent tendencies within the workplace.

- Report any violence or potentially violent situations immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Human Resources.
- All reports shall be kept confidential.
- All reports shall be investigated, and dealt with appropriately. This may include involving the Let's Talk Science Board Chair in the investigation of an incident that involves the President.
- If it is determined by the company that any employee or volunteer has been involved in violent behaviour or unacceptable conduct related to another employee or volunteer, immediate disciplinary action will be taken. Such disciplinary action may involve counselling, a formal warning and could result in immediate dismissal without further notice.

- Violent action, threats and assault are serious criminal offences, and shall be dealt with appropriately.

This Workplace Violence Policy must never be used to bring fraudulent or malicious complaints against employees or volunteers. It is important to realize that unfounded/frivolous allegations may cause both the accused person and the company significant damage. If it is determined by the company that any employee or volunteer has knowingly made false statements regarding an allegation related to violence, immediate disciplinary action will be taken. As with any case of dishonesty, disciplinary action may include immediate dismissal without further notice.

When an employee or volunteer has asked a member of the Senior Leadership Team to deal with a violent situation, the manager should:

- Support the employee or volunteer without prejudging the situation.
- Work with the employee or volunteer and document the offensive action(s) and have the employee or volunteer sign a complaint.
- Provide a signed copy of the complaint to Human Resources.

Special Circumstances

Should an employee or volunteer have a legal court order (e.g. restraining, or “no-contact” order) against another individual, the employee or volunteer is encouraged to notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team and to supply a copy of that order to Human Resources. This will likely be required in instances where the employee or volunteer strongly feels that the aggressor may attempt to contact that employee or volunteer at Let’s Talk Science, in direct violation of the court order. Such information shall be kept confidential.

If any visitor to the Let’s Talk Science workplace is seen with a weapon (or is known to possess one), makes a verbal threat or assault against an employee or volunteer or another individual, employee and volunteer witnesses are required to immediately contact the police or emergency response services and then notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Human Resources.

In cases where criminal proceedings are forthcoming, Let’s Talk Science will assist police agencies, attorneys, insurance companies, and courts to the fullest extent.

Confidentiality

Let’s Talk Science will do everything it can to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure that complainants and respondents are treated fairly and respectfully. Let’s Talk Science will protect this privacy so long as doing so remains consistent with the enforcement of this policy and adherence to the law.

Neither the name of the person reporting the facts nor the circumstances surrounding them will be disclosed to anyone whatsoever, unless such disclosure is necessary for an investigation or disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be determined by Let’s Talk Science and will be proportional to the seriousness of the behaviour concerned.

All records of harassment and violence reports, and subsequent investigations, are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone except to the extent required by law.

Let's Talk Science will also provide appropriate assistance to any employee or volunteer who is victim of discrimination or harassment.

Bonnie Schmidt

Approved by: _____
President

Date: April 1st, 2017

Employee Acknowledgment and Agreement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Workplace Violence Policy, and I agree to adhere to its requirements. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth by this policy, I may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date Adopted: 01/13/2012	Last Modification Date: 04/01/2017	Last Reviewed Date: 04/01/2017
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