



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

10b.

Security Measures at Toronto Public Library

Date:	April 16, 2007
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the Board's request that the City Librarian consider the Toronto Civic Employees' Union – Local 416 recommendations regarding health and safety issues and report to the Board at its April meeting.

While the Library already has a long history of addressing health and safety issues, there is always room to improve and adjust to changing circumstances. Library staff recommends that the Central Joint Health and Safety Committee is an effective structure within which to review safety issues and develop a strategy to address these issues. A more comprehensive Crisis Prevention and Response program is under development and a policy on Violence in the Workplace, which will be brought to the Board at a later date, is part of this program, which seeks to strengthen the Library's commitment to safety for both public and staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that:

1. The joint Union / Management review of staff safety issues and the development of strategies to address these issues be conducted within the structure of the Central Joint Health and Safety Committee (Central JHSC);
2. The Rules of Conduct Committee provide regular reports to the Central Joint Health and Safety Committee to provide an opportunity for Union worker representatives to comment on recommended actions or policy changes; and
3. No change be made to the wording of Board's policies since the health and safety needs of workers are already referenced in the Rules of Conduct and the Human Rights and Harassment and Occupational Health and Safety policies.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

The Union and Management co-chairs of the Central Joint Health and Safety Committee will be asked to develop an action plan for the review of staff safety issues and development of strategies to address these issues.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

At the March 26, 2007 Board meeting, the Toronto Civic Employees' Union – Local 416 made a presentation on health and safety issues at various TPL locations. In the presentation, the Bargaining Unit recommended that the Board consider:

1. a joint Union / Management review of safety issues and dangerous incidents, and the development of a strategy to address them;
2. recognition that the health and safety needs of workers be written into all relevant Board Policy, in particular, the Internet Use Policy; and
3. a worker representative be appointed to participate in an advisory capacity on the Rules of Conduct Committee.

The Board requested the City Librarian to consult with the Toronto Civic Employees' Union – Local 416 concerning health and safety issues and referred the recommendations in the presentation to the City Librarian for consideration in a report on Security Measures at Toronto Public Library for the April Board meeting.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Library is seen by Toronto citizens as providing a safe and welcoming environment. This is achieved within an urban setting, a diverse population and public spaces open to all. The Union and the Library co-operate in promoting and improving practices to provide a safe environment for Library employees through joint central and regional health and safety committees. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a joint Union and Management initiative, has been effective in providing support for staff after experiencing a traumatic incident.

COMMENTS

The Toronto Public Library Board has recognized the need to maintain a safe environment for the public and for staff from its inception. At its second meeting (January 29, 1998), the newly amalgamated Board approved the Rules of Conduct, a

policy which outlines the rules to prevent disruptions to library services, ensure the safety of public and staff and maintain the security of library property. Since that time the Library has put in place policies, procedures and training for staff that are reviewed often and adjusted to meet current challenges.

The Library has existing programs for promoting and maintaining a safe environment for the public and staff. Those programs are comprised of Board-approved policies such as the Rules of Conduct, protocols for reporting and tracking incidents such as the Incident reporting forms, procedures such as the Emergency Procedures, training programs for staff such as Dealing with Difficult People and security services and systems. These are detailed in the attachments to this report. The existing programs are updated on an on-going basis, as we are constantly learning how to better provide a safe environment.

The Library works with the Toronto Police Service and other community agencies to coordinate its response to safety issues. Branch staff have been involved in community safety plans, participating in community safety audits and addressing identified problems on Library property. Toronto Shelter, Housing and Support has provided training for library staff related to dealing with people who are homeless.

The Library is setting up a new program that specifically targets crisis prevention and response and violence in the workplace. Many elements of this program are already in place, including the ones outlined above. The program will include: a policy on violence and violence management; enhanced staff training for handling difficult users; safety inspections; lockdown procedures and debriefing protocols. The policy on Violence in the Workplace will be presented to the Board at an upcoming meeting. The Crisis Prevention and Response program was reviewed at the last Central Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting, and the Violence in the Workplace Sub-Committee is providing feedback.

Several existing structures provide opportunities for the Union and Management to work together on health and safety issues. The Joint Health and Safety Committees and the roles and responsibilities of the committees are defined in the Collective Agreement. Through these joint committees, the Union and Management co-operate in promoting and improving practices in the workplace to provide a safe and healthful environment in which to work. There are two other formally recognized forums in which issues can be raised and resolved: the Labour-Management Committee and the Labour Relations Steering Committee.

There are several ways for Union and Management jointly to address safety issues. Library Management suggests that the review and development of strategy be conducted within the structure of the Central Joint Health and Safety Committee (Central JHSC). There are a number of reasons for this suggestion:

1. The structure of the Central JHSC provides a set meeting schedule, formal and system-wide communications (published minutes) and a formal process for acting on recommendations (recommendations from Central JHSC to the City Librarian

require a response within a set period of time). This structure is a legislated requirement and described in the Collective Agreement.

2. The Central JHSC has established a Violence in the Workplace Sub-Committee and that Sub-Committee could provide a focus for the review and development of strategy.
3. The Regional JHSC are responsible for conducting regular safety inspections of Library buildings and conducting safety inspections prior to the opening of renovated or newly constructed buildings.

Library Management has considered the Union recommendation for an appointment of a worker representative in an advisory capacity to the Rules of Conduct Committee and is not recommending such action. Under our current practice, reports from the Rules of Conduct Committee are a standing agenda item on all Central JHSC meetings. The Union worker representatives on JHSC have the option of commenting on any recommended actions or policy changes.

Library Management has considered the Union's recommendation that the Board consider recognition that the health and safety needs of workers be written into all relevant Board policy, in particular, the Internet Use Policy. A review of the Rules of Conduct indicates that this is already in place. The opening paragraph states that the rules are to "ensure the safety of public and staff". When the Internet Use policy was prepared in 1998 and revised in 2002, consideration was given to incorporating similar wording. It was felt that the best way to achieve this was by referencing the Rules of Conduct in the Internet Use policy. The Rules of Conduct functions as the Board's communication to the public regarding expected behaviour. Reference to this policy achieved more consistent communication to the public and was a simpler message for the staff to convey. Other policies, such as the Human Rights and Harassment Policy and the legislated Occupational Health and Safety policy are concerned primarily with the rights of employees to freedom from harassment and to protecting the health and safety of employees. All Board policies must conform to the Human Rights and Harassment Policy and the Occupational Health and Safety policy; the Board's policies cannot contradict the legislative requirements outlined in these policies.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Structure and Roles of the Joint Health and Safety Committees
- Attachment 2: Rules of Conduct Policy
- Attachment 3: Internet Use Policy
- Attachment 4: Human Rights and Harassment Policy
- Attachment 5: Occupational Health and Safety Policy