



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

11.

Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy

Date:	October 15, 2007
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy for approval. The policy was developed with input from the Central Joint Health and Safety Committee (Central JHSC.) This new policy specifically addresses violence in the workplace, and supports the health and safety program currently in place in the Library. It is consistent with the City's Workplace Violence Policy and materials developed by the Education Safety Association of Ontario. The policy provides a framework under which a crisis prevention and response program will be formalized by the Library.

Although the Library has a long history of addressing health and safety issues, there is an increased concern of the need to address issues related to the potential for violence in the Library. The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy strengthens the Library's existing commitment to protecting the safety of the staff and public in the Library. The policy is part of a crisis prevention and response program that will be further developed by the Library. The overall goal of the program is to raise awareness of the potential for violence in the workplace, and to increase the Library's capacity to prevent and respond to violent incidents. The program will build on existing policies, emergency procedures and customer service training programs. The program was developed in consultation with the Central JHSC and the committee's input will be incorporated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. Approves the Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy (Attachment 1).

Implementation Points

To support the policy, staff will develop a Crisis Prevention and Response Program. The implementation plan for the Crisis Prevention and Response Program will be developed in consultation with Central JHSC. Elements will be brought to the committee for input as they are developed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The report has no immediate financial implications beyond what have already been approved in the current year's operating and capital budget. The implementation of this policy and the related Crisis Prevention and Response Program may require an upgrading of security measures at Library branches and additional staff training on elements in the program.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 16, 2007, the Board received a report entitled *Security Measures at Toronto Public Library*. The report outlined the Library's intention to create a policy related to violence in the workplace and a crisis prevention and response program. The Board directed that strategies to address staff safety issues be developed within the structure of the Central JHSC. The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy addresses both the safety of staff and public. The policy was developed in consultation with Central JHSC.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

This policy results from an increased concern of the need to raise awareness of the potential for violence in the workplace and to increase the capacity of the Library to prevent and respond to violent incidents. Although not a legislative requirement, many large scale public organizations develop crisis prevention and response programs in acknowledgement of the fact that organizations are vulnerable to incidents of violence from the staff or public. The City's Workplace Violence Policy and those of other agencies were reviewed in developing the Library's policy. In addition, materials from the Education and Safety Association of Ontario and other organizations were consulted.

The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy supports other Library policies including the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, the Rules of Conduct Policy which sets out expectations for public behaviour in the Library and the Human Rights and Harassment Policy which addresses workplace violence related to harassment or intimidation of staff. The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy applies to all potentially violent situations and specifically states that *the Library will not tolerate*

any threats or acts of violence and that all reasonable and practical measures will be put in place to prevent violence and protect employees and visitors from acts of violence.

The policy outlines the responsibility of all employees in maintaining a safe work environment with specific responsibilities for management and the Central JHSC.

COMMENTS

The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy commits the Library to developing a crisis prevention and response program. These programs typically include three distinct phases in crisis prevention and response. Prevention planning identifies and implements what can be done in advance to avert or minimize threats. Response planning includes procedures and guidelines to follow during a threat or violent event. Debriefing identifies how to successfully handle the after-effects of an incident which may include personal trauma, facility damage, internal and external communications as well as analyzing what can be learned from the incident to improve existing procedures.

To implement a crisis prevention and response program the Library will:

- communicate the Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy throughout the organization;
- review existing training programs related to violence prevention; introduce new training as appropriate and ensure training is ongoing;
- develop procedures related to workplace violence hazard assessments and with Central JHSC and Human Resources staff implement practical steps to minimize or eliminate identified risks;
- review existing procedures to be followed during and after a violent incident; introduce new elements as appropriate and communicate the procedures throughout the organization; and
- work with Central JHSC to review all reports of workplace violence.

Many of the elements of a crisis prevention and response program are currently in place in the Library. By approving a policy and formalizing the program, the Library will raise awareness of the potential for violence in the workplace; communicate the shared role of employees and management in violence prevention and response; and increase the Library's capacity to prevent and respond to violent incidents effectively.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy