



POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Responsible Unit	Human Resources – Occupational Health & Safety
Policy Number	V - 4
Date Last Updated	6 February 2008
Approving Sector Head	Executive Director, Human Resources
Policy	VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Policy Statement

Workplace violence is not common; however, it is important to acknowledge that physical violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard that can cause both physical and emotional harm. The University views any act or threat of violence in the workplace as unacceptable, and is committed to working to prevent workplace violence and to responding appropriately if workplace violence does occur. All members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students and visitors, are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment.

2. Risk Assessments

In consultation with its Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee, Acadia has developed and implemented a [Workplace Violence Risk Assessment tool](#). Risk factors such as workplace design and layout, various tasks and activities, and historical indicators are considered. This tool was used to conduct a baseline assessment of our University community, and information gained from that assessment formed the foundation of this policy and plan.

As time goes on, changes will occur within our community that impact the risk of violence. Departmental managers and supervisors are responsible for recognizing new risks and performing a new [Workplace Violence Risk Assessment](#) whenever there is a significant change in any of the following:

- the circumstances in which work takes place,
- the interactions that occur in the course of performing work, and
- the physical location or layout of the workplace (including construction of new facilities or renovation of existing facilities).

Completed Workplace Violence Risk Assessments must be submitted to Acadia's Health & Safety Office for review and action. The Health & Safety Office is also responsible for initiating a new risk assessment at least every five years.

3. Preventing Workplace Violence

Effective workplace design and layout plays an important role in preventing acts of violence. Departmental managers and supervisors should contact Acadia Safety & Security to assist in assessing the risks associated with design and layout, and recommending improvements.

Work situations and interactions such as working alone, working late, and working with troubled persons are critical factors in many cases of workplace violence. Based on the circumstances, departments may need to implement administrative controls such as work procedures, scheduling and communication methods that will minimize the risk. When necessary, departmental managers and supervisors should contact Safety & Security or the Health & Safety Office for assistance in determining appropriate administrative controls.

4. Reporting

All faculty, staff, students, contractors and visitors have a duty to report all incidents of workplace violence so that corrective and preventive actions can be taken.

(a) Emergencies

All employees should familiarize themselves with Acadia's Emergency Procedures, which are posted in all departments, and are also available on the web at:
http://admin.acadiau.ca/security/emergency_procedures.htm

(b) Non-Emergencies

Threatening behavior that causes one to believe there is potential for workplace violence must also be reported to one or more of the following, as appropriate: immediate supervisor/director of unit; Equity Officer; Safety & Security. Identifying patterns of potential violence may assist in preventing the situation from escalating.

(c) Investigation

All reports of emergencies or threatening behavior will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. The form of investigation will depend on the circumstances, and may involve resources from both on and off campus (such as law enforcement officials).

5. Support Services

Faculty, staff and students who have been exposed to or affected by violence at the Acadia's workplace will be provided with an appropriate debriefing. Arrangements will be made to consult health practitioners for treatment and/or counselling. In cases where other support services may be necessary, there shall be consultation with Human Resources and the Equity Office.

6. Training

Training on preventing workplace violence will be provided by Human Resources.