



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Brady Boghean, Manager, Corporate Health and Safety

Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Subject: New Corporate Policy- Workplace Violence and Harassment and Annual Policy Statements

Report #: 2024-1120-HR-R02-BB

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to introduce a new Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy and Program, along with our accompanying Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy Statement and Occupation Health and Safety Policy Statement.

These documents establish standards that comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act ("**OHSA**"), which requires employers to prepare and review such policies at least annually.

These initiatives reflect the County's commitment to preventing workplace violence, harassment, and discrimination and encourage a work environment where every individual is treated with respect and dignity further promoting the overall health and safety of all employees.

Lastly, continuously enhancing the County's dedication to health and safety is in alignment with the values in our strategic plan, including accountability, equity and inclusion. The Human Resources department has also recently revitalized quarterly meetings with our Local Municipal Partners and intend to share resources and engage in discussions about these initiatives.

Background

According to Statistics Canada, a 2020 Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work found that 31% of men and 47% of women in Ontario reported experiencing some form of harassment or sexual harassment in the workplace. Additionally, the Canadian Initiative on Workplace Violence reports that 1 in 5 incidents of violence occur in workplace settings.

Domestic violence is also a growing concern in our local communities, and these situations have the potential to impact the workplace.

As an employer, we must take all reasonable precautions to establish and maintain robust policies and procedures that protect our employees and foster a safe and respectful work environment.

Discussion

Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy and Program

The County's existing corporate policies on Workplace Violence and Harassment are separate. Adopting a single Workplace Violence and Harassment policy and program emphasizes the interconnectedness of these issues, streamlines procedures, and highlights their combined impact on employee well-being and organizational culture.

The new Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy and Program incorporates best practices while ensuring the County's compliance with current legal requirements and standards.

Additionally, this policy features enhanced reporting mechanisms that help employees feel safe and supported when raising concerns while also including reference to emergency response procedures to ensure employee safety.

These elements will be reinforced by training and awareness programs designed to educate employees about workplace violence and harassment.

The Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy and Program (Appendix A) and Violence and Harassment Reporting Form (Appendix B) are attached for Council's consideration.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually.

Policy Statements- Workplace Violence and Harassment/ Occupational Health and Safety

The policy statements demonstrate the commitment of the County, CAO, and County Council in taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment.

Additionally, the policy statements outline the accountability of managers and supervisors to ensure employee safety, while also emphasizing that employees share responsibility for their own health and safety.

These policy statements are posted in all County workplaces as they represent the cornerstone of our organization’s dedication to health and safety.

The Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy Statement (Appendix C) and draft Occupational Health and Safety Policy Statement (Appendix D) are attached for Council’s consideration.

These policy statements will be reviewed at least annually.

Financial Implications

Currently, there are no significant financial implications for the County of Essex. However, there may be some minor expenses associated with training, which are anticipated to be funded through existing operating budget capacity.

Consultations

- Senior Leadership Team
- Kyla Pritiko, Director, Human Resources

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact <input type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive report 2024-1120-HR-R02-BB Corporate Policy- Workplace Violence and Harassment and Annual Policy Statements as information; and,

That by-law 2024-51 be approved at the appropriate time for the adoption of Corporate Policy 2024-015 Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy and Program, Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy Statement, and Occupational Health and Safety Policy Statement.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Brady Boghean

Brady Boghean, Manager, Corporate Health and Safety

Concurred With,

Kyla Pritiko

Kyla Pritiko, Director, Human Resources

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
A	Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy
B	Violence and Harassment Reporting Form
C	Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy Statement
D	Occupational Health and Safety Policy Statement