

RAINY RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY	
Category: PERSONNEL	Number: PE14
Topic: Occupational Health & Safety, Working Alone and Workplace Violence	Page: 1 of 5
Date: Sept. 16 '14 Revised: Feb. 13 '18 Revised: May 24 '22	Authorized by:

The Library Board is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for staff, volunteers and patrons. The Board also acts to protect library property. The Board, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and library employees share the responsibility to ensure a safe and secure workplace.

Section A – Occupational Health and Safety

1. The *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1* (OHSA) imposes a legal duty on employers and on supervisors for ensuring the well-being of workers under their supervision and to take reasonable measures to protect their safety. The Board designates the CEO as the supervisor, in accordance with *OHSA*.
2. The Board ensures that funding, time and resources are dedicated to training the staff in safety, security and emergency procedures.
3. The Board requires each individual staff member to take responsibility for their own health and safety, as well as that of patrons. Each person will take initiative on health and safety issues and will work to solve problems and make improvements on an ongoing basis.
4. The CEO shall conduct regular occupational health and safety inspections of the workplace – including security-related matters – and will post the results of those inspections for review by all staff. The Board shall receive, read and review each inspection.
5. The response to any situation deemed to be an emergency shall be governed by the Managing Emergencies Policy (PE11) and/or the Staff and Patron Safety Policy (SE2), as required.

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Section B – Working Alone

6. Working alone describes a situation where a person is the only worker in the library, or where the worker does not have direct contact with a co-worker. The Library Board recognizes that staff safety is paramount, and agrees that appropriate supports will be put in place for staff working alone. Library staff acknowledge that, due to budget realities, working alone is a routine part of their duties.

7. The Library Board shall take the following measures:

- a) facility-related problems (such as broken outside lighting) shall be raised with the landlord and documented in writing.
- b) working alone procedures shall be specifically addressed in employee orientation.
- c) on request, a check-in procedure at closing time will be established for any staff person working alone.

8. Staff working alone shall take the following basic precautions:

- a) all unused spaces will be locked.
- b) defective outside lighting shall be reported promptly to the landlord for repair.
- c) no tasks involving climbing or heavy lifting shall be undertaken.
- d) the staff person shall work facing the public and carry a telephone with them.
- e) only professional staff shall be left in charge of a library.
- f) cash shall not be counted or left unattended in public areas.
- g) established opening and closing procedures shall be followed.
- h) staff shall familiarize themselves with the Staff and Patron Safety Policy (SE2).

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Section C – Workplace Violence

9. The definition of violence as set out in the *OHSA* is:

- a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker; and,
- c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

10. Violence in the workplace includes:

- a) verbally threatening to attack a worker
- b) leaving threatening notes or sending threatening e-mails to the workplace
- c) shaking a fist in a worker's face
- d) hitting or trying to hit a worker
- e) throwing or kicking an object
- f) sexual aggression against a worker

11. Violence in the Library or on Library property also includes:

- a) intentionally or recklessly damaging the property of another person
- b) intentionally causing alarm
- c) recklessly creating a risk by fighting
- d) creating a hazardous condition or danger by recklessly engaging in conduct which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury
- e) intentionally placing or attempting to place another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury
- f) wielding a weapon

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12. At all times, staff and patrons are expected to follow the Staff and Patron Safety Policy (PE2). Staff should follow the Managing Emergencies Policy (PE11) for any situation listed in that Policy.

13. The CEO or designate maintains a workplace violence program. The program sets out:

- a) a process for assessing the risk of violence in the workplace
- b) measures to control risk including those from domestic violence
- c) procedures for reporting incidents of violence; and,
- d) the process for dealing with, and investigating, violent incidents and complaints.

14. All reports are investigated by the CEO or designate:

- a) physical or sexual assault or threat of physical violence will be reported to the police.
- b) the Library will provide staff with information on the risk of violence in the Library and training workshops on a periodic basis addressing concerns such as "dealing with difficult people."
- c) anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call the police.
- iv) workplace violence will be reported immediately to the most senior staff member available and to the Library Board.
- d) employees are required to report expeditiously behaviour that they reasonably believe poses a potential for violence as described above.
- e) the Library, at the request of an employee, or at its own discretion, can prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing an employee on library property in cases where the employee suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individual(s).

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15. All investigations will be conducted in confidence to the extent possible. Documents will be retained per the Record Retention Policy (GO2). Employees who are found to have made false or malicious complaints will be subject to disciplinary action.

Statutory Authority:

Employment Standards Act, 2000, SO 2000, c 41

Municipal Act, 2001, SO 2001, c 25

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSO 1990, c M.56

Occupational Health and Safety Act, RSO 1990, c O.1

Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c P.44