



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY Policy # HR-006

Board Approved Motion #23-125 Date October 11, 2023
Review Cycle 3 years
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Beaver Emergency Services Commission (BESC) is committed to providing a work environment in which all workers are treated with respect and dignity. Each worker has the right to a violence and harassment free workplace. Violence and harassment will not be tolerated from anyone including: board members, employees, service providers, contractors, or members of the public.

BESC is committed to eliminating or, if that is not reasonably practicable, controlling the hazards of violence and harassment. Everyone must uphold this policy work together to prevent workplace harassment.

Definitions

“BESC” means the Beaver Emergency Services Commission

“Board” means the board of directors of the Beaver Emergency Services Commission

“Chair” means the chairperson of the board

“Regional Emergency Manager” means the person appointed or hired in this role by the board

Violence whether at the worksite or work related is threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm and includes domestic or sexual violence.

“Workplace harassment” means any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker’s health and safety. Workplace harassment includes conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, and a sexual solicitation or advance.

Reasonable action taken by the employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or a work site is not workplace harassment.

In support of this policy, BESC has put into place workplace violence and harassment prevention procedures. These include measures and procedures to protect workers from the hazards of harassment and workplace violence and a process for workers to report incidents, or raise concerns.

BESC will ensure this policy and the supporting procedures are implemented and maintained. All workers and supervisors will receive relevant information and instruction on the contents of the policy and procedures.

Supervisors and officers will adhere to this policy and the supporting procedures. Supervisors and officers are responsible for ensuring that workers follow these measures and procedures and have the information they need to protect themselves.

Every worker must work in compliance with this policy and the supporting procedures. All workers are required to raise any concerns about work place violence or harassment and to report any incidents to the appropriate person.

BESC will investigate and take appropriate corrective actions to address all incidents and complaints of workplace harassment in a fair, respectful and timely manner.

BESC pledges to respect the privacy of all concerned as much as possible. BESC will not disclose the circumstances related to an incident of harassment or the names of the parties involved (including the complainant, the person alleged to have committed the harassment and any witnesses) except where necessary to:

- investigate the incident or take corrective action
- inform the parties involved in the incident of the results of the investigation and any corrective actions taken, inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence, or
- comply with other legal requirements.

BESC will disclose only the minimum amount of personal information required that is necessary to inform workers of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence.

No workers can be penalized, reprimanded or in any way criticized when acting in good faith while following this policy and the supporting procedures for addressing situations involving harassment.

This workplace violence and harassment prevention policy does not discourage a worker from exercising the worker's rights under any law, including the Alberta Human Rights Act.

References

- Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 27 Violence and Harassment
- Alberta Human Rights Act
- Alberta Freedom of Information and Privacy Act
- BESC Health and Safety Operations Management System Section 6 Incident Management
- Employee Code of Conduct Policy #32

NOTE Policy HR-006 replaces Policy 45 Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and Policy 46 Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy

Board Chair

Board Vice Chair

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Date

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Date



Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy Appendix A

APPENDIX A

Agencies, Programs, and Materials Available to Assist an Employee in Seeking Support

Who	Contact(s)	Why
Alberta Occupational Health and Safety	Phone: 780-415-8690 Toll Free: 1-866-415-8690 www.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.aspx	To report serious injuries and provide information on the requirements of the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> and regulations.
Alberta Human Rights Commission	Phone: 780 472-7661 www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca	To report a human rights complaint. The Commission conducts seminars and information sessions and circulates a newsletter entitled "The Citizen"
The Support Network	Phone: 780 482-4357 1 800 232-7288 (Distress Line) www.thesupportnetwork.com	Produces a Directory of Community Services. Also provides counseling services (including crisis counseling), courses, and workshops in a variety of areas such as assertiveness training, building self-esteem, and others.
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General	Phone: 780 427-3441 www.alberta.ca/victims-services.aspx	Victims of crime are provided with the opportunity to express in writing to the Courts the harm done or loss suffered as a result of the crime. The Judge considers the statement in determining the sentence.
Viking/Beaver Family and Community Support Services	Phone 780-336-4024 DChrystian@vbfcss.ca	Provides critical incident debriefing
Tofield/Beaver County West FCSS	Phone 780-662-7066 tboastradley@tofielddalberta.ca	Can arrange for counselling with the FCSS counsellor.

Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Procedure

1.1 Reporting workplace violence and harassment

If a worker believes they have been subject to workplace violence or harassment, they must follow the procedures for reporting the incident. They must complete the incident reporting form when making a formal complaint.

Any person who believes they have been subject to workplace violence or harassment should inform (if possible) the individual responsible that their behaviour is offensive and ask that it stop. This should be done directly and with the help of a third party if necessary.

The complainant must keep a record (dates, times locations, possible witnesses, details of what happened and your response. The incident report form available through WorkHub can be used to for this purpose.

The complainant as soon as it is safe to do so, report the incident to your immediate supervisor/officer unless that person is the alleged harasser. If that is the case, then you can report to another supervisor/officer, the health and safety consultant or the REM.

The incident should be reported through the Workhub Incident and Hazard reporting tool or through Whistle Blower tool if you want to report the incident anonymously.

The parties involved in the informal or formal complaint process must maintain confidentiality.

No worker can be penalized or reprimanded when doing their best to follow the Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedures for Preventing Workplace Harassment.

Any person who needs help to pursue a complaint is encouraged to seek assistance. Internal resources include, district fire chiefs, officers, the BESC Health and Safety Consultant, Joint Health and Safety Representatives.

A list of external resources is included in Appendix A

2.1 Responding to an incident

Employees shall not put themselves at personal risk when responding to or assisting with an incident of workplace violence. Employees will call for immediate assistance from co-workers or call 911 for assistance from police services.

3.1 Employer Procedure for Documenting, Investigating and Preventing Harassment

BESC will investigate all complaints and incidents of workplace violence or harassment in a fair, respectful and timely manner. Complaints/incidents will be investigated and analyzed following BESC's Incident Management Process as set out in Section 6 of the Health and Safety Operating Management System (HSOMS).

BESC's health and safety consultant will be on the investigation team. The investigation team may also include the complainants officer/supervisor and the REM. If the incident involves the REM, a member of the board may be on the investigation team.

Incidents will be investigated promptly. The investigation will begin within 10 days of the date the complaint is filed.

The privacy of all involved in a complaint or incident of harassment will be protected as much as possible.

BESC will ensure that any inquiry made or informal or formal process taken pursuant to the Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy is kept in confidence except as necessary to the investigation or to respond to any legal and or administrative proceedings arising under this policy or otherwise. The policy is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act.

Workers who make bad faith allegations of workplace violence or harassment which are knowingly false, fraudulent or malicious will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including terminations

4.1 Informing Parties Involved of Investigation Results and Corrective Actions

When the investigation is complete, the investigators prepare a confidential written report setting out a summary of evidence, a description of any conflict in the evidence, conclusions and reasons for reaching the conclusions as well as the recommended corrective action if harassment has occurred. The direct supervisor/officer, the complainant and the respondent will receive a copy of the report. The direct supervisor/officer will take appropriate corrective action. If the incident involves the REM the BESC board will receive a copy of the report.

After corrective action has been taken, the supervisor/officer will follow up with the complainant to ensure the action was effective. If the violence or harassment has not ended the supervisor/officer will take additional or alternative corrective action. Further investigation may be necessary.

5.1 Education

BESC will provide training on to how to recognize workplace harassment, the policies and procedures in place to prevent and address workplace harassment, the appropriate response to incidents and the procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidents of workplace harassment.

This may include orientation sessions, presentations to employees, online training and print material. BESC will also provide incident investigation training for those responsible for investigating workplace violence and harassment complaints and incidents.

6.1 Elimination or Control of Workplace Harassment Hazards

Workplace violence and harassment hazards will be identified as part of the regular task hazard assessment process.

Completed hazard assessment results will be communicated to new employees during the health and safety orientation and during health and safety segments of regular trainings.

Employees and the Joint Health and Safety Committee will be involved in the regular review and revision of hazard assessments. Any incident of workplace harassment will prompt a review of a hazard assessment.

7.1 Employee Assistance

BESC will assist employees who have been affected by workplace violence or harassment such as through

- Advising employees to consult a health care professional
- Providing access to an Employee Assistance Program