

“We are called to be the Church, to celebrate God’s presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.” (United Church of Canada Creed)

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Policy

Metropolitan United Church is committed to the prevention of workplace violence. The Church will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect individuals from workplace violence from all sources. Workplace violence will not be tolerated by or against any person in the workplace.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals:

- Ministry personnel
- Full-time employees
- Part-time employees
- Fixed-term individuals
- Contract individuals
- Temporary and on-call employees
- Per diems
- Volunteers
- The congregation
- Visitors
- Third-party contractors, and
- Delivery persons.

This policy applies to any place an individual is engaged in Church work or activities and, therefore, is not limited to the Church building. All individuals shall uphold this policy and work together to prevent workplace violence.

Definitions (The Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario)

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE is the exercise or attempted exercise of physical force by a person against an individual in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the individual, or a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for an individual to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the individual in a workplace that could cause physical injury to the individual. This definition of workplace violence is broad enough to include acts that would constitute offences under Canada’s Criminal Code.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom he/she has or has had an intimate relationship. This pattern of behaviour may include physical violence, sexual, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and using electronic devices to harass and control. Domestic violence becomes workplace violence or harassment when it occurs or spills over into the workplace.

Compliance

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Infractions of this policy will be considered to be misconduct for which an appropriate discipline will be imposed up to and including employment termination for cause, dismissal from the Church, or sanctions against the instigator.

Procedures When Workplace Violence Occurs or is Threatened

1. Seek a safe place if possible
2. Summon assistance by any or all of the following:
 - Calling for help
 - Using walkie-talkie
 - Using cell phone
 - Attracting a co-worker, parishioner or other person, and/or
 - Calling 911.
3. If you are a victim of domestic violence and there is a possibility that your spouse or other individual will come to the Church with the intent to cause you physical harm, you must make the Ministry and Personnel Committee and the Ministry personnel aware of your circumstances. A plan will be developed and all information will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Confidential Procedures to Report Incidents of Workplace Violence

1. If necessary, get safe first and seek proper medical treatment.
2. Report the incident immediately to the Ministry and Personnel Committee, the Ministry personnel, a member of the Board of Elders, or another Church member, in person, by e-mail, by telephone, or by filling out the Incident Report Form.
3. Keep a record of the incident—date, time, witnesses, what happened, your response, etc. You do not have to have a record of events in order to make a complaint, but a record can help you remember details.
4. A complaint will be kept strictly confidential.
5. Nothing in this policy prevents an individual from pursuing other remedies such as criminal or civil action.
6. An internal or external investigator will immediately conduct an investigation and will take all necessary steps to resolve the complaint. The complainant, alleged offender and witnesses, if any, will be interviewed to determine appropriate action and resolution.
7. It shall be important that:
 - the safety of individuals is ensured;
 - all proper medical treatment is provided or sent for; and
 - authorities, where appropriate, are contacted—for example, the Police or the Ministry of Labour.
8. Resolution action may include disciplinary action up to and including employment termination or dismissal from the Church.
9. A detailed report may be filed with the Board of Elders with recommendations to help prevent future cases.

10. Regardless of the outcome of a complaint made in good faith, the person lodging the complaint, as well as anyone providing information, will be protected from any form of retaliation by either co-workers or superiors. This includes dismissal, demotion, unwanted transfer, denial of opportunities within the Church or harassment of an individual as a result of their having made a complaint or having provided evidence regarding the complaint.

Workplace Violence Program

1. The policy will be included in the policies section of the Church website.
2. Employee counselling, assistance and support to victims of violence will be provided as required.
3. The Church will review and implement such factors as workplace lay-out, use of signs, locks, physical barriers, lighting, electronic surveillance and worker scheduling.

Policy Review

The Ministry and Personnel Committee will review the policy to ensure:

- it addresses the needs of Metropolitan United Church, and
- conforms to any government legislation changes or policy changes by the United Church of Canada.

Related Metropolitan Documents

- **Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy (March 2019) United Church of Canada**

Related Documents/External Resources

- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act

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