

Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment

Q&A Information Sheet for Employees

To whom do these policies apply?

This policy applies to all Sheridan employees, including but not limited to regular, temporary, probationary, contract and cooperative educational training program employees, and to consultants and volunteers.

Students, visitors to Sheridan facilities, individuals carrying out contracted services at Sheridan or individuals conducting business with Sheridan are expected to refrain from violence towards employees.

What is the definition of workplace harassment?

Harassment results from a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment can make a person feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, offended or intimidated. Types of behaviour that may constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Ongoing condescending comments
- Repeated offensive gestures or comments
- Practical jokes which result in insult or embarrassment
- False accusations
- Abuse of authority which negatively disrupts or prevents the performance of workplace duties
- Intimidation or coercion
- Bullying
- Actions which create a “poisoned environment” which is hostile, intimidating or offensive

An isolated insult or adverse comment does not constitute harassment. Normal exercise of supervisory responsibilities including appropriate performance management, training, work assignment and discipline does not constitute harassment.

As an employee what do I need to know about workplace harassment?

- Employees and management share in the responsibility to ensure that their work environment is free from harassment.
- Employees must not engage in any behaviour that is or may be perceived as harassment. Employees are strongly encouraged to report incidents of harassment or retaliation to their manager, or to the Manager Equity and Human Rights Services at extension 2229.
- It is the responsibility of every employee to co-operate fully in any attempts to resolve a complaint and to co-operate fully in the investigation of any complaint.

What is the definition of workplace violence?

Workplace violence is defined as:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker; or,
- A statement or behavior that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the workers, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

Occupational Health and Safety Act R.S.O 1990

As an employee what do I need to do if I become aware of a workplace violence threat or incident?

- In the event of becoming aware of a workplace violence incident, immediately notify campus security by dialing 4044 on an internal phone, by activating a panic button or via any security phone.
- Report any threats of workplace violence to your manager immediately.
- Co-operate in any workplace violence investigations.

As an employee what do I need to know if I become aware of a potential domestic situation which could result in violence in the workplace?

- Report concerns of domestic violence that may enter the workplace to a manager or the Manager Equity and Human Rights Services.

How is the College working to prevent workplace violence?

- Physical workplace inspections will be completed by June 15 in order to identify and assess if further preventative measures are required.
- Risk assessments with regard to workplace violence are currently being scheduled in all areas of the College.
- Training initiatives are currently being developed.

Can an employee refuse to work if they believe they are at risk of workplace violence?

- An employee has the right to refuse work where they believe they may be endangered by physical violence in the workplace.
- The employee has to believe that threat of violence places them at risk of physical injury in the workplace.
- An employee cannot refuse work on grounds of workplace harassment.
- Based on these points, if you believe you have a reason to refuse work, immediately contact your manager.