



PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES FROM VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

#2-10

Approved: March 26, 1997 by: Board of Governors
Effective: March 26, 1997
Date to be Reviewed: 2007

POLICY

North Island College is committed to providing an environment in which all employees can work without threat to personal safety from acts of violence. To this end, any work-related threat or act of violence against an employee is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The College will remove immediately any person who threatens the safety or who exhibits violent behaviour.

North Island College will promote conditions that are intended to reduce the risk or eliminate the potential for incidents of violence that occur within its operation or facilities. In promoting an environment of personal safety, the College will:

- **Train employees to follow practices aimed at responding to various incidents;**
- **Based on input from employees establish practices that identify and address risks for each work location;**
- **Develop and maintain practices and procedures that contribute to the reduction of risk or elimination of potential incidents of violence; and**
- **Comply with Workers' Compensation Board regulations.**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Employees are aware of the seriousness with which North Island College views any acts of violence;
- Employees follow safety practices to respond to various incidents;
- The risk of incidents of violence at the College are eliminated or minimized; and
- Employees are aware of the assistance that is available to them and the recourse they may take should they believe that they are subjected to, or become aware of situations involving violence.

GUIDELINES

Development and Maintenance of a Program to Reduce the Risk of Violence

1. North Island College will develop and maintain a program that aims to reduce the risk of violence. The program will include:
 - a. Risk assessment and administration;
 - b. Investigation of reported incidents of violence in a prompt, objective and sensitive manner;
 - c. Provision of appropriate support for victims of violence;
 - d. Provision of appropriate training for employees;
 - e. Information to employees of the risk, nature and extent of issues related to violence; and
 - f. Regular reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and any programs pertaining to the policy.
2. North Island College acknowledges that where known, employees will be provided with information related to the risk of violence from persons who have a history of violent behaviour and whom employees are likely to encounter in the course of their work. In providing such information, North Island College acknowledges that there is a requirement to balance the provision of information with the protection of privacy.
3. North Island College shall provide the following to employees who may be exposed to the risk of violence:
 - a. The means for recognition of the potential for violence;
 - b. The procedures, policies and work environment arrangements which have been developed to minimize or effectively control the risk to employees from violence;
 - c. The appropriate response to incidents of violence, including how to obtain assistance; and
 - d. Procedures for reporting and documenting incidents of violence.

Responsibilities

1. All employees are responsible for contributing to a safe work environment.
2. Ignorance of College policies or regulations will not absolve an individual of responsibility.
3. Employees will:
 - a. Provide input into risk assessments;
 - b. Attend training sessions when requested;
 - c. Provide input into the development and maintenance of local plans;
 - d. Follow procedures for reducing the risk of violence;
 - e. Report incidents of violence;

- f. Provide input into incident investigations; and
 - g. Consider accessing counselling services when offered by the College.
4. Any behaviour which may be perceived as threatening violence, whether intended or not, will be dealt with as real. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Employee, Supervisor and Administrator Training

Training may address a number of issues associated with reducing the risk of violence in the workplace. In view of the many employees performing jobs with front-line responsibility, training will be required for employees, supervisors and Administrators in dealing with hostile situations, debriefing critical incidents and managing work-related stress.

Records pertaining to training in this area will be kept in the Office of Facilities Services.

Reporting Acts of Violence

1. When an employee observes an act or a behaviour that may be violent or threatening in nature, and they believe that there is a threat to their personal safety or the safety of others, the following procedure will apply:
 - a. Move to a safe location and alert those around you;
 - b. Dial 911 or the appropriate emergency number for your location to contact the RCMP;
 - c. State clearly that immediate assistance is needed;
 - d. Provide your location, and complete details of the situation; and
 - e. As soon as you are able, report the incident to the Administrator responsible for that location, or any other Administrator.

Responsibility of the Administrator

The Administrator acts on behalf of the President and is the College liaison between the RCMP and the College and takes such lawful steps as are necessary to deal with an incidence of violence. Such steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Order the RCMP to remove a person or persons from the College;
- b. Order the closing of all or part of any Campus;
- c. Report all actions to the President;
- d. Document and maintain all records pertaining to the case;
- e. Coordinate de-briefing sessions in conjunction with those individuals selected to provide a variety of follow-up services following an act of violence;
- f. Maintain communications with members of the College community in conjunction with the Director, College Communications; and
- g. Arrange for the provision of any special measures to protect members of the College community.

Incident Reporting, Investigation and Follow-Up

1. The President shall assign the responsibility for an investigation of incidents of violence.
2. A written report of the incident, investigation and recommendations considered necessary shall be provided to the President.
3. The College shall ensure that corrective actions are taken in response to incidents of violence in accordance with the requirements of the Workers' Compensation Board.
4. The College shall ensure that an employee reporting an injury or adverse symptom as a result of a violent incident is advised to consult a physician or counsellor of the employee's choice for treatment or referral.
5. Employees reporting any adverse symptoms as a result of an incident of violence may also contact the College's Employee and Family Assistance Plan.

Emergency Relief

Notwithstanding any of the above procedures, the President or designate, may take whatever interim actions considered necessary to protect the safety of the College users and/or prevent damage to College property.

Determination of Appropriate Disciplinary Action

1. Where the violent behaviour is that of a student, then the student will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Conduct Policy #3-06.
2. Where the violent behaviour is that of any employee, then the appropriate collective agreement or policy shall apply.
3. Where the behaviour is illegal, a report will be filed with the appropriate police department.
4. The results of an investigation will be provided to the appropriate Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

Communication

1. In conjunction with the President, the coordination of internal and external communications associated with threats and/or risks related to incidents of violence shall be the responsibility of the Director, College Communications in conjunction with the Manager, Facilities Services, and the Administrator of the location where the incident occurred.

2. The College Safety Procedures Manual shall include information on eliminating or reducing the risks of violence in the workplace.
3. Where an employee contacts the RCMP directly as a result of an act or perceived act of violence, then the employee will inform an Administrator, or designate as soon as possible.

Definitions:

The following description integrates the definition of violence included in the regulations of the Workers' Compensation Board with the intent of application of this policy at the College. The definition has been rewritten such that the policy applies to employees who may threaten through an act of violence, the personal safety of other employees. Accordingly, for the purposes of this policy, violence is defined as:

The attempted or actual exercise of any physical force so as to cause injury to an employee, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that they are at risk of injury.

Verbal abuse is considered an act of violence when it includes threats or behaviour which give an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of force being applied.

Any improper activity or behaviour that might create or constitute a hazard to an employee.

Cross Reference:

See also Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy #1-01

See also Emergency Response to Inappropriate, Disruptive or Threatening Behaviour Policy #2-11 may apply when the perpetrator of any act of violence is an employee or a student.

See also Student Conduct Policy #3-06 may apply where an incident involves violent, disruptive or dangerous behaviour of a student.

See also Human Rights Policy #2-08 may apply where the violent behaviour is alleged sexual or personal harassment.

See also Crisis Communications Policy #5-01

See also North Island College and North Island College Faculty Association Collective Agreement

See also North Island College and CUPE, Local 3479 Collective Agreement.

See also Human Rights Act of British Columbia

See also Workers' Compensation Act of British Columbia