



FORTFRANCES

**WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND
VIOLENCE POLICY
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

POLICY 5.34

Created: 2021-09-25
Revised: 2026-01-19
Authorized:
Superseded: By-Law 82-25

1. PURPOSE

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances (the Town) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace free from harassment, violence, and discrimination. This policy complies with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and incorporates recent amendments under Bill 190 (2024).

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, elected officials, volunteers, contractors, clients, and visitors. It covers:

- Physical and virtual workplaces, including remote work settings.
- In-person and digital interactions (e.g., email, video calls, social media).
- Work-related events, travel, and off-site activities.

3. DEFINITIONS

Workplace Harassment

Includes vexatious comments or conduct (in-person or virtual) that is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcome. This includes:

- Discriminatory harassment based on protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Sexual harassment and solicitation.
- Bullying, intimidation, and cyberbullying.

Workplace Violence

Includes physical force or threats of physical force that could cause injury. This includes:

- Domestic violence risks that may affect the workplace.
- Threats or intimidation via digital platforms.

Virtual Harassment and Violence

Includes inappropriate behavior through digital means such as:

- Emails, chats, video conferencing, and social media.
- Hostile or degrading messages, stalking, or threats online.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employers & Management

- Maintain a harassment- and violence-free workplace.
- Conduct risk assessments including remote work environments.
- Provide training on recognizing and responding to virtual misconduct.
- Ensure digital access to safety documents (OHSA, policies, JHSC info).
- Support victims and protect against reprisals.

Employees

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Report incidents promptly.
- Maintain confidentiality during investigations.
- Participate in training and comply with policy expectations.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)

- Review risk assessments and incident reports.
- Recommend preventive measures.
- Participate in investigations of critical incidents.
- May meet virtually as permitted under Bill 190.

5. PREVENTION MEASURES

- Conduct regular risk assessments for all work environments.
- Provide mandatory training on harassment, violence, and virtual conduct.
- Share information about individuals with a history of violence when legally required.

- Promote awareness of support resources (e.g., EAP, helplines).

6. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Informal Resolution

- Encourage direct communication where safe and appropriate.
- Document interactions and seek support from supervisors or HR.

Formal Complaints

- May be initiated verbally or in writing.
- Must be investigated regardless of complaint format.
- Investigations may be internal or external, depending on severity.

Investigation Process

- Interviews with complainant, respondents, and witnesses.
- Review of digital and physical evidence.
- Confidential documentation and timely resolution (goal: within 90 days).

Outcomes

- Disciplinary actions may include warnings, suspension, termination, or training.
- False or malicious complaints may result in disciplinary action.
- Complainants and respondents will be informed of outcomes as appropriate.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION

- All complaints and investigations will be handled confidentially.
- Retaliation against complainants, witnesses, or investigators is strictly prohibited.
- Breaches of confidentiality are considered reprisals and subject to discipline.

8. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or workplace conditions.

9. LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

This policy is guided by the following legislation and legal frameworks:

Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) – including amendments under Bill 190: Working for Workers Five Act, 2024

- Expanded definitions of workplace harassment and violence to include virtual misconduct
- OHSA now applies to telework performed in private residences
- Permits virtual posting of safety documents and virtual JHSC meetings

Ontario Human Rights Code

- Prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected grounds, including:
 - Age, race, ancestry, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, citizenship
 - Creed, disability, family status, marital status
 - Gender identity, gender expression, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
 - Sexual orientation, record of offences (in employment)
- Criminal Code of Canada