

Psychological Hazards in the Workplace

Sample policy statement for employers

_____ is committed to providing a physically and **psychologically healthy and safe workplace**. The management of _____ recognizes that workers and the company have a shared responsibility to promote the principles of mutual respect, confidentiality and cooperation, as outlined in this policy. Any act that can cause harm to worker psychological health is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

PURPOSE

This policy outlines our commitment to protecting the **psychological health and safety** of our workers. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that individuals are aware that any harm to psychological health and safety is considered a serious offence and therefore will be addressed accordingly. Those subjected to psychological harm will be assisted in the pursuit of their complaint and provided with appropriate support.

DEFINITIONS

Psychological health

A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Source: Assembling the Pieces, Guidebook, Canadian Standards Association.

Psychological health and safety management system

An organizational management system consisting of policies, procedures, and practices put in place to assist organizations in creating a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.

Psychologically healthy and safe workplace

A workplace that promotes workers' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health due to due to negligent, reckless, or intentional acts.

Workplace harassment

Means any objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, or action that a person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor in respect of the management of workers or the workplace.

Sample Policy Statement

Workplace violence

According to Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code, workplace violence means: "the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury." Examples of workplace violence include the following:

- threatening behaviour such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects
- verbal or written threats (any expression of intent to cause harm)
- physical attacks such as hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Management responsibility

Management plays a critical role in creating a psychologically healthy and safe workplace, by:

- fostering an organizational culture that promotes psychological health and safety
- ensuring that a psychological health and safety management system is in place to provide a work environment that is free from psychological harm
- ensuring compliance with relevant occupational health and safety laws
- ensuring that workers are trained in recognizing and responding to situations involving psychological harm
- ensuring that every reported incident of psychological harm is investigated, in an objective and timely manner, and potential areas of improvement are identified
- ensuring that the worker is advised to consult a health professional if the worker reports psychological injuries or adverse symptoms from psychological harm
- maintaining the confidentiality of the individuals concerned, except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigating the complaint or taking disciplinary measures in relation to the alleged complaint if discipline is being imposed
- providing appropriate support for affected workers.

Worker responsibility

Workers at _____ have the following responsibilities for maintaining a psychologically healthy and safe workplace:

- workers are required to be familiar with and follow the procedures that are in place to protect their psychological health
- all workers are to participate in the instruction on psychological hazards
- workers have the responsibility to treat each other with respect
- workers are required to immediately report all violations of this policy to their supervisor
- workers are responsible to co-operate in the investigation of complaints. Anyone who investigates or gives evidence in a complaint investigation shall keep details confidential
- workers are also responsible for participating in work site hazard assessments and implementing controls and procedures to eliminate or control the associated hazards.

Sample Policy Statement

Manager or supervisor actions

No action shall be taken against an individual for making a complaint unless the complaint is made maliciously or without reasonable and probable grounds.

Reasonable actions by managers or supervisors to help manage, guide or direct workers or the workplace are not harassment. Appropriate worker performance reviews, counselling or discipline by a supervisor is not harassment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

_____ and its managers will not identify any involved parties or circumstances about a reported incident, except:

- when it is necessary in investigating the complaint
- if it is part of disciplinary action
- where it is required by law.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The success of this policy and the procedures involves not only the implementation of the program but also ongoing evaluation.

_____ will evaluate this policy and procedures and will make adjustments whenever necessary to ensure the success of this program.

Signature of company owner/president

Date

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- BP024 Assessment and Control of Psychological Hazards in the Workplace - OHS information for employers and workers
- BP024-1 Psychological Hazards in the Workplace Procedures Worksheet
- The CSA *National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace - Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation* CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013 <http://shop.csa.ca/page/home>
- Mental Health Commission of Canada <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/>

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