

Section: Terms of Employment	Policy Number: D-3.11
Sub-section: Standards of Conduct	Effective Date: April 1, 2016
Subject: Workplace Civility and Respect	Revision Date:

Workplace Civility and Respect

Purpose:

The Employer is committed to creating a culture of respect and civility that creates a healthy, safe and caring work environment for all employees; all employees are to be treated with honesty and dignity.

Incivility and disrespect in the workplace can be a barrier to effective communication, coaching and performance. The impact can be severe; it may result in employee turnover, low productivity, reduced morale, diminished loyalty, and physiological impacts such as stress and depression that can lead to increased absenteeism. Incivility can escalate and may lead to more severe behaviours including harassment and violence.

This policy establishes the Employer's commitment to maintain a respectful and civil workplace. Through this policy, the *Guide to Civility* and the *Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy and Practice*, the Employer maintains a comprehensive violence and harassment prevention program as required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, as well as other individuals subject to the policy under terms of contracts or agreements.

Applicable Practices:

- *Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedures*
- *Guide to Civility*

Principles:

1. Workplace disputes and conflicts should be addressed using approaches that foster clear communication and openness, facilitate respectful interactions, and yield solutions of mutual agreement.
2. Guidelines and actions taken under the policy should serve to strengthen recruitment and retention of highly qualified and diverse employees.
3. Promoting civility, respect and early intervention of concerns will reduce the risk of incivility, including workplace violence and harassment.

Definitions:

Civility

Civility involves treating others with dignity and respect, and acting with regard to other's feelings.

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Civility means that even the most critical feedback must be delivered respectfully, privately, and courteously. Legitimate comment and/or advice from Managers and Supervisors on work performance or the work-related behaviour of an individual or group, is intended to assist employees to improve work performance or the standard of their behaviour.

Civility requires that even the most critical feedback be delivered respectfully, privately, and courteously.

Incivility

Incivility deals with a broad range of behaviours including, but not limited to:

- unprofessional behaviour
- rudeness
- yelling or shouting
- intimidation or bullying
- written (including email or social networking) or verbal comments, gestures, actions, behaviours or jokes that are degrading, embarrassing, offensive, demeaning or insulting
- deliberate exclusion of an employee from relevant work activities or decision-making
- decision-making influenced by factors which have no work-related purpose
- attempting to discredit an employee by spreading false information about him/her

Incivility can be subtle or overt. It may be a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents, and may involve the abuse of authority or position. Uncivil behaviour may be unintended or deliberately directed at another individual. In any case, the impact on that individual and/or the work environment is what must be addressed.

Although incivility may be subjective or unintentional, this does not excuse the behaviour. Rather, these factors may provide an explanation that can help to resolve a complaint and guide future behaviour.

Poisoned Work Environment

Where uncivil behaviours are sufficiently severe and/or pervasive and cause significant and unreasonable interference to the work environment, they may be deemed as creating an intimidating, hostile and offensive environment.

A poisoned environment can interfere with and/or undermine work performance and can cause emotional and psychological stress.

Although a person may not be the target of the behaviours, a person may feel the effects of certain harassing or discriminatory behaviours in their workplace.

See the Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy D-4.6 for definitions of Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment.

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Policy

All employees have a responsibility to act in good faith and be active participants in contributing to the creation and enhancement of a community culture of respect, inclusion, civility, dignity and understanding of the people with whom they work. This requires taking action to deal with incidents of incivility. All parties, at a minimum, are required to be open about concerns and listen to each other’s point of view with the goal of creating a healthy, safe and caring work environment.

Nothing in this policy replaces or prevents an employee from filing a complaint with the *Ontario Human Rights Tribunal*, as outlined by the *Human Rights Code* and legislation. Nor does it prevent an employee from reporting incidents of harassment or violence under the Employer’s *Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy* and Practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

It is recommended that, whenever possible, employees should address incidents of incivility towards them directly with the individual responsible for the behaviour.

Employees may seek advice and assistance from their Supervisor, the Manager, Human Resources and/or their union representatives. Further details about how to deal with incidents of incivility are available in the *Guide of Civility*.

All parties involved have a responsibility to act in good faith, communicate openly and listen to each other’s points of view, and try to resolve the complaint informally, where appropriate.

Incidents and behaviours that may indicate a risk of workplace violence or harassment, as defined under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, must be reported to a Supervisor as required by the *Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy* and Practice.

Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for creating and maintaining a positive and productive work culture. A supervisor’s area of responsibility includes any matter that involves, impacts or could potentially impact the workplace. This includes dealing with inappropriate behaviour of, or towards, co-workers, clients, contractors, volunteers, visitors or others.

Supervisors are accountable for identifying and addressing issues in a timely and fair manner. This involves coaching and counselling their employees and, if appropriate in the circumstances, taking disciplinary action. Actions taken must adhere to the principles of progressive discipline, policy and collective agreement provisions, and established procedures for investigating complaints.

Agreements with contractors or volunteers should include the requirement to adhere to this policy and include provisions to take action in cases of non-compliance.

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In situations where employees are subjected to uncivil behaviour by employees from other programs, their supervisor should discuss the situation and determine appropriate action in conjunction with the supervisor of the employee(s) from the other program(s).

Incidents and behaviours that may indicate a risk of workplace violence or harassment, as defined under the Occupational Health and Safety Act must be reported to a Supervisor as required by the *Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policy* and Practice.

Guidance for promoting a civil work environment and procedures for dealing with incidents of incivility are available in the *Guide to Civility*. Supervisors may seek advice and assistance from the Manager, Human Resources and Executive Director, as required.

Resources and Links:

- *A Guide to the Respectful Workplace Policy*. The City of Calgary:
<https://www.calgary.ca/CS/HR/Documents/Careers/Respectful-Workplace-Guide.pdf?noredirect=1>
- *Chapter 4: Healthy and Productive Work Environment, Human Resources Management Manual*. Government of Nova Scotia:
<https://www.novascotia.ca/treasuryboard/manuals/PDF/500/50409.pdf>
- *Workplace Civility and Respect Policy*. Ryerson University:
<http://www.ryerson.ca/policies/board/workcivilitypolicy.html>