

Workplace Violence Prevention & Response

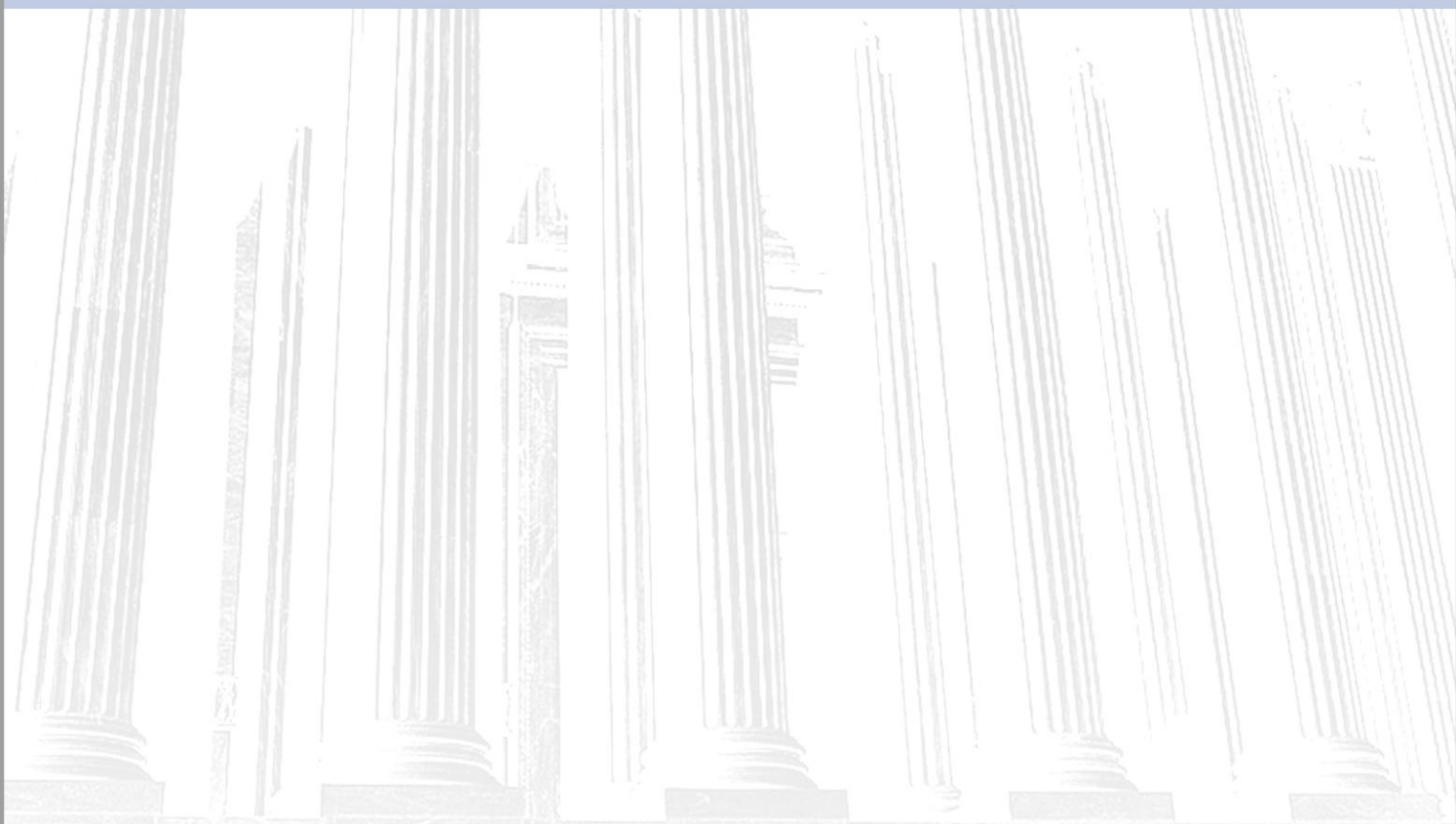


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INTRODUCTION

Ryerson University is a community of learning, teaching, working, living, and recreation. The University is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free of violence for all members of the Ryerson community.

Preventing and addressing workplace violence is a shared responsibility under Ryerson's Environmental Health and Safety Management System policy and this program. All University community members must be aware of and carry out their responsibilities as outlined in the EHSMS policy and related policies including,

- Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy
- Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct
- Workplace Civility & Respect Policy
- Environmental Health and Safety Management System Policy

The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program (the Program) outlines the ways that the University addresses workplace violence, including measures and procedures for:

1. Controlling the risks of workplace violence that are identified through periodic assessment.
2. Summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence is occurring or likely to occur.
3. Reporting incidents of workplace violence by community members.
4. Investigating and dealing with incidents and complaints of workplace violence.

Any act of workplace violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

SCOPE

The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program addresses workplace violence that may occur on Ryerson's campus or at work-related activities occurring off-campus. The Program is intended to implement the University's Environmental Health and Safety Management System policy, as it relates to workplace violence and pursuant to its obligation under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*.

Incidents of workplace violence *may* result in the involvement of local police and, in some cases, charges under the Criminal Code of Canada or other statutes. These are separate processes that are not within the control of the University and are outside the scope of this Program.

The Program will be reviewed and updated at least once a year and/or as new or modified ways of dealing with workplace violence are developed.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE?

The term “workplace violence” is defined under the OHSA 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 behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker.

In accordance with this definition, the terms “workplace violence” or “incident of workplace violence” as they are used in this Program will incorporate the exercise, attempted exercise or threatened exercise of physical violence that causes or could cause physical injury.

Note: Physical force that is applied as authorized by law is not considered workplace violence. For example, Ryerson Security may use force to prevent violence in some instances.

HOW TO SUMMON IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

When violence is in progress, or if it is imminent, call Ryerson Security and Emergency Services

External phones: 911

Internal phones: dial “80”

Persons with disabilities who have alternate contact arrangements for emergency situations should use the means established for emergency contact. Information is available in the Safety Planning for Persons with Disabilities brochure found at http://www.ryerson.ca/accessibility/support/security_brochure.pdf

EVERY COMMUNITY MEMBER’S DUTY TO REPORT

We all share responsibility in creating a workplace that is free of violence and does not tolerate incidents of violence. All members of the University community (including employees, managers, union representatives, faculty, students, contract workers, tenants, guests and visitors) have a duty to report:

- incidents of workplace violence, including threats of violence
- behaviours that may indicate a risk of workplace violence as outlined below
- physical workplace conditions associated with a risk of workplace violence that requires attention.

For a list of behaviours to be reported and what to do, please see the 1 page reference document “Steps to take when you encounter concerning behavior on campus”.

All community members must report incidents of violence including threats of violence, to Ryerson Security by dialing “80” to summon immediate assistance if violence is occurring or is imminent, or calling 416-979-5040 or emailing security@ryerson.ca as soon as it is safe to do so after an incident has occurred.

Those Ryerson individuals and teams responsible for addressing behaviour that indicates a risk of violence, such as Human Resources, Student Conduct Officer, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention etc., must report such incidents to the Associate Director, Integrated Threat & Risk Assessment Group.

Note: If the behaviour is based on human rights grounds (e.g. sex, sexual orientation, race, disability etc.) Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Services may be contacted for advice and assistance.

Physical Conditions that must be Reported

Physical conditions associated with a risk of workplace violence include:

- isolated areas where workers may be working alone
- impeded sightlines (eg. overgrown shrubbery or other objects blocking areas that create potential for workplace violence to occur hidden from view)
- impeded safety mechanisms (eg. objects interfering with emergency phones or poor lighting in dark areas)

Physical conditions must be reported to Ryerson Security by calling 416-979-5040 or emailing security@ryerson.ca

ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISKS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The University has in place many measures and procedures for controlling risks that arise from the nature of the workplace, the type of work, or the conditions of work at the University, both generally and in particular positions. Such measures are detailed on the department of Environment Health and Safety and Security website at www.ryerson.ca/safety

The purpose of risk assessments is to identify risks that may expose a worker to physical injury. The risk assessment takes into account both circumstances that are specific to our workplace and circumstances that would be common to similar workplaces.

When risks of workplace violence are identified, such as working alone, dealing with cash, etc., the University will put into place responsive measures and procedures to control such risks. For example, Ryerson has guidelines on working alone and a related risk assessment checklist that can be found at <http://www.ryerson.ca/cehsm/guidelines/index.html>.

The results of a risk assessment are provided to the Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC).

Managers, through the internal responsibility system outlined in the Environmental Health and Safety Management System policy are responsible for participating in identifying and assessing the risks of workplace violence and for taking appropriate responsive action. They should

reference the material available on the Risk Management website at <http://www.ryerson.ca/cehsm/riskmgmt/index.html>.

Managers must discuss potential risks of workplace violence and appropriate responsive action with appropriate University offices such as Human Resources, Ryerson Security, Environmental Health & Safety, the Student Conduct Office and/or Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services.

The University Workplace Inspection Program

Environmental Health, Safety and Security work closely with Campus Facilities and Sustainability, Student Housing and other campus resources to audit, identify and make changes to areas on the campus from which risks of workplace violence may arise. These initiatives include regular campus lighting audits, addressing issues of poor sightlines, isolated areas, landscaping, emergency communication, workplace layout and design, and specific needs in high-risk areas.

Ryerson conducts inspections of physical aspects of work or the workplace from which risks of workplace violence may arise. Any identified issues will be reported in accordance with the program and the line manager should advise their Human Resources Management Consultant. More information is available on the Environmental Health & Safety and Security website at http://www.ryerson.ca/cehsm/programs/workplace_insp.html

Ryerson Threat and Risk Assessment Team

Most incidents of harassment or violence are dealt with initially by individuals, offices and teams with responsibility for addressing such issues, primarily Ryerson Security, the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Office, Human Resources, the Student Conduct Officer and the Student Behaviour Risk Assessment Team. These individuals, offices and teams report matters as required under this program to the Integrated Threat & Risk Assessment Group, using established procedures and forms.

In some cases an individual's behaviour may present a concern of workplace violence that must be addressed at a University wide level. The University has structures in place to ensure such concerns are identified and managed. For issues that cannot be managed at the local level due to the existence of specific indicators, the matter is referred to the Ryerson Threat and Risk Assessment Team (RTRAT) for analysis. Reported incidents are referred to the RTRAT by the Associate Director, Integrated Threat & Risk Assessment Group. In general, the RTRAT will deal with the following kinds of concerns:

1. Explicit threat(s) of violence.
2. Actual incident(s) of violence.
3. Ongoing or multiple incidents of disturbing behaviour determined by the Associate Director, Integrated Threat & Risk Assessment Group to require review by RTRAT.
4. New or unusual circumstances, where there are no established processes or where it isn't clear how or who should deal with the incident(s).

The goal of the Ryerson Threat Assessment Team (RTRAT) is to minimize the risk of violence on campus through early and accurate assessment of significant threats of violence and appropriate intervention.

INVESTIGATING INCIDENTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

When an incident of workplace violence is reported to Human Resources, Ryerson Security, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services, or the Student Conduct Officer, an investigation may be undertaken to gather the facts relating to the incident so that the University can respond appropriately.

Investigations may proceed through one of several different mechanisms, depending upon contextual factors such as the subject matter of the complaint and the parties involved in the complaint. For example, if a student engages in violence, the investigation will be conducted under the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct which can be found at <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol61.pdf>.

Where an employee is investigated for an incident of workplace violence, an initial investigation will be conducted by Ryerson Security to provide assistance, summon emergency services if required, take immediate risk mitigation steps and conduct safety planning. Follow-up investigations will be conducted by Human Resources.

In all cases, investigations will be consistent with the relevant collective agreement, employment policy, student policies, and/or other agreements documenting the relationship between that individual and the University, as well as the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Situations not involving a student or employee will be investigated by Ryerson Security in accordance with security policies and procedures.

Situations involving persons who work at Ryerson for a third party contractor will generally be jointly managed by Ryerson Security, the Ryerson department that is responsible for the contract and the contract company.

Sharing of Personal Information

All collection, use and disclosure of personal information will be carried out in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act (FIPPA). The University will share personal information related to workplace violence as appropriate.

An overview of FIPPA in the University context can be obtained at <http://www.ryerson.ca/about/generalcounsel/infoprivacy/index.html>. Managers should seek guidance from the University's Information and Privacy Coordinator or their Human Resources Management Consultant.

Duty to Warn

If an individual with a history of violent behaviours presents a threat of workplace violence and a community member can be expected to encounter that person in the course of his/her work or study, and the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the community member to physical injury, then the University will provide information to the appropriate community member(s) about that risk.

Interim measures

In some cases, measures may be put in place to separate parties during an investigation. In all cases such measures will be in accordance with the relevant agreement documenting the relationship between that individual and the University (e.g., employment contract, collective agreement, residence agreement, student contract, consulting agreement, and/or security policies and procedures).

Remedies and Penalties

An employee who is found to have engaged in workplace violence will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of his/her employment.

A student who is found to have engaged in workplace violence will be subject to remedies and penalties under the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct.

A person who is not a student or an employee who is found to have engaged in workplace violence will be subject to penalties that are appropriate in view of their relationship to the University.

Criminal conduct may be subject to action under Canada's Criminal Code or other statutes.

Reprisals

There will be no reprisals against persons who raise issues under this program in good faith.

Vexatious or Bad Faith Use of the Program

There may be penalties or sanctions outlined in various policies (e.g., DHPS Policy, Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct and other applicable University policies) for making vexatious complaints of workplace violence, or making such complaints in bad faith.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTION

The University provides various training programs related to personal and workplace safety through Ryerson Security. In addition, other departments collaborate in order to provide appropriate training on matters related to workplace violence.

Information about workplace violence prevention and response, including training programs is available on the Environmental Health & Safety and Security website at <http://www.ryerson.ca/cehsm/>.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Details about the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Ryerson community to prevent and respond to workplace violence are set out below. It is not an exhaustive list of duties, but is intended to provide each community member with a general understanding of their roles and the role of others in preventing and responding to workplace violence.

Employees

As employees, we are all individually responsible for our own actions and in particular, for not acting or threatening to act violently.

Employees have the following, specific obligations:

- Abiding by the University's Environmental Health and Safety Management System Policy and this program.
- Contacting Ryerson's Security when immediate assistance is required to deal with a situation involving workplace violence.
- Reporting in accordance with the requirements set out above (Duty to Report).

Managers

The term "manager" as used throughout this document refers to individuals with supervisory responsibilities such as Managers, Supervisors, Chairs, Directors, Deans, Senior Directors, faculty and instructors, Principle Investigators, etc.

Managers are responsible for:

Prevention

- Promoting a work environment that promotes civility and does not tolerate harassment or violence.
- Taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstance for the protection of the worker.
- Providing information to workers that they require to be protected from physical injury from persons with a history of violent behaviours when the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose a worker to physical injury.

Response

- Contacting Ryerson Security when immediate assistance is required to deal with a situation involving imminent or actual workplace violence.
- Working with Human Resources and other relevant University offices as required in any investigation into workplace violence.
- Implementing actions and measures to address and prevent further or escalating incidents of violence.
- Reporting in accordance with the requirements set out above (Duty to Report).

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) and Security

The EHS and Security department is responsible for:

Prevention

- Notifying persons of potential risks in compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act's* Duty to Warn obligations.
- monitoring the implementation of risk mitigation plans
- Developing programs that promote safety and security and broadly communicating these programs to the community.
- Leading the proactive process of ongoing assessment of the risks of workplace violence that may arise from the nature of the workplace, the type of work or the conditions of work at the University.
- Training and providing resources for University workplace inspectors as they relate to conditions of workplace violence hazards.
- Maintaining a central repository and records management program of institutional knowledge of situations, information, reports and conditions relating to actual or potential incidents and risks of workplace violence, through the Integrated Threat and Risk Assessment Service.
- Escalating issues to the Ryerson Threat and Risk Assessment Team as required.
- Reviewing the Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program on an annual basis.

Response

- Responding to all instances where immediate assistance is required, taking steps to mitigate immediate risks and notify emergency services if required.
- Conducting an initial investigation into all incidents of workplace violence, taking steps to mitigate immediate risks, and conducting safety planning with affected persons.
- Assisting with investigations into workplace violence led by other departments.
- Responding to work refusals in accordance with the *OHS*A and internal processes.
- Liaising with law enforcement agencies and participating in legal processes as and if required.
- In accordance with the *OHS*A, immediately notifying the Ministry of Labour and the Joint Health and Safety Committee, if an incident of workplace violence were to result in a death or critical injury as defined by the *OHS*A.

Human Resources/Student Conduct Office/Discrimination and Harassment Prevention

The above departments are responsible for:

Prevention

- Collaborating with appropriate stakeholders on campus in order to provide appropriate training on matters related to workplace violence.
- Providing advice and assistance to Managers on creating a civil and respectful work environment, free from discrimination and harassment.

Response

- Contacting Security & Emergency Services when immediate assistance is required to deal with a situation involving imminent or actual workplace violence.
- Conducting or participating in investigations into allegations of workplace violence, as appropriate.
- Participating as requested in the risk assessment process and case management of concerns brought forward.
- Reporting in accordance with the requirements set out above (Duty to Report).

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)

The University has the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). The role of each JHSC in accordance with the OHSA is as follows:

1. Inspecting the physical conditions of the workplace.
2. Making recommendations for the improvement of the health and safety of workers.
3. Recommending the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of programs, measures and procedures respecting the health or safety of workers.
4. Following the existing procedures for reporting any physical aspects of the work or workplace that are identified in inspections as ones from which risks of workplace violence may arise.
5. Immediately reporting any incident of workplace violence (including an attempt or threat and including domestic violence that may flow into the workplace) of which the committee or any of its members become aware directly to Security & Emergency Services, and the committee co-chairs. Upon receipt of the report, the management co-chair of the JHSC will immediately forward this issue to the Human Resources Management Consultant and the manager.
6. Collaborate with appropriate stakeholders on campus in order to provide appropriate training on matters relating to workplace violence. Refer appropriate matters to the University's Threat Assessment Team.

The JHSC operates under a multi-workplace agreement and terms of reference that have been endorsed by the Ministry of Labour. Details concerning their roles and responsibilities can be found at <http://www.ryerson.ca/cehsm/resources/johsc.html>.