

GALIANO ISLAND RECYCLING RESOURCES SOCIETY

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

As with any public contact employment, GIRR employees may be exposed to the risk of violence. The goal is to eliminate the risk or where this is not possible, to minimize the risk as much as possible.

GIRR is committed to a violence free workplace. Any violent act against employees is unacceptable and illegal and will not be tolerated. This policy complies with WorkSafe BC OHS Regulations 4.27- 4.31 and applies to all GIRR employees.

The purpose of this document is to outline the policy, procedures, and guidelines for ensuring that all GIRR employees have as safe and violence-free an environment as possible.

Definition of “Violence in the Workplace”

Violence includes any threatening statement or behaviour or attempted or actual assault toward an employee by any person other than a co-worker, which gives the employee reasonable cause to believe that they were at risk of injury.

- **Threats** are defined as any communication of intent to injure that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe there is a risk of injury. Threats can be direct or indirect - delivered in person or through letters, phone calls or electronic mail.
- **Assault** is defined as any act, gesture or attempt to exercise force so as to cause injury to a worker or that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that there is a risk of injury, whether or not an injury occurs. Injury can be physical or psychological. Examples include:
 - Intimidating or frightening gestures such as shaking fists at another person; punching or pounding objects; angrily jumping up and down; or screaming.
 - Throwing objects.
 - Kicking, hitting, biting, grabbing, pinching, scratching or spitting.
 - Injuring a person using an object such as a vehicle, chair, cane, container or weapon.

Pro-active Procedures and Guidelines (Aimed at prevention)

Employees will be educated in the use of appropriate Conflict Resolution steps to first try to obtain voluntary compliance through discussion.

Workplace Design relates to the physical space. Examples of security measures include use of entrance and exit gates; use of locks and installation of barriers; keeping areas well lit; designing workspaces so that they are visible to fellow employees.

Administrative and Work Procedures relate to policies and procedures that must be followed. Examples include locking restricted access doors during hours of operation; reporting of suspicious persons or vehicles to supervisor for investigation; avoiding Lone Worker situations or developing Working Alone procedures.

GALIANO ISLAND RECYCLING RESOURCES SOCIETY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

Training Programs The most effective tool for prevention of violence in the workplace is for employees to have the skills and tools available to defuse an escalating customer incident. Various PVIWP training courses are available and may be considered for employees based on the results of the Risk Assessments. In any case all employees should familiarize themselves with Conflict Resolution procedures as outlined below. Their application will provide employees with the most basic and effective tool for violence prevention.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

In most cases the contributing factors of customer hostility are beyond the control of the employee. However, the employee can control their response to the situation and attempt to defuse the situation using appropriate conflict resolution techniques. Employees should not, by careless or deliberate word or action provoke a situation which might otherwise be avoidable.

The goal of the “**Conflict Resolution 5-step process**” is to obtain voluntary compliance through discussion. Once this approach has been exhausted then the employee’s recourse is to involve a Supervisor or the Police.

The following are step-by-step guidelines for resolving conflict, defusing hostility, and gaining voluntary compliance by non-violent means.

Step 1 - Presence

- Your presence alone may be enough to cause a person to comply and behave appropriately. If not, it may be necessary to speak to the person and ask for compliance. Be polite and pleasant. Be non-confrontational and stay in control of your emotions.
- The manner of your approach is critical. Always identify yourself verbally. Keep your tone polite and professional. People who are abusive are generally venting frustrations - not at you personally - but at what you represent. Don’t take insults personally - deflect them and try to respond professionally.

“I understand that you are upset / (that this is an inconvenience), but for the safety of our customers and staff / (we have a policy...) so I am asking you to please _____”

The person may comply. If not move to Step 2

Step 2 - Give Reasons for Compliance

- Reason with the person - tell them their behaviour is unacceptable; offensive; disruptive; unlawful.
- Give legal justification where appropriate i.e. contrary to company policy; contrary to law. State your authority to enforce the policy.

“As staff it is my responsibility to enforce our policy to ensure the safety of our customers”

GALIANO ISLAND RECYCLING RESOURCES SOCIETY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

The person may comply. Otherwise move to Step 3

Step 3 - Create Options

- Provide the person with options but do not make it sound like a threat. *"I can do _____, or we could do _____, otherwise if this doesn't work for you, I can show you how to safely leave the premises."* Or *"The sooner we do _____ the sooner you can be on your way"*.

The person may comply, otherwise move to Step 4

Step 4 - Confirm the person's intentions

- If the person still won't comply, confirm what you believe to be the person's final position based on their behaviour. *"So (what you are telling me is) (does this mean) you plan to keep doing what you are doing no matter how it affects others and that it is (illegal/contrary to policy)?"*
- If the person persists, ask them as a last resort: *"Is there anything I can do or say to get your co-operation?"*
- If you get a reasonable response, try to be helpful to ensure compliance but do nothing contrary to policy/unlawful.

The person may comply, otherwise move to Step 5

Step 5 - Action

- Failure to get co-operation at this stage will require you to take action. You need to call your Supervisor or the police.
- Advise the person of the action you plan to take. This will provide one last opportunity to comply. *"I am sorry but I will have to call for assistance from (the police/my supervisor) to resolve this issue"*.
- At this point step back from the situation, call for assistance and observe the individual until help arrives. If the person leaves, monitor their movements so you are able to locate them when assistance arrives.

Conflict Resolution - Supervisor Intervention

Once a supervisor is called to intervene in a confrontation between a customer and an employee the key steps are:

- Separate the parties
- Gather information from the customer
- Gather information from your employee
- Speak to witnesses
- Make a decision. Considering the following:
 - Severity of the incident
 - Has the employee acted properly
 - Was the customer out of line

GALIANO ISLAND RECYCLING RESOURCES SOCIETY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

- Has there been compliance by the customer
- Is an apology appropriate and acceptable to the employee
- Is an apology appropriate even if offered
- Should the offender be evicted from the premises
- Should the police be involved
- Should service be denied and for how long
- Implement your decision

Reactive Procedures and Guidelines (Reporting, Investigation, Remedies, and Post-Incident Support)

Reporting Incidents

- All incidents of violence must be reported verbally by the employee to their direct Supervisor
- All incidents of violence must be documented by the Supervisor
- The following types of serious incidents must also be reported to the police:
 - Sudden deaths or incidents which result in serious injury to any person
 - Suicides or attempts
 - Threats and assaults against employees by the public
 - Serious incidents and unlawful behaviour involving customers which in the opinion of the supervisor require police intervention

Laying of Criminal Charges

In cases of assault, the decision to file a criminal complaint is solely that of the employee who is the victim of the assault or threat. The employee should seek the advice of the attending police officer in this regard. GIRR cannot lay charges on behalf of the employee, but actively encourages employees to pursue such matters to the full extent of the law and will fully support them throughout the process.

Investigating Incidents

All reported incidents will be reviewed by the Board and investigated if deemed necessary.

Follow-up and Remedies

The ultimate remedy GIRR has is to refuse service to the customer and in certain cases ban further service for a specified time period. When a ban is enforced it should be reported to all staff and to the Board as soon as possible. Steps should be taken to:

- Ensure all witness statements are completed and forwarded to the Board
- Identify the person(s) by asking for identification or to the extent possible take photographs.
- Obtain all vehicle information (i.e. license number, make, model, colour)

If police were called, collect the name of the officer and the file number if possible.