

CALGARY HOUSING COMPANY POLICY:

Unacceptable Behaviours & Workplace Violence Policy

Policy Number: OHS-Unacceptable Behaviours & Violence-002
Approved By: CHCMT
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Policy Owner: CHCMT

BACKGROUND

Our customers, whether in Calgary Housing Company housing, or applying for housing, are at times in crisis and can display a range of cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses.

Our aim is to ensure that expressions of dissatisfaction from our customers are dealt with in the best way possible. CHC welcomes concerns from customers as valuable feedback, and wherever possible, staff work to de-escalate problems to enable a customer's complaint to be investigated.

CHC is committed to providing a respectful workplace for staff and respectful services to customers. CHC respects the rights and dignity of the people it serves and treats them in a non-coercive manner. In turn, we expect our staff to be treated courteously and respectfully. Violence or abuse is unacceptable.

The work performed by CHC has the potential for staff to encounter violence or harassment in the workplace. CHC will make every reasonable effort to:

- Train management and staff
- Identify sources of violence and harassment
- Establish reporting requirements and procedures to address unacceptable behaviours
- Reduce or eliminate the risk of violence
- Implement policies and procedures to maintain respectful environments and services

We accept that clients may sometimes be angry or upset. However, it is not acceptable when anger about an issue escalates into aggression directed towards staff or other clients.

Aggression is not restricted to acts that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (spoken, unspoken through body language or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, intimidated, threatened or abused.

Threats or acts of violence may be potentially higher in situations where staff are:

- Carrying out inspections or enforcement duties (e.g. addressing complaints or eviction notices)
- Conducting site visits for any reason

- Situations where there is potential for emotional outbursts or frustration of anger (e.g. denial of services, or long wait times at the customer service desk)
- Working in politically charged situations (e.g. cultural or religious backgrounds and experiences)
- Working alone or in isolated situations

PURPOSE

CHC is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all staff by developing and maintaining proactive policies, procedures and awareness programs. The purpose of this policy is to provide Calgary Housing Company staff with guidance for dealing with unacceptable or abusive behaviours from customers and outlines expectations of staff and CHC in reporting and responding to unacceptable behaviours.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

- “Customer” means any person(s) who either lives in CHC managed housing¹ or their guests/visitors/relatives who may be on site, attend the office with them or act on their behalf in any capacity, or are applying for CHC managed housing;
- “JHSC”: refers to CHC’s Joint Health and Safety Committee
- “Job Hazard Assessment” (JHA): is a technique that focuses on job tasks as a way to identify hazards before they occur. It focuses on the relationship between the worker, the tasks, the tools and the work environment;
- “SDMS” refers to The City’s Safety Data Management System;
- “Staff” means both management and non-management staff (unionized or exempt), part-time, on-call, and temp workers of CHC
- “Threat” means any act, gesture, or statement that gives a staff member, or another person, reasonable cause to believe that there is risk of injury to themselves or another person or damage to property, including intimidating body language;
- “Unacceptable Behaviour” means any actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to cause another person distress or discomfort.
- “Violence” means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury and/or damage to property;
- “Workplace” refers to any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, or near which a worker works.

INTENDED POLICY OUTCOMES

¹ Including CHC Rent Supplement Program

This policy aims to support good practices to address unacceptable behaviours and the prevention and management of threatening behaviours and violence between CHC and customers.

POLICY

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to CHC staff, supervisors, tenants, visitors and applicants at any of the following places: CHC offices; CHC managed properties; other locations visited by staff and customers while on CHC-related business, including CHC rent supplement programs.

2. Prevention and Assessment of Risk

To effectively prevent and/or deter threats and violent acts from occurring, there is a need to determine specific risks in your work areas.

- 2.1. To help prevent workplace violence, **leaders are responsible for:**

- 2.1.1. Ensuring staff are familiar with The City's Workplace Violence, CHC's Unacceptable Behaviours and Violence Policy, Respectful Workplace policies as well as safe work guidelines.

- 2.1.1.1. Providing these resources as part of staff on-boarding and included in the safety orientation

- 2.1.2. Ensuring Job Hazard Assessments are complete for each role and supporting staff to implement outcomes, including issues and any actions taken to minimize and/or eliminate danger.

- 2.1.2.1. Job Hazard Assessments must address specific criteria including, but not limited to:

- a. The physical layout of the work area;
- b. Work routines, schedules, procedures and practices;
- c. Geographical location, hours of operation, and staffing complements;
- d. Past incidents or occurrences of threats or violent acts;
- e. Risk of threats and violence in the workplace.

- 2.1.3. Ensuring staff are trained in techniques to avoid escalating situations where applicable.

- 2.1.4. Educating staff on how to report incidents of unacceptable behaviours and workplace violence in CHC's safety reporting system.

2.1.5. When there are identified trends in reported incidences, CHCMT will be notified by CHC Safety Advisor and a request will be made to Corporate Security to initiate a Threat Assessment Team, as referenced below.

2.2. Staff have a role in prevention by:

2.2.1. Learning to identify warning signs of workplace violence; taking necessary precautions, including participating in training opportunities and requirements as identified in JHA and maintaining professionalism

2.2.2. Reporting, in accordance with *this policy*, any violence incidents or warning signs they observe at work.

2.2.3. Reflecting risk of workplace violence adequately in their Job Hazard Assessment

3. Training and Reinforcement:

3.1.1. Verbal de-escalation training and strategies will be provided to staff for whom workplace violence is identified in the role Job Hazard Assessment (JHA) to teach non-physical skills to prevent potentially dangerous situations from escalating into physical confrontation or injury.

3.1.2. Non-violent crisis intervention training will be provided to staff for whom workplace violence is identified in the role Job Hazard Assessment (JHA).

3.1.3. Scenario-based exercises and drills will be scheduled bi-annually by the office building warden, with training and support from the Joint Health and Safety Committee for staff to practice and develop skills for verbal de-escalation and non-violent crisis intervention.

4. Physical Intervention

4.1. Staff should not intervene in any violent situation.

4.2. If a situation presents an imminent threat to your safety or that of another person, you should:

4.2.1. Quickly attempt to remove yourself from the situation and seek out a safe location;

4.2.2. Summon help from co-workers or other people in the area, if it is safe to do so;

4.2.3. **Call 9-1-1;**

4.2.4. Contact Corporate Security and ask to speak with an Integrated Security Centre (ISC) Supervisor;

4.2.5. Call their direct Supervisor for support and assistance.

5. Non-Compliance Consequences

5.1. Unacceptable Behaviours in the Workplace

5.1.1. If a customer demonstrates unacceptable behaviours in one of the District Offices, or on the phone, or at one of CHC managed properties, the staff member is to provide a verbal warning of the unacceptable behaviour.

5.1.2. If the customer continues with the behaviour, the staff member is to end the interaction either asking the customer to leave the District Office, or the staff member will leave the CHC managed property, or hang up the phone.

5.1.3. If escalation continues and the interaction cannot be ended safely, staff are to call Calgary Police or building security and must report the incident to the Health and Safety Advisor as a "Near Miss" or "Incident" in Safety Data Management System (SDMS).

5.1.4. If there have been two separate incidences recorded in a tenant's file a written notice will be sent to the tenant iterating CHC's "*Unacceptable Behaviour's and Workplace Violence Policy*". The written letter to the tenant will also reference *Section 21 of the Residential Tenancy Act – Tenant's Covenant's* and *Section 30(1)(b)*.

5.1.5. The written notice is to be mailed to the tenant requiring that they meet with the Property Manager and Tenant Liaison at the District Office to discuss corrective actions for the tenant.

5.1.6. Should the threatening behaviour continue, an eviction notice will be served by the Property Manager; if deemed unsafe the PM will engage an external resource for delivery of the notice, such as Calgary Police.

5.1.6.1. Calgary Police Services will be involved if needed.

5.1.7. All interactions and communications (verbal and written) must be documented in the case a file is opened with the Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Services.

5.2. Acts of Violence and Threats Against Staff.

5.2.1. **In the case of violence**, the staff member(s) is to call 911 immediately and the Housing Services Coordinator will activate the Threat Assessment Team and issue at 24 hour notice of tenancy termination as per the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

5.2.1.1. Where there has been an incident of violence against CHC staff, detailed notes of the incident will be added to the tenant's electronic file.

5.2.1.2. If the individual attempts to re-access CHC in the future, the application will be reviewed and considered by the Manager of Client Services.

5.2.2. In cases where a tenant or applicant threatens, or acts in a threatening manner towards CHC staff, the staff member(s) is to call 911 immediately and the Housing Services Coordinator will activate the Threat Assessment Team where deemed appropriate.

5.2.2.1. If the threat is from a tenant, a 24 hour notice of tenancy termination as per the Residential Tenancy Agreement may be issued.

5.2.2.2. If the threat is from an applicant, CHC Supervisor(s) will work with Corporate Security to complete a risk assessment and determine appropriate actions which may include a short or long term ban from the workplace.

5.3. Staff Non-Compliance

5.3.1. Staff failing to adhere to the items contained in this policy including completing hazard assessments and fulfilling reporting requirements will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

6. Reporting Incidences

6.1. Staff must report all incidents of threatening behaviours as near misses to their Supervisors and input into SDMS within 24 business hours.

6.2. In incidences of workplace violence, **Leaders** are responsible for:

6.2.1. Reporting the incident to Corporate Security by phone at 403-268-8868 or online via the Security Incident e-Reporting Tool.

6.2.2. Documenting all actions taken for future reference, including filling out an X519 Occupational Health & Safety Hazardous Condition Near Miss Report form or X75 Occupational Incident Report/Investigation form.

6.2.3. Seeking advice or consultation on how the situation may be resolved (e.g. mediation, formal investigation).

6.2.4. Implementing recommended actions to help resolve the situation and assist in preventing further occurrences.

6.2.5. Consulting, referring, involving or cooperating with other City or external resources that may assist with the incident or provide support to the employee(s) (e.g. EFAP, safety, and police).

6.2.6. Working with applicable unions and associations to develop and implement procedures to deter or limit the risk of violence in the workplace.

7. Debrief and Supports

7.1. Any staff member(s) impacted by aggressive behaviours, or a victim of workplace violence will be encouraged to consult with a health professional. Services are available from the City's Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) , including Critical Management Services.

8. Corporate Security

8.1. All incidents of workplace violence must be reported to Corporate Security.

8.2. Corporate Security will triage and facilitate the investigation of all reported cases of workplace violence using an Investigation Matrix.

8.3. Corporate Security may activate the **Threat Assessment Team (TAT)** to help coordinate the response. TAT consists of the following member representatives:

- TAT Coordinator
- Corporate Security
- Human Resources
- Management from affected business unit(s)

Additional members may consist of representatives from:

- Police
- Environmental & Safety Management
- Unions or associations
- Other professions (e.g. Psychologist, lawyer, communications)

When activated TAT is responsible for:

- 8.4.1 Meeting and planning a response to a workplace violence situation where there is a potential risk from escalating violence;
- 8.4.2 Deciding is/when to intervene in a workplace violence situation;
- 8.4.3 Reviewing any available, relevant information about the incident;
- 8.4.4 Reviewing requirements for enhanced security of staff and assets;
- 8.4.5 Assisting with messaging to the victim and others in the organization;
- 8.4.6 Referring staff member(s) to applicable resources for obtaining court orders (e.g. restraining orders);
- 8.4.7 Issuing Trespass Notifications, if applicable;
- 8.4.8 Consulting and providing advice and/or direction on dealing with concerns and incidents of workplace and domestic violence, where appropriate;

8.4.9 Assisting with other issues that may arise;

SUPPORTING REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Other references and resources

- The City of Calgary Workplace Violence Intranet [Site](#)
- The City of Calgary Workplace Violence [Policy](#)
- The City of Calgary Workplace Violence [Procedures](#)
- The City of Calgary Respectful Workplace [Policy](#)
- CHC Working Alone [Policy](#)
- CHC New Employee Safety Orientation [Procedure](#)
- Employee Family Assistance [Program](#)
- Emergency Information for [Employees](#) (includes what to do in an act of violence)
- Residential Tenancy [Act](#)
- City of Calgary [Employee & Family Assistance Program](#)

REVISION HISTORY

Creation Date	Review Date	Description
August 2017	November 2020	