

# Violence Prevention Policy

## Toronto United Mennonite Church

**Intent:** TUMC is committed to providing a working environment that is safe, secure, and free from threats, intimidation and violence. We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to workplace violence. As such, we will not tolerate violent behaviour and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent violence and to protect workers from acts of violence.

**Guidelines:** The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that no pastor or staff is exposed to violence at work; and
- Ensure that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken towards any pastor or staff found to have committed violence against either another pastor or another staff up to and including dismissal.

**Application:** This policy applies to congregants, community members, workers, volunteers, pastors and staff including full-time, temporary and contract staff. This policy is applicable at all church and workplace settings, and at church and work-related activities and social events that take place off-site.

- Pastors and staff are responsible for preventing violence and reporting acts of violence that threaten, or are perceived to threaten, a safe working environment.

**Definition:** For the purposes of this policy:

“Workplace Violence” occurs when a person is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted in the course of employment. Workplace violence includes threatening behaviour, verbal or written threats, verbal abuse and physical attacks. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- Expressions of intent to inflict harm;
- Threatening activity, such as waving a fist;
- Shoving;
- Pushing;
- Hitting;
- Verbal abuse
- “Domestic violence” is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another person with whom they have, or have had, an intimate relationship. This pattern of behaviour may include physical violence, sexual, emotional, and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and using electronic devices to harass and control.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Reporting Procedures for Pastors and staff:
  - Anyone who believes they are the victim of workplace violence should immediately report in writing the incident to the Team Lead or to PCRC.
  - Anyone who has good reason to believe that workplace violence is occurring or has occurred should immediately report the matter to the Team Lead or to PCRC.

- Staff should also notify their Team Lead or PCRC (Pastors will notify PCRC) if a restraining order is in effect or if a potentially violent non-work-related situation, such as domestic violence exists that could result in violence in the workplace.
- A report of workplace violence should include details about the alleged incident(s), including the date(s), time(s) and location(s), what happened, who was involved and the names of any witnesses.
- Duties of the Pastoral Care Relations Committee (PCRC)
  - The PCRC and Team Leads have the additional responsibility to act immediately on observations or allegations of a potentially dangerous situation, including domestic violence. PCRC and Team Leads are responsible for addressing potential problems upon being aware of them, before they become serious.
  - Any incident reported will be communicated to PCRC.

### **Investigation**

- Will be conducted by PCRC
- All reports of workplace violence, harassment or domestic violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Potentially dangerous situations and precautionary measures will be communicated to individuals who are potentially affected.
- Furthermore, the applicable investigation protocol may be altered if it is determined that it is necessary to do so, such as where there is a reasonable and imminent threat to a pastor's or a staff's safety.
- Reporting to Police: All physical assaults will be reported to the police, as will any behaviour or threat of violence or harassment that requires police intervention or follow-up.

### **Intervention**

- PCRC will intervene as appropriate at any indication of a potentially violent or harassing situation.
- In the event that a pastor or staff is considered to be at risk of violence or harassment either from within or outside of the workplace, a plan will be developed to minimize the risk and respond to any potential emergency situation.
- Should PCRC become aware of a potential incident of domestic violence affecting a pastor or a staff, every reasonable precaution will be taken in the circumstances to protect the affected pastor or staff.

### **Corrective Action and Discipline**

- If PCRC determines that a pastor or a staff has engaged in workplace violence or harassment, appropriate corrective action will be taken, up to and including dismissal (at the discretion of the Board).
- In addition, PCRC may require that a pastor or a staff participate in an anger management program or other form of counselling, either voluntarily or as a condition of continued employment. If the violent or harassing behaviour is that of a non-employee, PCRC will take appropriate action in an effort to ensure that such behaviour is not repeated. However, not every complaint will warrant corrective action. Rather, corrective action will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Incident Management:** In the event of a significant workplace violence or harassment incident, we will assess the situation and arrange for the following interventions as appropriate:

- Facilitation of medical attention;
- Individual debriefing;

- Counseling for pastors or staff affected; and
- Reporting to the police.

**Risk Assessment**

- At least annually and minimally after each and every incident of workplace violence or harassment, PCRC or its delegate shall complete an evaluation to determine whether a risk of violence or harassment exists due to the nature of the work and/or work environment.
- Where workplace violence or harassment risks are identified, evaluation and implementation of appropriate corrective measures are required to reduce or eliminate the identified risks.