

Policy 200-80

Rural Municipality of Gull Lake 139

Workplace Violence Policy & Prevention Plan

**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 (the "Municipality") is committed to minimizing and eliminating the risk of workplace violence.

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 is committed to providing employees with workplace violence training and taking appropriate corrective action respecting any employee who subjects another worker to violence. Violence in the workplace may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for cause.

**2. APPLICATION**

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139's violence policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of the "Municipality" and prohibits violence by any employee of the "Municipality", including supervisors and co-workers, Council members, as well as by any person doing business with or for the RM.

If the alleged individual committing a violent act is a Council member, please also refer to the ***Code of Ethics Bylaw No. 140-16, and Policy 200-99.2 Harassment Prevention Policy.***

*The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (the Act) contains protections for workers against violence in the workplace. Section 3-21 of the Act outlines the employer's responsibility for developing and implementing written policy statement and prevention plan (PSPP).

**3. DEFINITIONS**

**"Violence"** is defined in section 3-26(1) of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*, as:

Violence means the attempted, threatened or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause injury, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that the worker is at risk of injury.

**"The Complainant"** is the person who makes the complaint.

**"The Respondent"** is the person who has allegedly committed violence.

**"Worksite"** means a location where a worker is or is likely to carry out their responsibilities of employment. This includes work-related settings such as work-related conferences, travel, municipality sponsored social events and any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in the course of their employment.

#### **4. VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 has conducted a risk assessment in preparation of this policy that considered the following potentials risks:

Previous incidents of violence in the workplace;

- Situations where employees interact with members of the public;
- Integrity of site security, equipment, and lighting;
- Effectiveness of emergency procedures;
- Procedures used in cash handling; and
- Procedures for releasing contact phone numbers, names and addresses of employees only to authorized individuals.

A workplace violence risk assessment of the above factors must be performed as often as necessary to protect workers and to provide a safe working environment.

This reporting requirement also applies to any repeated risk assessments performed to assess and prevent workplace violence incidents.

#### **5. VIOLENCE RISK REDUCTION**

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 will further take the following actions to minimize or eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace

- Ensuring employees have access to appropriate personal protective equipment;
- Reviewing and updating emergency procedures, site security, and applicable administrative processes;
- Upgrading site security equipment when required;
- Arranging for sufficient staff levels to carry out the work safely;
- Training and education so that employees understand the risks and the controls which must be followed for preventing exposure and responding to workplace violence; and
- Monitoring the effectiveness of control measures through safety inspections.

The “Municipality” recognizes that the following positions are at increased risk of being exposed to a violent situation:

1. Administrator/Assistant Administrator/Casual Position at the “Municipality” Office (listed below);
2. Shop Foreman at the Shop (listed below); and
3. Labour/Outside Workers/Casual Season Workers at the Shop (listed below).

The “Municipality” further recognizes that there is an increased risk that a violent situation may occur at the following worksites:

1. R.M. Office located at 1184 Conrad Avenue, Gull Lake, SK S0N 1A0 and;
2. R.M. Shop located at 6663 Queens Avenue, Gull Lake, SK S0N 1A0

If an employee is at an increased risk of being subject to violence in the workplace, The “Municipality” will inform employees of the nature and extent of the risk from potential violence in writing, except if the disclosure is prohibited by law. The “Municipality” will disclose any information in its possession related to the risk of violence from persons who have a history of violent behavior and whom employees are likely to encounter in the course of their work.

### **Risk Assessment for the “Municipality” main office at 1184 Conrad Avenue, Gull Lake, SK S0N 1A0:**

- Typically, the RM office is a safe environment. There is the occasional ratepayer that may come in irate or is known to be hostile due to unpaid taxes and having tax enforcement issues.
- The Administrator and office staff are to not engage with the individual and will calmly ask him/her to leave the establishment.
- By remaining calm, this will help the ratepayer or customer to remain calm. Avoid escalating the situation. If the Admin or office personal are alone and the ratepayer continues to behave in an agitated manner, stop talking and wait until they realize you are not responding.
- Office personal can ask the ratepayer to come back another day, when perhaps the Reeve/Administrator is able to be present.
- If a Reeve or Council member enters the office with aggression the employee can ask him/her to calm down or leave immediately. All Reeve and Council are aware they are to have full respect with staff. **Policy 200-99.2 Harassment Prevention Policy** and the **Code of Ethics Bylaw 140-16** speaks to this.
- Do not be a hero.
- Report all violent incidents immediately. Violent Incident Report Form attached to this Policy.
- If you do not know the customer (not a ratepayer) as he leaves take a picture of the vehicle and plate if possible with phone.
- If working late at the office, do not park in the back, park on the front street where lighting is sufficient. Be sure to lock vehicle door and lock office behind yourself when entering. When finished and ready to leave, look out windows and down the street so to not see anyone loitering around.
- Be active and alert at all times.
- Have a permanent sign at the front and back of office indicating there is no cash on site. Deposit money every day. The float will only contain \$100.00.
- Cameras are situated inside the office aimed directly at the front entrance door.

### **Risk Assessment for the “Municipality” Shop located at 6663 Queens Avenue, Gull Lake, SK S0N 1A0:**

- The RM Shop is located the east side of Gull Lake in the industrial side of town.
- There are continuous thief issues from surrounding businesses and for that reason the “Municipality” has four (4) cameras set up around the RM of Gull lake Shop recording day and night.
- During the day time hours typically workplace violence has not been documented to date. This is not considered high risk.
- With the Main RM Office Being physical blocks from the shop ratepayers do not typically visit the RM Shop.
- If an outside worker feels threatened by another co-worker and the Foreman is not around to control the situation. Do not engage. Do not entice. Walk away calmly, if this does not work, the Complainant should gather their belongings and leave immediately, and go to the main office at 1184 Conrad Avenue, Gull Lake, SK.
- At that time the Administrator can either call the Reeve and/or Councillors, and fill out a Violent Incident Report Form.
- If shop employees are working during the evening hours, they need to ensure the doors are locked so an unwelcome visitor may not gain access and surprise the employee.
- The hard drive to the cameras is situated in the shop office and the employee can scan the data (film) back and see while they were working inside if there was any activity outside that they would not have been aware of.
- The shop is well lit by the doors, park by the street and the best well lit areas. Lock your vehicles after exiting and have keys ready to enter the shop.
- Be active and alert at all times.

## 6. REPORTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 encourages all employees to report any incidents of workplace violence **immediately** so that complaints can be quickly investigated.

If an employee believes they have been exposed to violence in the workplace, they should tell any supervisor with whom they feel comfortable or contact the Administrator as soon as possible. If the Administrator is the accused offender, then the written report may be submitted to the Reeve. Employees may be asked to provide a written complaint, which should be specific and include, but not be limited to, the names of the individuals involved, the names of any witnesses, the date, time and location of the incident.

The "Municipality" will not retaliate against employees for filing a complaint and will not permit retaliation by management employees or co-workers.

Furthermore, no action will be taken against an employee who has made complaint in good faith which is found to be unsubstantiated. However, a complainant may be subject to disciplinary action where it is proven that the complaint is fraudulent or malicious.

## 7. INVESTIGATION

Following the reporting of the incident by the employee, an investigation will be undertaken. The "Municipality" or their designate will investigate.

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 will document incidents of alleged violence, the investigation and its outcome, which may include documenting who is involved, potential witnesses, and any other related documents.

In the event of an allegation of violence, the "Municipality" has full discretion to take whatever temporary interim measures that it deems appropriate to ensure the workplace remains a safe and productive environment and/or helps to facilitate an investigation into said violence including, but not limited to, removing an individual from the workplace.

Nothing in this policy prevents or discourages a worker from referring a harassment complaint to the Occupational Health and Safety Division under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. A worker may also file a complaint with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission under The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. A worker retains the right to exercise any other legal avenues available.

Respondent:

9. The Respondent is responsible for:

- a) co-operating with the investigative process.
- b) keeping a documented record of the details relating to the complaint such as dates, pictures, etc.

## 8. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 will not disclose the name of a complainant or the respondent or the circumstances related to the complaint to any person except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigating the complaint or taking corrective action with respect to the complaint, or as required by law.

In order to protect the safety of the complainant and other staff, the "Municipality" may place an employee on administrative leave if it is deemed necessary to protect employee safety.

## 9. INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES & REMEDIES

Violence in the workplace may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment for cause. If it is determined that workplace violence has occurred, appropriate and effective remedial action will be taken. Appropriate action may also be taken to deter any future incidents.

If the alleged perpetrator of violence is a Council member, please refer to the Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 **Code of Ethics Bylaw 140-16** for the procedure to be followed and available sanctions.

The "Municipality" will advise the parties of the results of the investigation.

## 10. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

In the event that an employee, as a result of a work-related violence, experiences injury or adverse symptoms, the employee is encouraged to consult the worker's physician for treatment or referral for post incident counselling. If an employee consults their physician for treatment or receives counselling that is related to the workplace violence, the "Municipality" shall credit the worker's attendance as time at work and ensure that the worker loses no pay or other benefits as a result of the workplace violence.

## 11. TRAINING

The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 is committed to providing a training program for employees that includes:

- the means to recognize potentially violent situations;
- procedures, work practices, administrative arrangements and engineering controls that have been developed to minimize or eliminate the risk to workers;
- the appropriate responses of workers to incidents of violence, including how to obtain assistance; and
- procedures for reporting violent incidents.

## 12. ACCESS TO POLICY & POLICY REVIEW

Copies of the policy statement and prevention plan will be made readily available to employees.

This policy shall be reviewed, and revised if necessary, every three years or whenever there is a change in circumstances that may affect worker health and safety.

Date of Policy: Adopted by Resolution of Council on **April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Res. 93-24**

**This Policy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.**

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENT & AGREEMENT – EMPLOYEE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, an employee of The Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 ***Policy 200-80 Workplace Violence Policy & Prevention Plan*** (the "Policy") and have read and understood it and acknowledge that I will abide by the Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth by this Policy, I may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENT & AGREEMENT – COUNCIL MEMBER**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Council member of the Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Rural Municipality of Gull Lake No. 139 ***Policy 200-80 Workplace Violence Policy & Prevention Plan*** (the "Policy") and have read and understood it and acknowledge that I will abide by the Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth by this Policy, I may face disciplinary action or sanctions.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Council member Signature