



Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy

1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace that is free of harassment, violence and threats of violence. We believe that physical and psychological safety is the right and responsibility of every person. The GNWT recognizes that the impacts of domestic violence on employees in the workplace can be an occupational safety hazard that can cause physical and psychological harm.

Domestic violence can affect anyone, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, or education. Domestic violence is any form of abuse, mistreatment, or neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, former partner or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. The impacts of domestic violence may also be felt by those close to individuals involved in a domestic violence situation.

2. Principles

The GNWT adheres to the following principles in implementing this Policy:

- 2.1 The GNWT is sensitive to, and supportive of, the needs of employees who are impacted by domestic violence.
- 2.2 The GNWT will support employees and the dependent children of employees who are experiencing domestic violence. The GNWT will provide access to Domestic Violence Leave, as well as information on available domestic violence services and support resources.
- 2.3 The GNWT is committed to the health, safety, and wellness of all its employees and supporting those who are at risk because of domestic violence and to respecting the privacy rights of those involved.

3. Scope

This Policy and the applicable guidelines apply to departments, agencies, and employees of the GNWT, except for:

- Members of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, and
- Employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply in this Policy:

Deputy Head - means the Deputy Minister of a department, Superintendent of a divisional education council, the Chief Executive Officer or President of a board, authority or agency, or a person duly appointed as a Deputy Head.



Domestic violence – Can mean any circumstance in which a family member (intimate partner or former family member) is violent, threatening, intimidating, or makes a member of their family or household feel afraid for their safety. Domestic violence, alternatively referred to as family violence or intimate partner violence, may include:

- physical violence;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse, often exhibited by verbal abuse;
- mistreatment and neglect;
- cultural or spiritual abuse; or
- financial abuse.

Dependent Child – any child (including a stepchild or foster child) of the employee who is under 21 years and dependent upon the employee for support, or who is attending school or is a student at some other institution and is under 21-years old, or who is 21 years or older and dependent upon the employee because of mental or physical infirmity.

Occupational Health and Safety – matters related to the health, safety, and wellness of employees, contractors, guests of the government, and members of the public in the workplace.

Workplace – a location where an employee is engaging in work, or is likely to, engage in work while employed by the GNWT.

5. Authority and Accountability

General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Financial Management Board. Authority and accountability are further defined as follows:

(a) Minister of Finance (Minister)

The Minister of Finance is accountable to the Financial Management Board for the implementation of this Policy.

(b) Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Finance is accountable to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

Specific

(a) Financial Management Board

The Financial Management Board may approve the Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy.



(b) Minister of Finance

The Minister:

May recommend amendments and exceptions to the Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy to the Financial Management Board; and

(c) Deputy Minister of Finance

May recommend Domestic Violence and the Workplace Guidelines and amendments to the Minister. These guidelines may include:

- a. a process for reporting domestic violence;
- b. a process to identify the hazards and risks associated with reported domestic violence; and
- c. a process to ensure confidentiality and privacy while ensuring workplace safety.

(d) Ministers

Ministers are accountable for the implementation of this Policy in their departments, boards and agencies.

(e) Deputy Heads

Deputy Heads are accountable to their respective Ministers for the application of the Domestic Violence and the Workplace Guidelines.

6. Provisions

(1) The GNWT will provide training and support to employees and supervisors through:

- a. Regular review of this Policy and its supporting Guidelines with employees;
- b. Providing training on the policy, guidelines, toolkits, and resources available for GNWT employees;
- c. Promoting and ensuring the availability of GNWT supports and other resources available to employees and residents of the Northwest Territories; and
- d. Establishing a clear and confidential process for employees to communicate with their employer about domestic violence.

(2) Upon communication by an employee to the employer that they or their dependent child(ren) have been involved in a situation of domestic violence, the employer will engage with the



employee on the following stages of domestic violence response and management through application of the response framework set out in the Policy Guidelines:

- a. Inform the employee of the protections in place to ensure confidentiality and privacy for those involved;
- b. Provide information on available supports, including the availability of leave, and aid in accessing those supports;
- c. Conduct a workplace risk assessment and review workplace accommodations as necessary; and,
- d. Conduct regular check-ins with the employee to provide support and update accommodations or safety plans.

7. Prerogative of the Financial Management Board

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Financial Management Board to make decisions or act with respect to domestic violence in our workplaces.