

**WACC POLICY**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*Issued by the Directors*

*September 2016*

**General**

1. The Association recognizes that it has a responsibility to provide, in so far as is reasonably practicable, a healthy and safe working environment, free from workplace violence, harassment, and discrimination, for its employees. It also accepts that its operations must be designed and implemented in such a way that risks are limited and the likelihood of injury to, or adverse impact on, anyone is avoided.
2. WACC is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and harassment, and will take whatever steps that is reasonable to protect its employees and to ensure that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their race, creed, colour, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, and family status. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between the employees.
3. Violent behaviour and harassment will not be tolerated by any person in the workplace and is unacceptable. Everyone in the workplace must be dedicated to preventing workplace violence and harassment, and to promote equality and respect. Everyone is expected to uphold the policy and will be held accountable by WACC.
4. The purpose of this policy is to create and foster a work environment that is free from workplace violence, harassment, as well as discrimination. The policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Executive employees and staff for reporting workplace violence, harassment, and/or discrimination.

**Definitions**

5. Workplace violence means any of the following:
  - The use of physical force against or by an employee in the workplace that causes or could cause physical injury;
  - The attempted use of physical force against or by an employee in the workplace that could cause physical injury; and
  - A statement or behavior that is reasonably believed to be a threat of physical harm or threat to safety or security in the workplace that could cause physical injury;

6. Workplace harassment means:

- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against an employee in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome;
- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or
- Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the employee and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

## **Responsibilities**

7. As chief executive of the organization, the General Secretary has overall responsibility for all aspects of WACC activities, including health and safety.
8. The Manager of Administration has been identified as the co-ordinator of health and safety for the organization, and is required to advise the General Secretary on related matters. He has the responsibility for:
  - Undertaking safety inspections,
  - Reviewing safety procedure,
  - Co-ordinating the maintenance of safety equipment,
  - Dealing with any health or safety issues that may arise,
  - Monitoring compliance with health and safety requirements,
  - Taking reasonable preventative measures to protect employees and others from workplace violence and harassment,
  - Ensuring that workplace violence and harassment assessments are conducted as often as is necessary and to address workplace violence and harassment risks identified through the assessments,
  - Ensuring that all employees are trained on this policy and to maintain a record of all completed training, and

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- Establishing a process for reporting and responding complaints and/or incidents of workplace violence and harassment.
9. All staff and volunteers are required to:
- Take account of health and safety in their work,
  - Consider the safety-related implications of programs and projects with which they are involved,
  - Carry out their activities in a way that does not put others at risk of injury,
  - Promote a work environment free from workplace violence and harassment and discrimination,
  - Notify the Secretary General and/or staff with supervisory authority immediately of any acts of workplace violence, harassment, or discriminatory conduct,
  - Participate in training regarding this policy and any necessary training as required by WACC, and
  - Fully participate and cooperate in any investigation of complaints and/or incidents in breach of this policy.
10. Staff with supervisor responsibilities will:
- Ensure that employees and volunteers are provided with such information as they may require to carry out their work safely,
  - Review work activities in their area of responsibility to ensure that adequate training has been provided,
  - Monitor, so far as is reasonable, work practices to ensure that staff are working safely,
  - Include consideration of health and safety matters in employee performance appraisals,
  - Promote a work environment free from workplace violence and harassment and discrimination,
  - Communicate and review this policy with the volunteers and employees to ensure full understanding of the procedure and their responsibilities,
  - Ensure that all volunteers and employees are trained in this policy, and
  - Respond immediately to all complaints and/or incidents of workplace violence, harassment, and or discriminatory conduct.

## **Safety Culture**

11. It is WACC's policy that work is only undertaken if it can be performed safely, and every employee has the right to refuse work that is unsafe.
12. The Association will take all reasonable steps to control any risks that are brought to its attention by staff, volunteers or others.
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14. Staff members are encouraged to become involved in health and safety, will be given the opportunity to contribute to the development of safe working practices, and will be consulted on health and safety related matters.
15. WACC will provide training to any employee, or volunteer working in the WACC offices, that may be necessary in order for them to perform their duties safely.

## **Office Safety**

16. Although WACC's offices provide a relatively safe working environment, they are not-risk free. The Association is committed to controlling risks, and it therefore requires that all staff:
  - a. Bring, to the attention of their supervisor, or the Manager of Administration, any risk that they may identify,
  - b. Co-operate in the implementation of measures designed to limit or eliminate risks, and
  - c. Take any necessary actions to protect visitors, volunteers and contractors who are on WACC's property.
17. New electrical equipment, including extension cords, must not be introduced into the workplace without the Manager of Administration being advised. He will carry out a review of all portable electrical equipment annually, and will remove from service any such equipment which shows signs of damage such that electrical safety may be compromised.
18. The use of toxic substances must be avoided, and no toxic substance may be introduced into the workplace without the prior approval of the Manager of Administration. He will maintain a list of any such substances and their location.

## **Non-office Work**

19. Employees who are carrying out their duties in locations that are not under WACC's control, including those who are working from home, participating in an outside meeting or event, visiting a project, or travelling on behalf of the Association, are required to take steps to limit the risks to which they are exposed.
20. From time-to-time it may be consistent with WACC's role for a staff member to visit an area where personal safety is at risk. In such circumstances, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the staff member is not exposed to risks unnecessarily and to limit the risks that cannot be avoided in so far as this can reasonably be achieved.
21. Those who work regularly from home must:
  - Carry out a risk assessment of the environment in which they work,
  - Take all reasonable precautions to control risks, including risks of a breach of confidentiality and privacy of personal information, and
  - Notify the Manager of Administration of any significant risks that cannot be controlled or eliminated.

## **Accidents**

22. Any work-related accident which leads to injury to an employee, any accident occurring on WACC premises in which any person is injured, or any incident which might have led to an injury, must be reported promptly to the Manager of Administration.
23. In case of any injury accident on WACC premises:
  - All staff must co-operate in ensuring that first aid is provided any other actions to protect against further injury and alleviate suffering are undertaken as a priority, and
  - A written report, identifying the person involved, the extent of injuries, any equipment involved and the circumstances surrounding the accident, including any likely causes, must be prepared by the senior member of staff on the premises at the time of the accident.
  - Every injury accident will be investigated by or under the direction of the Manager of Administration, the need for any remedial action necessary to prevent a recurrence must be identified, and such remedial action will be taken promptly.

- In the case of illness developing while at work, or in the event of an employee being diagnosed as having an illness which may be work-related, the Manager of Administration must be notified. In the case of the latter, he or she will promptly advise the General Secretary.

## **Reprisals**

24. WACC will not tolerate any form of reprisals or threats of reprisals and employees who engage in such actions will be disciplined according to the Discipline Policy.
25. Reprisal includes:
  - Any act of retaliation that occurs because a person has complained of or provided information about an incident of workplace violence, harassment, or discrimination,
  - Intentionally pressuring a person to ignore or not report an incident of workplace violence, harassment, or discrimination, and
  - Intentionally pressuring a person to lie or provide less than full cooperation with an investigation of a complaint or incident of workplace violence, harassment, or discrimination.

## **Reporting and Investigation**

26. All complaints of workplace violence, harassment, or discrimination will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
27. In the event of an incident involving workplace violence, a senior staff or executive employee will determine whether the police need to be contacted in relation to the incident where the employee or others have not already done so.
28. Where police have been contacted, the General Secretary must be informed and notified as soon as possible.
29. All complaints and/or incidents will be thoroughly investigated in an unbiased, impartial, and timely manner by the Investigator, appointed by the General Secretary. The Investigator will arrange to meet and interview the complainant, the person(s) being accused and any other employees or witnesses to the alleged incident, and take any other steps deemed necessary to fully and fairly investigate the complaint and/or incident.

30. Each stage in dealing with a case of workplace violence, harassment, or discrimination needs to minimize further distress for the complainant and involve as few people as possible. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible with the exception of when there is a concern over an individual's safety.
31. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator will review the information gathered, provide a report to the General Secretary. The General Secretary will review the report produced, take appropriate actions, and respond to the complaint.

## **Annual Review**

32. WACC commits to review the Health and Safety Policy at least once annually. The review will provide an opportunity for WACC to assess and address any gaps in the policy and to consider any changes to the workplace that may affect the effectiveness of the policy, and to remind all employees in the workplace about the policy and its requirements.