



TOWN OF OXFORD
Special Council Meeting
Council Chambers and Zoom – *livestream on FaceBook*
Monday, October 3, 2022
6:00 pm

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Working Alone Policy – includes risk assessment and work plan - for approval – *included in package (page 2-11)*
4. Town of Oxford Visa Limits – *the request and policy are included in package* – request to amend the policy – *(page 12-13)*
5. Tax and Water Collection Policy – recommendation from Committee of Whole – *included in package (page 14-18)*
6. Town of Oxford Violence Prevention Policy and Procedure – for approval – *included in package (page 19-27)*
7. Municipal Boundary – direction for CAO in regard to application
8. Extend Final Property Tax payment date – for discussion
9. Adjournment



TOWN OF OXFORD POLICY

NUMBER:

PAGE:

DEPARTMENT: Occupational Health & Safety

TITLE: Working Alone Policy

MINUTES REFERENCED DATE:

1ST REVISION DATE:

CURRENT REVISION DATE:

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the precautions which must be followed when working alone in any facility and/or job site within the Town of Oxford.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and agents who engage in any activities requiring them to work alone.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 High Risk Activities – Activities where the potential for the occurrence of incidents or injuries is deemed to be highly likely and where the severity of the injury or incident will bring serious consequences. High risk activities include the following:

- Working from heights
- Working in confined spaces (under current OHS regulations in Canada, a worker is NOT permitted to work alone in a confined space).
- Work including lockout/tagout
- Working with electricity
- Working with hazardous substances or materials
- Working with material under high pressure
- Working where there is a possible threat of violence
- Working in isolation from first aid services or immediate/emergency assistance

3.2 Low Risk Activities – Activities where the potential for the occurrence of incidents and injuries is deemed to be highly unlikely and where the severity of an incident or injury is generally thought not to have serious consequences.

3.3 Risk Assessment – Individually and collectively, supervisors and workers are required to assess the conditions or circumstances under which an employee may be working alone to determine the risks, the level of risk and prevention measures required to reduce those identified risks to acceptable levels. A critical part of the risk assessment is the determination of emergency assistance procedures.

3.4 Working Alone – Individuals are working alone when they are by themselves in an office, vehicle, workshop, production area, field site or any other area/building or place where work is being done within or for the Town of Oxford. Assistance, in the event of an injury, illness or emergency, is not readily available to the to the individual in these cases.

3.5 Emergency Assistance – A means of communicating to gain assistance in the event of an emergency involving an incident or serious injury, illness, or threat of violence.

3.6 After Hours – The period when “normal” weekday or shift operations cease.

3.7 Field Work – Field work consists of work activities conducted for the purpose of deliveries & pickup of materials, study, research, training and/or production related activities that are undertaken by the staff of the Town of Oxford at locations outside the Town of Oxford.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 In order for this Working Alone policy and procedures to be effective, they will be implemented with reason and diligence. To achieve this, respective responsibilities have been defined to ensure those who can positively impact on the potential risks of working alone are aware of their responsibilities and have the knowledge and skill to effectively implement working alone guidelines.

4.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.2.1 Identify risks or hazards associated with the work to be performed or the environment where the work is to be done.

4.2.2 Conduct and document a risk/hazard assessment for each different (specific) type of work or work location that can be deemed to be a working alone situation.

4.2.3 Communicate the results of the risk assessment to all affected workers and others conducting similar work.

4.2.4 Provide scenario-specific written working alone procedures/work instructions in their area(s) of responsibility to eliminate or minimize identified risks.

4.2.5 Develop effective methods of communication for those who require emergency assistance, depending on the specific **work, location** of the work and **nature** of the work (e.g., cell phones, radio, pager, etc.). When electronic devices are not feasible, an effective contact system must be established (e.g., check-in procedures, periodic site visits, worker being required to check in after the completion of specific tasks). The length of time a worker may be out of contact with a supervisor (the **frequency** of regular communications) must be based on the results from the risk assessment.

4.2.6 Document when working alone is permitted and/or prohibited and ensure this is effectively communicated to all workers as well as being updated on a regular basis (e.g., annually, semi-annually).

4.2.7 Schedule, whenever possible, potentially hazardous work for times when supervisors and appropriate assistance will be available.

4.2.8 Provide adequate staffing (e.g., buddy system) for potentially hazardous tasks performed at off-hours or in remote locations.

4.2.9 Ensure that all lone workers have valid first aid training.

4.3 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.3.1 Participate in the Working Alone risk assessment and risk management decisions with the supervisor.

4.3.2 Follow safe work practices outlined in safe work procedures.

4.3.3 Maintain regular communication as directed by supervisors.

4.3.4 Ensure valid first aid training is in place.

4.4 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.4.1 Monitor applicable legislation to ensure the Working Alone policy is up to date with Canadian OHS legislation and incorporates any new or revised regulatory requirements.

4.4.2 Provide consultation to all supervisory staff within the Town of Oxford, in the development of departmental/divisional and site-specific Working Alone plans.

4.4.3 Coordinate the development of departmental/divisional and site-specific Working Alone plans.

4.4.4 Develop, modify, revise, and update as required, a standard Working Alone Checklist to be used as the basis for documentation of directive information concerning the specific Working Alone requirements.

4.4.5 Audit to determine the effectiveness of the Working Alone policy within the Town of Oxford.

5.0 WORKING ALONE PROHIBITED:

5.1 There are certain situations where working alone cannot and shall not be permitted within the Town of Oxford. Working alone shall be prohibited when working in areas of:

- **Confined Space Entry**
- **Electrical Work**
- **Trenches/Tunnels/Manholes**
- **Risk of Drowning**
- **Fall Arrest Equipment or Scaffolding**
- **Machine and power tools that could cause a critical injury such as a chain saw, table saw, etc.**
- **Quick acting, acutely toxic material as described by the corresponding Safety Data Sheet (WHMIS Health Hazard)**
- **The use of supplied air respiratory equipment or self-contained breathing apparatus**
- **Use of a vehicle, crane, or other mobile equipment, where the operator does not have a clear, full view of the intended path of travel.**

6.0 COMMUNICATION

The Working Alone policy shall include any of the following, where practicable, to ensure the most practical and effective means of communications:

- 6.0.1 Portable or cellular telephone
- 6.0.2 Walkie-Talkie or Two-Way Radio System
- 6.0.3 Personal alarm or pager
- 6.0.4 "Buddy" system
- 6.0.5 Check-in system and requirement for updating an individual's status while working alone, or
- 6.0.6 Any other safe method that may be considered most effective to the specific department's/area's safe operations.
- 6.1.0 Each Working Alone scenario shall use these communication options, either singularly, or in Combination in the development of a site/scenario-specific Working Alone communication plan.

7.0 GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING WORK ALONE RISK ASSESSMENTS

7.1 There are several scenarios within the Town of Oxford that call for jobs with Working Alone situations. It is essential that employees and their supervisors work together to develop safe work procedures. It is mandatory that the working conditions or circumstances that present a high level of safety risk, be assessed so the probability of an incident or injury can be minimized. Supervisors and employees shall evaluate working alone assignments on a case-by-case basis and shall consider the following risk factors for working alone:

- 7.1.1 Tasks and hazards involved in the work to be performed
- 7.1.2 Consequences resulting from a "worse case" scenario. This will be accomplished by asking the question, "What if?"
- 7.1.3 Likelihood for other persons to be in the area
- 7.1.4 Possibility that a critical injury or incident could prevent an employee from calling for help or leaving the workplace
- 7.1.5 Emergency response time
- 7.1.6 Employee's training and experience
- 7.1.7 Worker's physical handicaps or any pre-existing medical conditions
- 7.1.8 Frequency of job supervision, if at all
- 7.1.9 The time, shift and location of the work to be performed
- 7.2.0 Whether the employee is accustomed to working alone

7.2 Supervisors shall provide written Working Alone safety plans, for scenarios listed in Section 7.1. Safety plans should include the following:

- 7.2.1 Location of work
- 7.2.2 Duration of work including specific time of return of solo employee
- 7.2.3 Specific work to be performed and identification of associated hazards
- 7.2.4 Consideration for "worst case" scenario
- 7.2.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required
- 7.2.6 Name of contact person
- 7.2.7 Likelihood that an injury would prevent the employee from communicating with the contact person.
- 7.2.8 Frequency of checking in, either in person or by two-way communication (e.g., radio, cell phone)
- 7.2.9 Methods of communication (e.g., cell phone, radio, pager).

7.2.9.1 Emergency Plan

7.2.9.2 Procedures to eliminate or minimize the identified risks (e.g., buddy system)

7.2.9.3 Confirmation where and when working alone is permitted.

7.3 Supervisors must review working alone safety plans with their affected employees with a particular emphasis on safe work procedures and the provision of assistance to employees at risk due to infrequent supervision, intermittent communication, or physical isolation. Complete Working Alone plans must be kept on file and be available for review. Written safety plans should be reviewed and updated at least **annually**.

7.4 The designated contact person shall be responsible for the following:

7.4.1 Review of the work plan

7.4.2 Maintaining regular contact with the solo employee as prescribed by the work plan

7.4.3 Initiate the emergency plan if necessary

7.5 Communication must be maintained between the person working alone and the designated contact person through two-way communication via radio, cell phone, direct contact, or other effective means. If direct contact through scheduled check-in is the method of communication selected, the person working alone must have a method of signalling for help in the event of an emergency.

7.6 If direct contact through scheduled check-in is the method of communication selected, the designated contact person will check-in with the solo employee on a frequency determined by the approved working alone plan. If contact cannot be made with the solo employee during a scheduled check-in, the emergency plan shall be initiated.

7.7 Should anything change in the course of the work being done, the employee working alone shall notify their supervisor immediately of the change and the work is to be modified accordingly as per the direction of my supervisor.

Originated by: _____ Date: _____



TOWN OF OXFORD POLICY

NUMBER:

PAGE:

DEPARTMENT: Occupational Health & Safety

TITLE: Working Alone Risk Assessment Form

MINUTES REFERENCED DATE:

1ST REVISION DATE:

CURRENT REVISION DATE:

1. Supervisor: _____
2. Solo Employee: _____
3. Description of work assigned where an employee may be working alone or in a remote location where there is a risk of injury and no immediate assistance in the event of injury or accident:

4. Location of work: _____
5. Hazards & Risk Factors associated with the work (check all applicable):

**** Rate the risk a E = Extreme, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = Negligible**

If the rating is **Extreme**, there is absolutely **NO** working alone permitted.

If the rating is **High**, it is strongly recommended that an employee should not work alone, however the final judgment on the employee's skill, experience and abilities will be left up to the supervisor.

If the risk is "**medium**" or "**low**", the employee may work alone, ensuring that actions to minimize/eliminate the associated hazards are in place and the safe work plan is in effect.

Hazard	Activity where hazard is present	Risk Rating	Actions to minimize the risk
Animal Hazard			
Electrical Shock			
Weather/Enviro			

Extreme Temps			
Slips, trips, falls			
Fatigue			
Moving object(s)			
Power Tools			
Cuts, scratches			
Violence			
Working at Heights			
Crush or entanglement			
Poison/chemical			

6. Do the risks associated with the hazards identified in #5 above change, dependent on the time of day the task is being completed? Please explain: _____

If any of the risks identified above change in risk, you may need to review any associated safe work plans, policies, and procedures and/or modify the work to avoid changes to the risk associated with the task.

I agree that the risks identified above along with the established policy and procedures enable me to work alone under the situation described herein at Town of Oxford. Should anything change in the course of the work being done, I am to notify my supervisor immediately of the change and the work is to be modified accordingly as per the direction of my supervisor.

Signed: _____ (**individual working alone**).

Signed: _____ (**supervisor of employee**).

Date: _____

DRAFT



TOWN OF OXFORD POLICY

NUMBER:

PAGE:

DEPARTMENT: Occupational Health & Safety

TITLE: Working Alone Safe Work Plan

MINUTES REFERENCED DATE:

1ST REVISION DATE:

CURRENT REVISION DATE:

PURPOSE

This safe Work Plan form must be filled out ahead of the work being done by the following people:

- Supervisors planning any work involving young workers (under 25 years of age) where they may be working alone;
- Supervisors of students/seasonal employees where they may be working alone;
- Employees, in consultation with their supervisor, who are required to work alone after hours, on weekends or on holidays.

This plan **must** be accompanied by the **Working Alone Risk Assessment Form**. Completed forms are to be copied and left on site with the applicable supervisor, the affected employee as well as the Health & Safety Department.

WORKING ALONE SAFE WORK PLAN

Supervisor: _____

Solo Employee: _____

Location where working alone will be done: _____

Reasons for requirement to work alone: _____

Documentation of Training (specific to the area, safety orientation session, list PPE and proper use of PPE where applicable): _____

Has the employee demonstrated competence to work alone? [] YES [] NO

Communication plan that has been established while working alone that has been agreed to by both parties:

a) How is the communication going to happen [] **Radio** [] **cell phone** [] **land line** [] **direct contact** [] **other:**

b) Frequency of contact to be made: _____

c) Plan if contact is missing: _____

I agree to abide by the established procedures enabling me to work alone under the situation described in the attached risk assessment for the Town of Oxford. Should anything change in the course of the work being done, I am to notify my supervisor immediately of the change and the work is to be modified accordingly as per the direction of my supervisor.

Signed: _____ (**individual working alone**).

Signed: _____ (**supervisor of employee**).

Date: _____

DRAFT

August 22, 2022

Hi

This is a request to change the policy on purchasing Cards-see attached

The expenses on the Town Visa (CAO card) have almost reached the max amounts in the past two months. It is very convenient to have the card available for purchases that require immediate payment. We use the Town Visa for stamps for invoices, conferences, hotels, monthly payments for programs provided on the computer, alarm systems (Microsoft, Adobe, etc.), Amazon, purchases around town (better than reconciling accounts with individual businesses), and since the public works card under Wes name is deleted, the Town Visa is also used for any purchases for public works that require immediate payment. They are all small amounts but add up

I went online to check the limits for each card we currently have with Scotiabank. Right now, our total max limit with VISA per month is \$12,000.

Greg has a \$5,000 limit and Linda has a \$6,000 limit.

The policy (attached) states CAO and Mayor have a max \$5000 each and director has \$2,500. This needs to be revised to account for changing times and payment methods.

Since the mayor usually is not active in purchasing, my suggestion would be to decrease Greg to \$3000, Increase CAO to \$ 9,000. If the rec director or public works supervisor become permanent, then we could get them cards with a budget to work with, and consider lowering the CAO to give the directors some or increasing our credit limit from \$12000 to \$20,000.

Visa slips are all posted and authorized separately at the time of purchase. Once the statement comes in, I reconcile and look for any that are missing. Since Visa does allow a month to pay it gives me time to search.

Not as secure as having an account and cutting cheques but convenient for one time purchases, monthly payments for programs and random purchase around town.

Thanks

Ruthann Brookins/Senior Accountant
Town Of Oxford
Wild Blueberry Capital of Canada
902-447-3194
ruthann.brookins@oxfordns.ca

Appendix 5 - Purchasing Cards

Objectives

1. The Town of Oxford is committed to:
 - a) Reducing the costs of procuring and paying for low dollar value goods, services, and travel expenses by reducing the number of small orders and invoices processed and the number of cheques issued.
 - b) Eliminating the issuance of travel and cash advances in addition to separate payments or registration fees, transportation costs, and accommodations.
 - c) Maintain the existing levels of discounts negotiated with suppliers for prompt payment by providing a more efficient payment process.
 - d) Streamline administrative functions and reduce the time spent by departments processing payments.
 - e) Maintain an acceptable level of accountability and safekeeping of the Town of Oxford's assets by setting appropriate limits and restrictions on the use of cards.

Roles and Responsibilities

2. Purchasing cards may be used by select authorized purchasers for procuring both goods and services for the Town of Oxford. The purchasing card has a transaction limit which is set by the Town of Oxford to meet the cardholder requirements. The CAO shall use discretion in the number of cards in use at the Town of Oxford by reviewing the nature of the positions which have cards and the requirement of their respective departments.
3. Unless a separate and different level has been specifically approved by Council, the purchasing card limits shall be as follows: *Max 12,000*
 - a) Mayor - \$5,000 *3000 ?*
 - b) CAO - \$5,000 *9,000*
 - c) Directors - \$2,500

These limits are defined as the maximums for individuals the CAO deems appropriate to have a purchasing card. The limits represent the total amount of purchases that can be charged to the card during a one-month billing cycle.
4. Under no circumstances shall a transaction be split into two or more separate receipts to bypass the transaction dollar limit on the card or the approval limits of the employee.
5. The purchasing card may not be used to purchase or pay for:
 - a) Personal purchases
 - b) Cash Advances
 - c) Alcohol

**TOWN OF OXFORD
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

Subject: Tax & Water Collection Policy

Number:

Approved by: Council

Effective Date: February 19, 2019

Revision Date:

Minutes reference date:

PURPOSE

To establish a policy for effective and efficient billing and collection of tax and water accounts receivable. The purpose of the policy is to:

1. Outline billing dates as required by the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA);
2. Ensure municipal tax and water revenues are collected in a timely and effective manner;
3. Ensure that all taxpayers and water customers are treated fairly and equitably; and,
4. Provide staff with guidance for informed and sustainable decision making, consistent with the Town's organizational values of excellence and fiscal responsibility.

SCOPE

All employees involved in the collection process must adhere to the policy statements contained within this document.

All water, tax levies and amounts added as tax liens are subject to these policy statements.

The *Municipal Government Act* legislates the billing and collection of taxes and is the primary authority on the tax billing and collection function, including but not limited to the tax sale process.

The approved Utility and Review Board of Nova Scotia water utility Rules & Regulations and Schedule of Rates and Charges are the primary authority on the water billing and collection function.

POLICY

TAX ACCOUNTS

BILLING

1. The Town will issue an interim tax bill with a due date of June 1 each year. The bill will be calculated at 50% of the prior year's bills with the discretion of the CAO to adjust any tax accounts where the variance between the prior year and current year assessment is substantial.

2. Sewer charges will be determined by Council through separate bylaw and/or policy and the full amount for the year will be included on the interim tax bill.
3. The final tax bill will be due on September 30 each year.

INTEREST

4. Interest will be calculated and accrued monthly, on arrears, starting immediately after the due date on all taxes/rates/liens outstanding. The rate of interest charged will be 1.5% per month compounded annually (18%/year).
5. Interest is not paid on credit balance in tax accounts except if the credit has resulted from payment of taxes on account that has been appealed (assessment) and the resulting tax amount is less than the original tax billing (determined after the final bill). Interest will be paid to the taxpayer on the overpayment at a rate of 1.5% per month.

TAX COLLECTION – GENERAL PRACTICES

6. Provisions of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 6 deal with Tax Collection and provide the legislative framework within which the Staff are expected to carry out tax collection. This policy is intended to provide more specific guidance in certain circumstances but is not intended to allow Staff actions contrary to the Act or to limit the authority given to Staff under the Act.
7. Staff will make all reasonable effort to collect taxes due to the Town. This includes reasonable effort to locate taxpayers whose whereabouts are not readily known. A number of procedures common to the collection industry may be used including the use of outside agencies as outlined in administrative policies or procedures approved by the CAO.
8. The MGA provides that every person liable to pay taxes shall be served with a tax bill, to be mailed to the address shown on the filed roll or to a more current address if known to the Treasurer. Canada Post epost delivery has legislated authority to deliver electronic mail; epost delivery is deemed by Council to meet the requirements of the MGA should epost be a service offered to property owners.
9. The Town of Oxford considers it to be the responsibility of the property owner to ensure their address is up to date on the assessment roll and the tax system. The Town will be deemed to have a more current address if the notification has been received in writing from the taxpayer at least 30 days prior to the invoice date of the tax bill following the notification. Having filled the legal requirement to bill as noted above, the Town considers it to be the taxpayer's responsibility to contact the Town to determine amounts owing for taxes if they have not received their bill.
10. The Town accepts no responsibility to notify new property owners of arrears against properties they buy after the filing of the annual assessment roll except for the usual tax billing process. It is the responsibility of the purchaser and their solicitor to ensure that taxes for the year of purchase are paid. The Town will make every effort possible, within the staff resources available, to change ownership information on properties as it becomes available from the

Property Valuation Services Corporation but will not accept responsibility for interest that may accrue on tax arrears that remain unpaid as a result of a change of ownership.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

11. Staff have authority to enter into tax arrears payment arrangements with taxpayers giving due consideration to the taxpayer's personal circumstances and history of the taxpayer to comply with prior tax payment agreements. Staff may make reasonable demands for personal financial information from a taxpayer. No provision in this policy requires a taxpayer to provide such personal information but failure to do so may preclude the acceptance of a payment arrangement for their arrears. If a tax arrears payment arrangement results in taxes being outstanding for more than six years, the arrangement must be documented in writing to ensure the period of tax lien is extended to cover the property.

PROPERTIES IN TAX SALE POSITION

12. At June 30 of each year, all accounts will be reviewed. Accounts that have current year tax outstanding and part or all of prior year tax outstanding shall be considered to be in tax sale position. The CAO is authorized to adopt administrative guidelines that identify minimum amounts below which the second years' taxes will not trigger the tax sale procedures.
13. Tax Sale properties shall be sent a preliminary notice giving 60 calendar days to pay the account in full. The preliminary notice shall indicate that a title search and/or survey of the property may be commenced at the end of the 60 days without further warning – the cost of which will constitute a lien on the property in question.
14. Once a preliminary notice is issued staff are still permitted to enter into payment arrangements with the taxpayer. Any such arrangement should not normally extend beyond the end of that fiscal year at which time the account must be paid in full.
15. Properties for which there are no negotiated payment arrangements will be submitted for title search after a list of eligible properties is provided to Council. A survey will be done, if found to be necessary. A Notice of Intent to sell for taxes shall be issued on each property no earlier than January 15 of the following calendar year.
16. Once a property has been issued a Notice of Intention it should not normally be removed from the tax sale process except as a result of full payment. Staff may determine when circumstances dictate otherwise and remove a property from the list.
17. If payment arrangements as negotiated above are dishonoured, staff will immediately, without notice, begin or continue the formal process of tax sale unless other arrangements satisfactory to Staff can be negotiated.

REAL PROPERTIES NOT IN TAX SALE POSITION

18. For properties not in tax sale position, reminders will be issued to individual assessed owners. The number and timing of reminders will be determined by staff, taking into consideration the perceived beneficial financial impact. In any given year there will generally be 2-3 reminders sent to accounts with arrears over a predetermined limit.

COLLECTION PROCEDURES INVOLVING ISSUANCE OF WARRANTS

19. The CAO is authorized to adopt administrative guidelines with respect to the issuance of warrants to collect taxes due.
20. In the event that services of outside agencies are used, staff are authorized to pay the fee charged by that agency for execution of the warrant. Such fee should be determined in accordance with the procurement policy adopted by Council. If a staff member executes the warrant they will be compensated in accordance with municipal policy if the work is conducted outside of normal office hours. Such fees and expenses associated with the issuance of a warrant shall be added to the account to be collected pursuant to the warrant.

TAX ACCOUNT ADJUSTMENTS/WRITE OFFS

21. The CAO may approve administrative policies governing the write-off or adjustment of taxpayers accounts. In general, staff have authority to write off accounts in the following circumstances:
 - a. Where notice is received from PVSC that an error has been made in the filed roll which cannot be corrected by any provision of the Assessment Legislation (e.g. Duplicate Assessment, Deleted Accounts).
 - b. Where there has been an error made by Municipal staff or in other circumstances deemed appropriate, the Treasurer may approve the write-off of interest on an account.
 - c. Where the internal and external cost to pursue collection of an account would reasonably be expected to exceed the amount to be successfully collected.
 - d. Where a taxpayer has been discharged from their liabilities under bankruptcy.
 - e. Where the taxpayer cannot be located, despite reasonable efforts to do so.

COLLECTIONS COSTS

22. The CAO is authorized to approve certain fees and procedures associated with tax collection on a cost recovery basis such as, but not limited to, fees for cheques/preauthorized debit not able to be processed by a bank.
23. The CAO shall approve increases to the fee(s) no more frequently than annually (fiscal year of April 1 – March 31). No annual increase can exceed CPI as measured by the twelve-month average index for the prior twelve months ended December. Increases may be cumulative when implement in year 2 or later.

PROPERTY TAX DEFERRAL

24. Section 70 of the MGA allows Council to adopt a bylaw which would provide for the postponement of tax payment. Council has determined that it will not enact a bylaw under the provisions of this section with the understanding that staff are authorized to negotiate payment arrangements that are reflective of the taxpayer's ability to pay at any given time and that staff are best able to determine what this regular amount should be. The MGA provides that tax sale can be avoided by having a tax payment arrangement that is being honoured. All taxpayers should be encouraged to make some amount of regular payment on their taxes, however nominal, such that a deferral program is not considered necessary.

WATER ACCOUNTS

GENERAL PROVISIONS

25. The Town is government by regulations in effect for its water utility that have been approved by the Nova Scotia Utility Review Board.

ARREARS COLLECTION

26. Staff are responsible and authorized to negotiate and accept reasonable payment arrangements with customers who are in arrears. The circumstances of the individual customer will be taken into account in these negotiations.

27. All water accounts will be reviewed at the due date and those with arrears of \$30 and over will be sent a reminder notice. The reminder will allow a ten-day period in which the account is to be paid. At the end of the ten-day period those accounts still outstanding will be sent a Notice of Intention to Disconnect, within five business days, unless the account is paid in full. Staff are expected to use collection tools at their disposal and their judgement in applying this policy in determining accounts that will actually be disconnected.

28. Staff are authorized to use generally accepted collection practices to locate exited water customers and collect arrears. If an inactive account is deemed to be uncollectable or if the expense of collections outweighs the amount to be obtained, staff may approve the write-off of the account. A list of account write-offs shall be presented to Council on an annual basis.

29. Staff may waive the interest charges if in their judgement the circumstances warrant it.

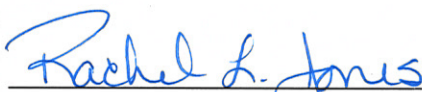
30. The CAO is authorized to adopt administrative policies/guidelines that further guide the collection process in accordance with the UARB approved rules and regulations governing the water billing and collection process.

REPEAL

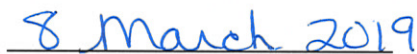
31. Council hereby repeals and replaces all previous policies for tax & water collections.

Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT this the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of the Town of Oxford's Tax & Water Collection Policy which was adopted by Council at its duly convened meeting held 19 February 2019.



Chief Administrative Officer



Date



Town of Oxford Policy

DEPARTMENT: ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS

TITLE: **Workplace Violence Prevention Policy**

MINUTES REFERENCED DATE: September 7, 2022

APPROVAL DATE: September 19, 2022

REVISION DATE:

1.0 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PURPOSE

- 1.1** The Town of Oxford is committed to providing a respectful, healthy, and safe work environment and acknowledges that violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard which can cause physical and emotional harm which can occur on and off the job. Every employee is entitled to work in an environment free from violence, threats of violence and other disruptive behavior. These behaviors can include verbal and physical intimidation, hostile language and actions, verbal, and physical threats, and bullying by fellow employees, Councilors, contractors, suppliers, volunteers, or members of the public against self, others, or municipal property.
- 1.2** Any form of violence is unacceptable, and the Town of Oxford is committed to reducing and if possible, eliminating the risk of violence. The Town of Oxford has zero tolerance for any act of violence, in any form, committed by or against employees, Councilors, contractors, suppliers, volunteers, or members of the public. All employees are responsible to help minimize violence and support the Town of Oxford's workplace policies.
- 1.3** Any Town of Oxford employee, councilor, or committee member may file a complaint under this policy. Complaints by members of the public will be addressed through the code of **Conduct and Progressive Discipline Policy**.
- 1.4** The intention and purpose of this policy is to establish, maintain, and identify risk to prevent violence, in any form, from taking place. Where incidents are reported, the Town of Oxford will act promptly, fairly, and judiciously. The most effective element in preventing violence in the workplace is education. The Town of Oxford will provide educational opportunities, information, and promote awareness of violence to foster a safe, secure, and respectful workplace. This policy is one of the vehicles of education to our employees.

2.0 SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees of the Town of Oxford. Should violence in any form occur, the Town of Oxford will take all available steps to ensure a workplace free from violence

3.0 DEFINITIONS AND GUIDANCE

3.1 DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOURS: The Town of Oxford acknowledges that violence is much more than a physical act. Workplace violence is a much broader issue potentially endangering the health or safety of another person and includes, but is not limited to:

- 3.1.1 Threatening behaviors:** Threatening behaviors can threaten physical harm, such as intimidation (shaking fists or physical gestures), displays of any kind of weapon, and or verbal and written threats.
- 3.1.2 Physical Attacks:** Physical attacks can take several forms, depending on the intended target. In some cases, an attack may target a person and include behaviors such as: shoving, hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, scratching, slapping, sexual assault, and anger-related acts such as throwing objects at another person. Physical attacks can also be directed toward buildings or property, cars, personal property, and an organization. This type of behavior can include arson, sabotage, vandalism, theft, and destruction of property.
- 3.1.3 Written or Verbal:** Threats of harm, written or spoken, can be classified as:
 - 3.1.3.1 Direct Threats:** Clear and explicit communication (including emails, voicemails, text messages, etc.) which clearly indicate the potential offender intends to do harm (e.g., “I am going to make your pay for what you did.”)
 - 3.1.3.2 Conditional Threats:** Implied (written or verbal) involving a condition (e.g., “If you don’t stop bugging me, you will be sorry.”)
 - 3.1.3.3 Veiled Threats:** Threatening body language or behaviors leaving little doubt in the mind of the potential victim that the perpetrator intends to do harm (e.g., “Do you think anyone would care if someone beat up _____.”).
 - 3.1.3.4 Messages from third parties:** Any message transmitted in any form from third parties.
- 3.1.4 Bullying and Harassment:** Bullying and harassing behavior includes any behavior designed to trouble or worry the victim and includes verbal abuse and intimidation, aimed at demeaning, embarrassing, or humiliating someone. This behavior can include coercive or fear-inducing behavior in the form of verbal abuse, such as swearing, insults or condescending language. Examples include pranks, rumors, arguments including derogatory language regarding race, religion, or sex.

3.2 SOURCES OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR: The Town of Oxford, in its commitment to educate employees and promote awareness of violence must consider all possible sources of violent behaviors. Workplace violence can arise from a person:

- 3.2.1** Inside the workplace, such as from a co-worker, or volunteer.
- 3.2.2** Related to the function of the workplace, such as a contractor, councilor, or supplier.
- 3.2.3** With an indirect relationship with the workplace, such as an estranged spouse, partner, or a former employee.
- 3.2.4** Who is unrelated to the organization, such as a member of the public, or a person with violent intent.

3.3 SOURCES AWAY FROM THE WORKPLACE: The Town of Oxford also identifies that workplace violence can also occur away from the workplace. Incidents of violence can also occur:

3.3.1 At business-related events such as conferences, trade shows or other events that relate to work.

3.3.2 Resulting from your work such as at a client's home or yard, store, or even at your own home (e.g., you receive a threatening phone call that is related to your work, or someone comes to your home).

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger of personal injury or violence involving weapons should call 9-1-1 immediately.

4.2 Town of Oxford employees are expected to report any threat or act of violence that they have received, witnessed, or have been informed of, to the CAO or supervisor.

4.3 Town of Oxford employees, no matter the designation, who commit a violent act or threaten to commit a violent act may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal prosecution and/or civil prosecution as appropriate.

4.4 Any individual who makes a substantial threat, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on municipal property, at municipally sponsored events, or other location/event, shall be subject to removal from the premises as quickly and as safety permits, pending an outcome of an investigation.

4.5 Any Town of Oxford employee who has committed an act of violence in the workplace or has otherwise violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

4.6 Any form of retaliation against employees who are exercising their rights under this policy will be considered a violation of this policy and will not be tolerated. Such retaliatory action may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

4.7 Any Town of Oxford employee found to have lodged or otherwise supported a false accusation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

4.8 The Town of Oxford will make every effort to ensure appropriate confidentiality where an incidence of violence has occurred.

5.0 COMPLIANCE: Anyone who believes that they have been subject to workplace violence as defined or otherwise implied by this policy will:

5.1 Safely make a reasonable attempt to resolve the behavior informally by telling the alleged offender that their behavior is unacceptable and unwelcome and clearly stating that this behavior must stop.

5.2 If the matter is not resolved informally between the individuals, the complainant should immediately inform their immediate supervisor, and/or the CAO.

5.3 Anyone who witnessed violence in the workplace should immediately inform their immediate supervisor and/or the CAO. The witness will be notified if the complaint is resolved informally, or if the matter is progressing to an investigation.

5.4 Supervisors and managers who are aware of violence including prohibited conduct or potential of violence in the workplace is expected to address the situation promptly whether a formal complaint has been made or not. Supervisors and managers are required to proactively address any conduct which could lead to violence or a violent act. Supervisors and managers are also required inform the CAO of any incidents.

5.5 It is vitally important that reports or complaints be made as soon as possible after the alleged incident has occurred so that the issue may be addressed and resolved as swiftly as possible.

5.6 The complainant may have evidence of violent or aggressive behavior but may not wish to lay formal complaint. If this occurs:

5.6.1 The CAO, supervisor or both may agree on an informal means of resolving the issue which may include informal meetings or other communications with the alleged person whom the allegations are made., or

5.6.2 The CAO may recommend that an investigation should nevertheless occur as though a formal complaint was in fact laid, even where that recommendation is contrary to the wishes of the complainant. An investigation may need to proceed if the allegations are serious or if there have been previous complaints or incidents involving the respondent.

5.7 Where possible a complaint must be made in writing and include details of:

5.7.1 What happened – a description of the events or situation.

5.7.2 When it happened – dates and times of the events or incidents.

5.7.3 Where it happened.

5.7.4 Who saw it happen – include the names of any witnesses and their contact information (if required).

5.8 In all cases, the CAO of the Town of Oxford shall be informed of reports and shall have the final decision on the appropriate course of action.

6.0 INVESTIGATION: Investigations will be completed by the CAO of the Town of Oxford, or another employee appointed by the CAO. In all cases involving a councilor or CAO, the investigation shall be completed by a Councilor or an external investigator, where appropriate. The investigation will include:

6.0.1 Interviewing the complainant and respondent to investigate all facts and circumstances relevant to the complaint, including dates and locations.

6.0.2 Interviewing any witnesses, if any.

6.0.3 Reviewing related documentation, if any.

6.0.4 Making detailed notes of the investigation and maintaining them confidentially.

6.1 Where the case involves an employee, once the investigation is complete, the investigator or CAO will prepare a detailed report of the findings. A summary of the findings will also be provided to the complainant and respondent.

6.2 Where the case involves a Councilor, once the investigation is complete, a detailed report of the findings and recommendations will be prepared and submitted to Council at an in-camera session.

6.3 Where the case involves the CAO, once the investigation is complete, the Councilor or external investigator will prepare a detailed report of the findings and recommendations and submit to Council at an in-camera session. If the CAO chooses, they may elect to have legal representation present for the delivery of the report to Council.

6.4 Should the circumstances warrant, the respondent's employment, or seat on a committee or Council may be suspended (with pay for employees and Councilors) during all or part of the Town of Oxford's investigation. Where a criminal charge is laid, the Town of Oxford reserves the right to suspend an employee, Councilor, or committee member without pay pending trial.

6.5 This policy's goal is to balance both timeliness of the investigation with the concepts of thoroughness and fairness for all individuals involved. The following are investigation timelines.

6.5.1 Once a complaint has been received, the investigator will have 14 calendar days to collect statements from victims and witnesses.

6.5.2 The respondent will then have 14 calendar days to submit a rebuttal in writing.

6.5.3 The investigator will then have 14 calendar days to submit a final report, including checking with complainants or witnesses on statements made by the respondent.

6.5.4 Depending on the complexity of the situation, additional time may be allotted for proper investigation.

7.0 THIRD PARTIES: This policy also applies to contractors, suppliers, or members of the public. The Town of Oxford may have limited ability to investigate or control the conduct of these third parties. However, the Town of Oxford will take reasonable action to stop or reduce the risk to its employees, Councilors, committee members, or volunteers. Such actions may include:

7.0.1 Posting this policy in a location visible to third parties.

7.0.2 Removing third party violators.

7.0.3 Withdrawing municipal services.

7.0.4 Contacting Law Enforcement.

7.0.5 Taking legal action against third party violators.

7.1 Where a third party engaging in workplace violence, as defined, or implied by this policy has been asked to stop and does not, employees are authorized to:

7.1.1 End telephone conversations.

7.1.2 Politely decline services.

7.1.3 Inform the individual their behavior or actions is unacceptable and ask the individual to leave the workplace.

7.1.4 Seek the assistance of the supervisor, CAO or dial 9-1-1.

7.1.5 All such actions shall be reported immediately, in writing, to the CAO.

7.2 Where employees are in the private home or yard or business of a resident who engages in workplace violence, employees are authorized to decline service and leave the premises. Where a resident has engaged in workplace violence in the past, or where there is a good possibility of the client becoming violent (e.g., in cases where Public Works is directed to shut off water service), employees are encouraged to not attend alone.

8.0 RIGHTS UNDER THIS POLICY: Employees have the right to refuse work if workplace violence is likely to endanger them. In these instances, employees should immediately contact their supervisor and/or the CAO, at which point appropriate measures will be taken, as outlined in this policy, to protect the employee and investigate the situation.

9.0 POLICY REVIEW: This workplace violence prevention policy shall be reviewed annually through the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the CAO. Violence risk assessments and violence prevention plans shall be reviewed every 5 years, or if an incident of violence occurs that is not identified in the current Violence Risk Assessment, or if there are significant changes or renovations in the workplace.

Chief Administrative Officer's Annotation for the Town of Oxford Policy Book

Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider (7 days min): _____

Date of Passage of the current Policy: _____

I certify that this Violence in the Workplace Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.

Linda Cloney, CAO

Dated

Date Last Reviewed: August 19, 2022

Date Last Amended:



Town of Oxford Procedure

DEPARTMENT: ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS

TITLE: **Workplace Violence Prevention Procedure**

MINUTES REFERENCED DATE: September 7, 2022

APPROVAL DATE: September 19, 2022

REVISION DATE:

Definition:

The Town of Oxford acknowledges that violence is much more than a physical act. Workplace violence is a much broader issue endangering the health or safety of another person and includes, but is not limited to threatening behaviors, physical attacks, written or verbal, and bullying and harassment. The Town of Oxford must conduct a violence risk assessment for each of their workplaces in accordance with the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and this procedure to determine if there is a risk of violence in the workplace and prepare a written report concerning the violence risk assessment detailing the extent and nature of any risk identified by the assessment.

PURPOSE:

Preparation of a plan for the identification, remediation, and documentation for workplace violence:

- To assess the risk of positions to workplace violence.
- Determine the risk.
- Inspect the site where for those positions that are deemed to be a risk and prepare suggestions to lessen the risk of violence.
- Once an incident has taken place, investigate the incident.
- Prepare a post incident plan to alleviate the possible reoccurrence of the incident.

PROCEDURE:

- A) Carry out a Risk Assessment of the positions for employees in the Town of Oxford. This will be done using the violence risk assessment form. In conducting a violence risk assessment, the Town of Oxford must take all the following into consideration:
- a. Violence that has occurred in the workplace in the past.

- b. Violence that is known to occur in similar workplaces.
- c. The circumstances in which work takes place.
- d. The interactions that occur while performing work.
- e. The physical location and layout of the workplace.

Representatives of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee will carry out this assessment for the positions in each of the departments. If the answer to any of the questions on the Violence Risk Assessment form is “yes”, a written Violence Prevention Plan must be prepared. The violence risk assessment form must be completed:

- a. The Town of Oxford becoming aware of a type of violence occurring in similar workplaces that was not taken into consideration when the previous violence risk assessment was conducted.
 - b. Every five years.
 - c. Immediately following any significant changes in the circumstances in which work takes place, interactions that occur while performing work, or physical location or layout of the workplace.
 - d. The Town of Oxford planning to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility.
 - e. The Town of Oxford is ordered to do so by an officer.
- B) Determine the risk of the position if the risk assessment warrants this to be done. The trigger will be one yes response to any questions on the violence risk assessment form. Representatives of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee will determine this risk for the positions in each of their departments.
- C) Carry out an inspection of the associated worksite to identify possible dangers and determine what can be done to lessen or alleviate the risk of violence. This will be done in conjunction with the regular workplace inspection as per the workplace inspection procedure.
- D) In the event that workplace aggression/violence has occurred, or significant renovation or alteration to the location of the workplace, a new violence risk assessment and/or an investigation will be carried out. Representatives of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee will carry out this risk assessment and/or investigation for each of their departments/workplace unless that representative is involved with the incident, at that time, a replacement will be chosen from the membership of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.
- E) A workplace violence prevention plan will be developed. This will be carried out by representatives of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the CAO for each of the affected departments.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN: The Town of Oxford must establish and implement a workplace violence prevention plan for each workplace for which a significant risk of violence is

identified through a violence risk assessment or that an officer orders a plan for. As part of a workplace violence prevention plan, an employer must do all the following:

1. Prepare a written workplace violence prevention statement unique to the individual workplace that:
 - a. Document reasonable measures to minimize and, to the extent practicable, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace or,
 - b. Adopt a code of practice on violence in the workplace published by the CAO governing the primary business conducted at the workplace.
 - c. establish and document procedures for providing employees with the information and training required.
 - d. establish and document procedures for reporting, documenting, and investigating incidents of violence.
2. The Town of Oxford will consult with the Occupational Health and Safety Committee when establishing, reviewing, and revising a workplace violence prevention plan.
3. The Town of Oxford will make a copy of the workplace violence prevention policy, procedure, and current plan available for examination at the workplace by any employer, contractor, constructor, supplier, employee, or any person working in and around the workplace of the Town of Oxford. A copy of each of the policy, procedure, and current plan will be posted in a prominent place or places in each of their workplaces so it can be always easily accessible.