

Policy Statement on Workplace Violence

ERH is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. It is the policy of the organisation that violence in any form is unacceptable. Violence includes any form of verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, physical attack and property damage.

Any form of violence by an employee against another employee, contractor, subcontractor or visitor, if proved, will lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for unacceptable conduct.

ERH is also committed to the continued development and implementation of a range of measures and procedures, to protect and support an employee whilst engaged in company business, including:

- Reporting and recording systems for incidents, near misses and activity that raises concern
- The provision of all necessary medical and professional support to employees who are victims of violence whilst at work
- Periodic monitoring and review

Allegations of harassment within the work place will be dealt with under the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

1. Support for Staff

1.1 Reporting

Any employee who feels that he or she has been the target of workplace violence (verbal or physical) must report this to their line manager and complete an incident form (in a case where the line manager is the aggressor, the employee should report the incident to the line manager's manager, or in exceptional circumstances, their dedicated Human Resources Officer). Once complete, the incident form should be sent to the SHEQ Manager.

1.2 Support following a violent incident

If the employee has been the target of physical violence and has injuries, the employee must receive any necessary medical treatment and advice; a first aider/ambulance should be called.

In the event of an employee being a victim of physical or verbal violence, ERH will offer appropriate and timely, help and support. Managers should be sensitive to the employees need to talk about the incident and may wish to seek additional support from a member of the Senior Management Team and/or Human Resources.

It is important to recognise that the employee may be suffering some distress and require support in dealing with the post-incident effects. It is not possible to be prescriptive here because individuals react differently to particular experiences. There are a range of measures that can be implemented to support a victim:

Debriefing – enabling the victim to talk through their experience and to express their emotions, concerns and needs is often helpful. How this is best achieved depends upon the relationship with the individual and their reaction to the incident. In some situations the line manager may be appropriate, on others the use of a trained counsellor may be the most appropriate means of support. In such cases, advice can be obtained through the Human Resources Department.

Employee support – this can take many forms, e.g. temporary changes in role, location or working practices; and in serious cases such support may include time off, phased return to work, referral to Occupational Health or counselling. Advice and assistance in determining the extent to which support can be provided is available via the Human Resources Department

Colleague support - the importance of colleague support should never be underestimated. Colleagues are likely to be seen as primary emotional supports.

Additional advice and information is available from Human Resources

Given that harassment can be considered as violence, employees may also seek support through the organisation's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

2. Witnesses to violence

Any employee who witnesses workplace violence (be it verbal or physical) should feel able to report this to their line manager without fear of intimidation.

3. Extreme Acts of Violence

In the event of an employee or group of employees being victims of, or witnessing, an extreme act of violence, ERH will offer appropriate and timely, help and support. It is not possible to be prescriptive about the support because individuals react differently to particular experiences.

In the event of a violent incident on site involving one or more major injuries, death, multiple deaths or casualties, the Board of Directors will take responsibility for managing the situation and the SHE Director will act as the disaster co-ordinator.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The SHEQ Manager has responsibility to ensure that proper procedures are in place to implement this policy and to monitor compliance. In practice, the SHEQ Manager delegates the management functions for the effective implementation of the policy to Directors, Managers and Project/Site Managers.

4.2 Directors, Managers and Project/Site Managers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to review the working practices, procedures and working environment of their members of staff. This will be done in consultation with employees and other relevant persons to develop appropriate safe systems of work (i.e. a risk assessment). In so doing, the aim is to:

- prevent colleagues being placed in situations which present significant risks to their personal safety (*this is a fundamental principle*)
- identify those roles, where those occupying them may be considered to be 'at risk' from violence due to the nature of the work activities, location or other pertinent factors
- ensure that those 'at risk' are provided with all necessary information, instruction and training to enable the individual to identify circumstances which may give rise to the potential for violence, how to avoid such situations and how to deal with them should they arise
- effectively communicate safe working procedures to all employees, including part-time and temporary employees
- develop employee awareness, via induction processes, line-manager supervision and intervention, team meetings etc.
- enable sensitive and careful consideration to expressions of concern by colleagues, (*the threat of violence or aggression should not be taken lightly*)
- ensure that all incidents of violence are reported and recorded, notified to the appropriate manager(s), and that appropriate actions are taken to support the individual, prevent a recurrence and to investigate promptly and thoroughly any reported incidents
- report all suspicious incidents to, so as to prevent potentially violent incidents from arising
- monitor incidents of violence and review the effectiveness of the arrangements made

4.3 All employees: Effective policies and procedures to tackle the issue of violence at work, depend upon the co-operation between employers and employees. Thus, it is expected that all employees will:

- familiarise themselves with this Policy and any associated procedures, guidelines and instructions
- take reasonable steps to avoid situations, which may have the potential for the risk of violence

- report and record all incidents of violent, aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour, *(or any incident or behaviour which they consider may lead to such acts)*, to their line-manager immediately
- actively participate in training events or other preventative measures designed to raise awareness, deal more effectively with potentially violent situations and to minimise the potential for such incidents
- co-operate with their line-manager in the identification of situations which may give rise to the potential for violence and assist in the development of 'safe systems of work'

5. Action

Acts of violence will not be tolerated by ERH.

This Policy Statement should be read with reference to associated policies for staff.

Allegations of violence against an employee will be investigated under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

Complaints of harassment should be pursued under the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Signed



Jerome Mathias
(Managing Director)

Review period: 12 Months