



**Policy Title:**                    **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & AGGRESSION POLICY**

**Policy Type:**                    **HUMAN RESOURCES - WHS**  
 (Statutory, Financial, Administrative, Human Resources)

**Policy Number:**        **HR021**

Approved by Council	Last Review	Current Review	Next Review
	19 May 2020	18 May 2021	17 May 2022
	Resolution #	Resolution #	Resolution #
	20.6632	21.6948	
Approved by CEO/Director:	Bernie McCarthy –	 Signature.	
Effective Date	18 May 2021		
Implementation Department	Officer Position		
Corporate Services	Human Resources Manager		
Revision #:	Document Management File #.		
4.0	01-03-HR024		

## **1. Policy Background/Scope**

This Policy applies to all Aurukun Shire Council employees and contractors. Employee to employee violence, bullying or harassment is not included in the scope of this Policy. These situations are covered by the Aurukun Shire Council Workplace Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct Policy.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure a healthy work environment for all employees, contractors and visitors and the continuous development and improvement of its safety management system in order to:

- achieve best practice Work Health and Safety performance.
- identify, assess and control risks.
- incorporate Work Health and Safety considerations into all work processes.
- consult with staff around Work Health and Safety issues.
- provide Work Health and Safety training and instruction.
- set Work Health and Safety performance targets for the Council and management.

Aurukun Shire Council is committed to ensuring all employees are provided a safe workplace with minimal risk and are able to meet Council's mission and objectives and to meet the responsibilities of their employment effectively.

## **3. Zero Tolerance**

Aurukun Shire Council actively supports zero tolerance towards aggression and violence in the workplace. Aurukun Shire Council will achieve this by establishing an environment that promotes identification of hazards, assessment and control of risks, preventative training and education, reporting and effective management of all incidents and incorporation of safety into facility design. The adoption of harm minimising practices, and the active reduction in the use of restrictive interventions will assist Aurukun Shire Council in achieving a safe and effective work environment.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Chief Executive Officer**

- To ensure that the Aurukun Shire Council program to manage occupational violence complies with all statutory and common law requirements.
- To provide leadership and support for zero tolerance of occupational violence.

### **4.2 Security Liaison Group**

- This group will act as a reactive sub-committee of the Work Health and Safety Committee and its membership will be made up of but not limited to-
- Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
- Work Health and Safety Officer (Coordinator)
- Management
- Director (relevant to incident)

### **4.3 Directors**

- to ensure compliance with governing policies and procedures of occupational violence.
- to ensure that appropriate risk management actions are taken where risk of occupational violence is identified.
- to ensure that all front line staff receive appropriate training and instruction.

### **4.4 Supervisors**

- to ensure compliance with occupational violence policies and procedures.
- identify and alert staff to violent clients and hazardous situations.
- to ensure that staff report exposure to occupational violence to the WHS service on the prescribed Incident reporting form.
- to investigate all incidents of occupational aggression and violence in conjunction with the Health & Safety Representative (HSR).
- ensure debriefing is completed for those either directly or indirectly involved in the incident.
- track and analyse incidents for trends and prevention initiatives.

### **4.5 Employees**

- to comply with this procedure and all Aurukun Shire Council procedures.
- to participate in training about dealing with violence in the workplace.
- to report all potential or actual incidents to the Human Resource Department via an Incident Report
- contribute to risk assessments and incident investigations.

### **4.6 Work Health and Safety Team**

- to ensure systems and procedures are established and implemented to effectively provide a proactive means of preventing and reducing incidents of workplace aggression and violence.
- to provide guidance on Aurukun Shire Council site-wide risks and means for control.
- to ensure that systems of harm reduction post event (counselling etc.) are made available to all staff exposed to occupational violence.

## **5. Procedure**

### **5.1 Risk Identification and Assessment**

- incidents of occupational violence will be reported in accord with Aurukun Shire Council incident reporting.
- incidents of occupational violence will be managed in accordance with the Aurukun Shire Council Procedures.

### **5.2 Risk Control**

- the establishment of an ongoing management plan for all clients/families exhibiting aggressive/violent behaviour.
- neither intent nor ability to carry out the threat is relevant. The key issue is that the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

- this policy will be reviewed and modified regularly to implement appropriate risk control measures.
- if an incident occurs or escalates, it is important staff have immediate response options, which include calling more senior staff for assistance, security or the police.
- the response approach selected needs to be appropriate to the situation and skills of staff and may include:
  - calm verbal and non-verbal communication
  - verbal de-escalation and distraction techniques
  - support from other staff
  - request that the aggressor leave
  - withdrawal to a safer location
  - internal emergency response
  - external emergency response

### **5.3 Post-incident**

- a system to reduce harm resulting from exposure to occupational violence will be available to all staff. This will include an identified counselling service.
- Manager/Director and Health and Safety Representative will manage aggression and violence issues through the Council's consultative processes.
- all incidents and near misses of client initiated aggression or violence are reported via Incident Report and followed up by the Manager/Director or Supervisor.
- in the event of exposure to aggressive or violent incidents staff are provided with debriefing opportunities and follow-up.
- if Police are involved, appropriate Aurukun Shire Council management may be notified as required.

### **5.4 Training**

- appropriate training will be provided to all front line staff in order to increase awareness skills and knowledge

## **6. Definitions**

### **6.1 Occupational Violence**

An incident occurs in which an employee, sub-contractor or contractor is abused, threatened or assaulted. This includes incidents of workplace aggression and family/visitor aggression and violence. It may include:

- verbal, physical or psychological abuse.
- intimidating or threatening behaviours.
- aggravated assault.
- threats with a weapon or object.

### **6.2 Assault**

The direct or indirect application of force by a person to the body, clothing or equipment worn by another where the application of force is without lawful excuse and with the intent to inflict or being reckless as to the infliction of bodily

injury, pain, discomfort, damage, insult or the deprivation of liberty and results in infliction of any such consequence. It is also an act that causes reasonable fear in another person of injury or intimidation.

### **6.3 Code of Behavior**

The agreed set of minimal standards of behavior that all staff, families and visitors are expected to comply with to ensure that Aurukun Shire Council workplaces are safe, professional and friendly environments. See Code of Conduct Policy for further information.

### **6.4 Identified Individual**

A client, family member or visitor who has been identified by Aurukun Shire Council as posing an ongoing risk of aggression and/or violence to staff.

### **6.5 Security Liaison group**

The group consisting of the Workplace Health and Safety Officer, immediate supervisor related to any incident, Health & Safety Representative and a representative of management, meets reactively to review and make recommendations following incidents involving occupational violence.

## Appendix A – Warning Notice

(Insert date)

<<NAME>>

<<ADDRESS>>

Dear <<NAME>>

Further to the incident that occurred at <<COUNCIL LOCATION>> on the <<DATE>> between yourself and a member of Council staff.

You have been made aware of Council's policy with regard to maintaining a violence-free workplace on <<DATES>> and have been provided with a copy of our policy.

This letter is to advise you that future incidents of aggressive or violent behaviour which you are involved in at this Council could subsequently require police involvement, refusal to provide a service and/or legal action.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter with a representative from Council please phone <<PHONE NUMBER>>.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive Officer  
Aurukun Shire Council

COPIES: Addressee

Client file

Security