



# POLICY

## Domestic Violence in the Workplace

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### DOCUMENT CONTROL

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### REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
Feb 17, 2016	R01	Initially developed; draft for discussion
Apr 21, 2016	R01	Presented to EC for comment
May 3, 2016	R01	Presented to EB for comment
May 9, 2016	R01	Updated to reflect feedback received from EB; to include elected representatives in the policy and additional feedback received since EB meeting;
May 27, 2016	R01	Reviewed with SSU;
June 7, 2016	R01	Presented to Executive Board for approval; Approved by Executive Board;

5/30/2016

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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

**Policy Number:** Int-Admin-2016-Jun-07-EB-R01-DomViolence  
**Responsible Office:** Policy  
**Responsible Executive:** EVP Policy

**Date Established:**  
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### **SUMMARY**

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The Society of Energy Professionals recognizes that all forms of violence (e.g. involving children, elders, intimate partners and others) may impact an employee(s), union member(s) or elected representative(s) in the workplace. The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires The Society to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for worker protection if they become aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, of an employee in a domestic violence situation that may expose a worker to physical injury in the workplace.

This policy's primary focus is on domestic violence as it affects The Society's workplace and other Society controlled or sponsored venues and events.

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

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The Society of Energy Professionals (SEP) is committed to promoting the health and safety of all workers working within their offices. This commitment includes the prevention and reduction of the incidence and effects of domestic violence.

SEP condemns violence against women, men, or children in any form, whether as an act of workplace violence or in any employee's personal life. SEP recognizes that domestic violence is a workplace issue, compromising the safety of both victims and co-workers and resulting in lost productivity, increased health care costs, increased absenteeism, and increased employee turnover. The SEP recognizes however, for purposes of this policy, that domestic violence means intimate partner violence. The Society also recognizes that in the majority of cases of intimate partner violence, the male partner is the perpetrator and the female partner the victim.

Domestic violence permeates the lives and compromises the safety of thousands of employees each day, with tragic, destructive, and often fatal results.

The Society is committed to ending domestic violence and meeting this responsibility in a manner that:

- is sensitive to, and supportive of, the needs of those who are experiencing domestic violence in their lives;

- provides those who are experiencing domestic violence access to information regarding resources and supports to ensure their physical safety, emotional health, and basic material and financial needs; and
- protects the health and safety of all those that may be placed at risk as a result of domestic violence and its impact in the workplace. The privacy rights of those experiencing domestic violence will be respected to the extent possible while ensuring compliance with the law.

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## **RESPONSIBILITY**

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### **The Society will:**

- Strive to create a workplace that:
  - is free from all forms of violence, including domestic violence
  - support workers who are recognized to be, or who report being, a victim of domestic violence
- Take reasonable preventative measures to protect the safety of workers who request assistance in the workplace because they are the victims of domestic violence and will also take preventative measure to protect other employees of any impact of the victim's experience.
- Respect the confidentiality of those who report domestic violence, informing other workers only to the extent necessary to protect safety and to comply with legislative requirements
- Provide training where required (1 Mgmt, 1 SSU Rep, 1 PO)

### **The Staff Director and the Special Assistant to the President and Office Manager will:**

- Understand and uphold the principles of this policy
- Ensure this policy is explained to employees
- Be provided with training to be knowledgeable about the observable signs or behaviours that may suggest domestic violence
- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for worker protection if they become aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence that would likely expose a worker to physical injury, may occur in the workplace
- Provide informed and supportive responses to employees experiencing or witnessing domestic violence in the workplace. Make these employees aware of resources that are available to assist victims of domestic violence
- Work with employees who report being the victims of domestic violence that may pose a threat in the workplace by developing a workplace safety plan to protect them and others in the workplace. This plan will be individualized to the circumstances reported but may include elements such as:
  - Resource and referral information
  - Call screening, new phone number, e-mail blocking, removal of employee contact information from public directories

- Additional security and/or security measures at the workplace
- Work schedule adjustment to enable domestic violence victim to obtain medical, counselling or legal assistance
- Grant paid and unpaid leave in appropriate circumstances for employees experiencing domestic violence
- Workplace relocation
- Consult confidentially with other Society staff, where required, in developing the workplace safety plan
- Properly document any report of domestic violence and contact the authorities when applicable
- Protect the confidentiality of employees who report domestic violence within the limits needed for safety, recognizing that information may need to be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis if any employee's safety at work is jeopardized
- In good faith, take all reasonable and practical measures to protect workers who report or witness domestic violence from reprisals (acts of retaliation, direct or indirect) or further violence,
- Take appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary actions to address instances in which an employee uses workplace resources to perpetrate domestic violence

**Workers who are witnesses to domestic violence** in the workplace are required to:

- Take action to ensure their own immediate safety in the event of a domestic violence incident
- Report any such incident immediately to the supervisor or manager
- Report to their supervisor/manager any information that indicates the safety of any employee in the workplace is at risk as a result of domestic violence
- Apart from these situations, maintain confidentiality regarding a co-worker experiencing domestic violence

The Society recognizes that **workers experiencing domestic violence** may be reluctant to disclose the problem to a supervisor or manager. The Society encourages disclosure in order to protect the safety of the employee and others in the workplace. Disclosure also enables the Society to support the worker and provide links to appropriate services. Although the Society respects the worker's need for confidentiality, workers are responsible for:

- Disclosing any situation that threatens the safety of any persons in the workplace
- Informing the supervisor/manager if they have applied for, or obtained, a restraining order that includes the workplace as a protected area.

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## **BACKGROUND**

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Addressing domestic violence relates to the union agenda as a health and safety issue, a workplace issue, a discrimination issue, a family issue — and as a human rights issue. Like other struggles for health, safety and human dignity, domestic violence affects the lives of untold numbers of working people. Domestic violence is emotionally disruptive, dangerous and, at worst, it can claim the lives of workers.

Union interest in addressing this issue grows out of a strong tradition of fighting for social and economic justice. In addition to a higher standard of living, unions have fought for respect, civil and human rights, personal self-determination, and freedom from violence.

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## **APPLICABILITY**

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The Domestic Violence Policy applies to all Society employees, union members, and elected representatives.

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## **DEFINITIONS**

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**Domestic Violence** - Domestic Violence is any form of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse including stalking and financial control. Domestic violence is different in each situation; however it is always a pattern of behavior used by one person to gain power and control over another in an intimate relationship. Domestic Violence can occur between current and former partners of any age. It can occur among people from all racial, economic, and religious backgrounds, amongst people with disabilities, and can exist in both same sex and heterosexual relationships.

**Worker** – Employees, elected representatives and members who work within the offices of The Society of Energy Professionals.

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## **Contact Information**

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EVP Policy

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### ***Related Information***

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#### **Society of Energy Professionals Documents:**

Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Anti-Harassment Policy

Member and Member Harassment Procedure

Staff and Member Harassment Procedure

Staff and Staff Harassment Procedure

#### **Other Documents:**

This policy is in accordance with the **Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act** (the Act), as amended, and ***will be reviewed annually in accordance with the Act.***

#### **Related Links:**

**Make It Our Business** provides information and education to help meet obligations under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act. According to the Act, employers must prevent and respond to domestic violence in the workplace. See more at:

<http://makeitourbusiness.ca/>

**Canadian Labour Congress**, Domestic Violence at work resource centre. See more at: <http://canadianlabour.ca/issues-research/domestic-violence-work>

**CUPE**, Domestic violence and the workplace: A Bargaining Guide. See more at: <http://cupe.ca/domestic-violence-and-workplace-bargaining-guide>

Ontario Ministry of Labour, Workplace Violence & Workplace Harassment. See more at: [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs\\_workplaceviolence.php](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs_workplaceviolence.php)