

# Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Survey

## *Part One- Instructions*

### **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment (WVRA) - Steps to complete the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation Toronto Teachers' Bargaining Unit (TTBU) Assessment Submission**

Under the process created by the Toronto District School Board (the Board) Health & Safety Department (HSD) there is **only one (1)** WVRA permitted for submission for each bargaining unit per school/site.

Additionally, the HSD system **cannot** be completed over multiple sessions. The TTBU group completing the WVRA may wish to consider printing the .pdf version of the WVRA and complete the paper version as time permits, and when finished, transfer to the on-line survey at a later time.

1. The Branch President and/or Health & Safety (HS) Representative organise TTBU members in completing the WVRA for your school/site;
2. The Branch President and/or HS Representative will notify TTBU teachers of the on-line survey in preparation for the TTBU Member information collection session(s);
3. Part F allows for additional comment. It is here that items not specifically identified in the survey may be noted such as the functionality of the public address system and emergency calling procedures posted on all phones and PAs;
4. **One (1)** WVRA will be completed compiling input from all participating TTBU Members at your school/site and submitted electronically;
5. It is recommended that each teacher go to the survey (location of survey on TDSB website is below) and print off the .pdf version, include their responses and then all the responses of all the teachers be collated and included on the one electronic version completed and submitted; and
6. Once submitted, the system will automatically send a copy to the originator (Branch President or the HS Representative). The originator is asked to forward their copy to their Executive Officer.

To get to the WVRA, once in TDSB Web go to Quick Links, Health & Safety, OH&S Reporting Forms, Online Workplace Violence Risk Assessment. There is also a link to the blank printable version (the official submission must be on-line).

Once the WVRA has been completed and submitted (the Health & Safety Department is currently asking that the survey be **submitted by 30 April, 2019**), the Member that submitted the survey on behalf of the TTBU will get a copy. This report should be printed and saved. Section E of the WVRA will generate a list of corrective actions that are recommended as a result of the issues identified. The items on the list can then be addressed one-by-one.

Once all corrective actions have been addressed a new WVRA (the reassessment) should be submitted. This should be done before June 30, 2019.

## ***Part Two- Rationale***

The *Ontario Health & Safety Act* (OHSA) requires all school boards to assess the risks of workplace violence and to conduct a reassessment of the risks of workplace violence as often as necessary to ensure the workplace violence policy and the measures and procedures in the workplace violence programme continue to protect workers from workplace violence. School boards must ensure an assessment/reassessment of the risks of workplace violence is conducted for each of their workplaces

### **A risk assessment under the OHSA is not an assessment of an individual or student.**

Under the OHSA, school boards are required to assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from:

- a. the nature of the workplace
- b. the type of work; or
- c. the conditions of work.

The **nature of the workplace** refers to the physical aspects of the workplace and may include, but is not limited to, schools, school yards, school board offices, field trip locations, non-traditional classrooms, third-party spaces, hospitals, and custody and correctional facilities and any other place that a worker performs work for the school board.

The **type of work** refers to the activities workers perform and the type of people with whom workers interact- such as students, co-workers, agencies, parents, volunteers, and other members of the community, either individually or in groups. Activities could include, but are not limited to, classroom teaching, assisting students outside the classroom, non-academic work, recess, lunch support, and field trips. These are a few examples of the different settings where work is performed and school boards must assess all types of work for the risk of workplace violence.

The **conditions of work** refer to other aspects- such as the time of work, whether workers move from location to location, work alone, or work in isolated or remote workplaces.

As a leading practice, a risk assessment conducted in a school board setting should include assessing:

- the physical environment, for instance, the security and control of entry and exit points, the working conditions and maintenance of the school communication systems, and the geographical location of the school;
- work practices, conditions, and the nature of work, such as working alone with students or others, working outside, working in a portable, being a half-time or part-time teacher,

providing personal care to a student, special events at a school including assemblies and school trips; and

- current measures and procedures in the workplace violence programme, which may include, but not be limited to:
  - a means to summon immediate assistance – workplace violence response and prevention protocols – information and instruction (which may include elements such as recognising, managing, and de-escalating behaviours); and
  - measures and procedures to develop and/or revise student safety plans – sharing of information as appropriate, and consistent with OHSA and other applicable legislation, for student transitions and transfers within and across school boards – measures and procedures when the school board becomes aware of domestic violence, and – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The risk assessment should also include any known risks based on a review of previous workplace incidents, as well as any known risks identified in other school communities (e.g. the entry of weapons into a school).

Development of a student safety plan is not an assessment or reassessment of risk in itself of the work, or the workplace as required under OHSA. However, the measures and procedures in the workplace violence programme may include safe work practices (e.g. student safety plans) to support and protect students and workers. Student safety plans may be developed or revised to address a change in the potential of risk of workplace violence.

## **Workplace Violence under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act***

OHSA Definition – Section 1(1)

“**workplace violence**” means,

- (a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker;
- (c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

Workplace violence against a worker may be a one-time occurrence or involve repeated behaviours over time, such as hitting, kicking, and biting that causes or could cause physical injury. Workplace violence may also include an attempt to exercise physical force against a

worker, such as an attempt to hit or bite, and may also include a statement or behaviour which is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat of violence, such as leaving a worker a threatening note or threatening an act of violence against a worker.

A continuum of inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviours can occur at the workplace. This can range from offensive remarks to violence. Workplace harassment may escalate over time. Where harassment (including sexual harassment) in the workplace involves threats, attempts or acts of physical force that causes or could cause physical injury, it would be considered to be workplace violence under OHSA.

A person does not need to have the capacity to understand that their behaviour could cause physical injury to a worker to be workplace violence under OHSA. It is important to identify and manage inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviours early to minimise the potential for these behaviours to lead to workplace violence.

## **Reassessing the Risk of Workplace Violence**

A WVRA needs to be submitted for each school/site once; however, a reassessment of the risks of workplace violence may be required at some point to ensure that the workplace violence policy and programme continues to protect workers. As per Grievance resolution 11-16 (signed May 5, 2011), the assessment for the risk of violence will be reviewed and reassessed at each school/site on an annual basis.

A reassessment of the risks of workplace violence is required by OHSA as often as necessary to ensure that the workplace violence policy and programme continues to protect workers from workplace violence. Changes or events within a school board workplace that may warrant a reassessment may include:

- a. an increase in the number, frequency or severity of workplace violence incidents for that specific workplace (e.g. school, classroom, school board office, &c.);
- b. a change in the physical environment of the workplace (e.g., the addition/ removal of portables or security controls);
- c. a change in the student population of a school (e.g., at the beginning of a school year or when there is a significant change in the numbers or makeup of the student population mid-year);
- d. a change in curriculum or scheduling, or a change in environment (e.g. noisy construction at a school), to determine if such change could provoke violent behaviours;
- e. a critical injury caused by workplace violence at the school/site;
- f. a threat assessment where the risk of violence is elevated and/or considered high; and/or
- g. once all corrective actions from a previous WVRA are completed.

Note: “critically injured” means an injury of a serious nature that,

1. places life in jeopardy;
2. produces unconsciousness;
3. results in substantial loss of blood;
4. involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe;
5. involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe;
6. consists of burns to a major portion of the body; or
7. causes the loss of sight in an eye.

The Board, as the employer, will develop measures and procedures to address the risks identified in the assessments both at the system and school level. The TTBU shall be provided this information.