

Information for Contractors

Zero tolerance policy on violence against any person in the workplace

The Government has a position of zero tolerance towards violence against women under the *Safe Homes, Safe Families, Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan*, and in support of Tasmanian Government agency efforts to obtain White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation. Accordingly, Government procurement and associated contractual documents now contain specific clauses in relation to the Government's zero tolerance towards violence against any person in the workplace. These clauses set expectations with respect to the behaviour of Contractors procured to provide Government works and services. An example of such a clause is included at the end of this document.

Family Violence and Violence against Women

The Government recognises the devastating impact that family violence can have on the lives of those who experience it, and that it can have wide ranging effects, threatening both work and financial security. As such, with a number of Tasmanian Government agencies already in the process of becoming a White Ribbon Accredited Employer, and with all agencies ultimately planning to become White Ribbon accredited, a zero tolerance policy on violence against any person in the workplace has been introduced.

- **Violence against women** is defined by the United Nations as “Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women”.
- **Family violence** typically involves a wide range of controlling or other behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature, which involves fear, harm, intimidation, emotional abuse or economic deprivation.¹ It can involve a wide range of behaviours that can occur over a number of years both before and after separation. The behaviours might relate to the following:
 - *Physical abuse* – including assaults, threats, use of weapons, dangerous driving, destruction of property or sleep deprivation.
 - *Sexual abuse* – including sex without consent, criticising or using degrading insults.
 - *Emotional abuse* – blaming the victim for all the problems in the relationship, damage to self-esteem/self-worth, periods of sulking or withdrawal of engagement.
 - *Verbal abuse* – continual “put downs” and humiliations privately or publicly, these may include body image, ability as a parent or spouse or the victim’s intelligence.
 - *Social abuse* – isolating victims from friends and family through rudeness, moving location, forbidding or physically preventing the victim from going out and meeting people.
 - *Economic abuse* – complete control of all money with no direct access to bank accounts or providing an “allowance” that is not enough or impacting on the victim’s ability to maintain employment.
 - *Spiritual abuse* – denying access to ceremonies, land or family, preventing victim from practising religion or forcing them to do things against their beliefs.²

¹ Safe at Home. (2015). *About Family Violence*. Retrieved from www.safeathome.tas.gov.au/publications

² Adapted from: Safe at Home. (2015). *About Family Violence*. Retrieved from www.safeathome.tas.gov.au/publications

Being an Active Bystander

Being an Active Bystander means that you should never ignore a situation and walk away, but nor should you be aggressive or violent in response. Always keep yourself and others safe.

If you witness a violent act you can:

- Call the police - 000 in an emergency.
- Be a witness - stand far enough away to be safe but close enough for the violent person to see you and be aware they are being watched (take note of their description).
- If safe, use your phone to video what is happening or take a photograph.
- Get the support of other people, if nearby.
- If safe, verbally intervene by saying that their actions are not okay and you are calling the police.

Try to assist the victim:

- For example: “Are you okay, do you need a taxi?”.
- Offer other practical assistance.
- Stick around to make sure the situation has cooled down.
- If safe, say something like “Hey, that’s not on”.
- Create a distraction eg ask for directions.

Workplace Behaviour Expectations of all Contractors

Contractors are to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Direct or indirect discrimination, bullying, harassment and/or victimization will not be tolerated. The Government has a culture of zero tolerance towards violence against any person in the workplace and expects all contractors to uphold this requirement. If you have any concerns, please contact the relevant agency Human Resources Branch or relevant contract Contact Officer who can provide further information and assist in resolving any issues in a confidential and sensitive manner.

This is a workplace issue

Family violence, violence against women, and violence in any form are sensitive and complex matters that impact a large proportion of people in our society. These matters arise in nearly every workplace. Please find below information on what to do if an employee discloses family violence. The details of relevant service providers are also provided.

- Believe and validate the person’s experience.
- Affirm that the victim/survivor is blameless.
- Enable the victim/survivor to regain control.
- Be non-judgemental.
- Be supportive, encouraging, open and honest.
- Be prepared with information about support services.

National Services

Police Emergency Line: 000

1800RESPECT - 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au

Relationships Australia - 1300 364 277 www.relationships.org.au

Mensline Australia - 1300 789 978 www.mensline.org.au

Family Relationship Advice Line - 1800 050 321 www.familyrelationships.gov.au

Other Information

White Ribbon website - <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au>

Example of clause

Zero tolerance towards violence against women

- (a) Violence against women is defined by the United Nations as “any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women”.
- (b) The Principal upholds a zero tolerance policy towards violence against any person in the workplace. The Contractor acknowledges and undertakes to uphold a zero tolerance policy towards violence against any person in the workplace in its interaction with employees, agents and subcontractors of the Principal and in delivery of the Principal’s Requirements.
- (c) The Contractor must and will ensure that its employees, agents and subcontractors will at all times in delivery of the Principal’s Requirements act in a manner that is non-threatening, courteous and respectful.
- (d) If the Principal reasonably believes that any of the Contractor’s employees, agents or subcontractors are failing to comply with the behavioural standards specified in this clause then the Principal may in its absolute discretion:
 - (i) prohibit access by the relevant employees, agents or subcontractors to the Principal’s premises; and
 - (ii) direct the Contractor to withdraw the relevant employees, agents or subcontractors from providing the Principal’s Requirements.