

ISSUE IN FOCUS



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SASKATCHEWAN
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Interpersonal Violence in the Workplace

Background:

Interpersonal violence is a serious issue in Saskatchewan and one that all citizens in the province have a shared responsibility to address. While just one incident of interpersonal violence in the workplace is too many, the fact that Saskatchewan has the highest rates of police-reported domestic violence for both males and females in Canada is totally unacceptable and action needs to be taken.

Issue:

The recent passage of Bill 172 (Paid Interpersonal Violence and Sexual Violence Leave) intends to address, at least partially, the very real issue of interpersonal violence in Saskatchewan. The Government's decision requiring that employers offer five days of paid leave, in addition to providing five days of unpaid leave, has the potential to create as many issues as it tries to solve. By adding to the cost of staffing for many businesses, it creates additional challenges that did not have to be, when a simpler and more effective solution could have been implemented through the Ministry of Social Services.

Recommendations:

1. Education and training for both employers and employees in recognizing interpersonal violence in the workplace should be promoted as a much-needed first step in fostering greater awareness of the issue. Employers should make these workshops available to their employees to ensure all actions taken by those employees are clear and consistent.
2. With proper education and training, employers will better understand their role in making their workplaces safe and will craft clearly-defined policies

to appropriately deal with suspected, reported, or witnessed incidents of interpersonal violence involving their employees or in the workplace more generally.

3. Employers should allow for reasonable time away for impacted workers but not be required to pay wages above and beyond the current leave available in the workplace.
4. Victims of interpersonal violence should be granted access to Employment Insurance (EI) benefits to cover lost wages for days off taken in relation to finding new housing accommodations, making childcare arrangements, meeting with medical and legal professionals, healing from emotional and physical injuries, etc. The SCC encourages the Government of Saskatchewan to lobby the Government of Canada to amend EI to allow for this provision.
5. In addition, any person requiring services and support should be informed of services of the offices of the Ministry of Social Services, as they have current programs and financial supports that could well serve the individual's needs.
6. The SCC will encourage strategic actions from all levels of government to ensure there is appropriate resources and services for victims of abuse across the province.

History:

Letter to Minister of Labour Relations & Workplace Safety 2017

Adopted Policy Resolution 2018

Letter to President of Saskatchewan Federation of Labour 2019

Letter to Minister responsible for Status of Women Office 2019

Letter to NDP MLA Nicole Sarauer 2019

Letter to Minister of Labour Relations & Workplace Safety 2019