



The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Policy Statement On Interpersonal Violence in the Workplace and the Employer's Role

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.

Such a deeply-rooted societal problem requires immediate action from all parties – governments, employers, and employees. The role of employers in addressing this issue is important, but their efforts will only be effective unless broader action is taken by the community as a whole.

Therefore the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (SCC) has adopted the following Policy Statement and will be communicating it widely:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

The SCC will promote the available courses and information for employers to use and encourage their employees to better understand the risks within their own workplaces and in the community as a whole. This is both a business and community issue that needs to be addressed by society moving forward - together.