

Policy Title Harassment-Abuse Policy and Code of Conduct Program	Policy Type Human Resources		Policy Number HR-200
	Date Adopted	1 July 2018	Revision Date As Needed
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Policy Statement/Rationale

The Belleville Theatre Guild has a long legacy of providing a caring and supporting environment for its employees and volunteers, together with outstanding service and quality theatrical entertainment for its patrons. The Board of Directors is fully committed to maintaining and enhancing that legacy.

It is the primary objective for all associated with our Theatre Guild to ensure that the working environment—for employees, volunteers and patrons—ensures a positive theatre experience.

Note: See also **Conflict and Complaint Resolution Policy (HR-100)**

Procedures/Responsibilities/Expectations

Purpose

This Code is intended to promote a harmonious and respectful working environment for all BTG employees and volunteers and to ensure that the BTG complies with the requirements of the *Ontario Workplace Health and Safety Act* (the “OWHSA”) relating to workplace violence and harassment. It aims to set the highest standards of service integrity, to minimize discord and to promote the resolution of conflicts among or between employees, volunteers and the public. Refer also to the **Conflict and Complaint Resolution Policy**

Application

The code applies at all times when employees and volunteers are engaged in activities at, or are representing, the BTG. Emergency Contact Information can be found in the Box Office, the Old Box Office, Theatre Change Room, the Annex Conference Room, and Concession Stand

General Expectations

Employees and volunteers are expected at all times to:

- treat one another and the public with dignity, respect and hospitality;
- act with honesty, integrity and professionalism;
- observe high standards of appearance and conduct;
- avoid conflicts of interest;

- conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best traditions of the BTG, reflects positively on our public image, and fully supports our mission and mandate.

Unacceptable Conduct

Conduct considered unacceptable is what most of us reasonably understand as unbecoming or inappropriate in a workplace serving the public. It includes violence. It also includes harassment of one person by another, or others, on any basis, including: race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability or any other prohibited ground of discrimination recognized under the *Human Rights Act of Ontario*.

The OWSA defines “workplace violence” as

- the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,*
- an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,*
- 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.*

It defines “workplace harassment” as

engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

Harassment is often based on the perceptions of people - having something said or done to them that causes distress or discomfort. It can be culturally based - what is accepted in one culture may be inappropriate in another. However, one’s culture or ethnic background is not a legitimate excuse for inappropriate or unwanted behaviour or actions. Awareness and understanding of conditions causing harassment is crucial to maintaining good relationships among employees, volunteers and the public.

Harassment can include, but is not limited to, slurs, epithets, teasing, threats, verbal or physical abuse, derogatory comments or jokes, and the display or distribution of derogatory pictures or material.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following sorts of unwelcome conduct: comments or jokes of a sexual nature, the display or distribution of pornographic pictures or material, inappropriate or uninvited touch or contact, sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or sexual assault.

Unacceptable conduct must be discouraged at all times.

Complaints and Reports about Unacceptable Conduct

Violence

If violence occurs or is likely to occur, those involved or witnessing it must inform as soon as possible their director, stage manager, or another person of responsibility as soon as possible.

Other forms of Unacceptable Conduct

If any other form of unacceptable conduct occurs, those involved in or witnessing it should make a reasonable effort to resolve the situation immediately.

If that approach proves unsuccessful, or the behaviour continues or increases, the conduct should be reported as soon as possible to their director, stage manager, or another person of responsibility as soon as possible.

Complaints

Any person who perceives that they have been subjected to unacceptable conduct and that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, may, without delay, make a complaint in writing to the BTG President.

The President of the BTG will provide an initial response within 14 working days of receiving notice of a complaint, take such action as s/he considers appropriate and report back to the complainant and respondent on the process taken to address the issue.

Code of Conduct Program

Statement/Rationale

This program provides guidance and procedures for implementing the BTG Code of Conduct in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario *Workplace Health and Safety Act* dealing with workplace violence and harassment.

Part 1 of this program provides a basic set of procedures for dealing with violence.

Part 2 provides the same for other forms of unacceptable conduct, including harassment.

Parts 3 and 4 supplement these basic procedures. They provide detailed procedures for dealing with patrons, intruders and robbery.

Part 5 describes the roles and responsibilities of those at the BTG who are responsible for the application of the Code of Conduct and this program.

Procedures/Responsibilities/Expectations

Part 1 – Violence

Risk Control

Measures and procedures to control the risks identified by your assessment (see Appendix) as likely to expose a worker to physical injury.

Summoning Assistance

Call the police and identify to those involved that you have done so. If you feel comfortable enough to step in to defuse the situation without resorting to violence yourself, have someone else call the police. One fact that must be made clear is that you can be found liable and subject to the applicable laws if you use violence to deter violence. The police are trained to deal with these situations. If there is a crowd, have them removed to an alternative area and get statements from witnesses.

Reporting

Anyone witnessing violence in the Theatre should report it as soon as possible to their supervisor (directors, assistant directors and heads of departments) or a senior staff member (Director, Technical Director) or an executive member of the Board of Directors (President, Vice-president, Treasurer or Secretary). Whenever possible, reports should be in writing. It is important to remain objective and report the facts without interpretation. Interpretations that do not help to relay the facts are statements of bias or conclusions such as, “well, you know how they can get”, or “I assume they were drinking”, or “I didn’t see it happen but I know that so and so likes to cause trouble”.

Keep to the facts such as time and date, a quick background as to the situation just before the altercation, how the incident started, how it was dealt with (if dealt with at all) and what was the outcome. These facts will help supervisors, staff and/or Board members in assessing the situation and dealing with it properly. They may ask for your interpretations in an interview such as your knowledge of the individual(s) involved and any other situations that may have aided in making the situation worse but statements of this type should be requested so that you are not seen as biased in your report.

Investigation

All reports of violence are to be sent to the President for investigation and copied to the Vice-President.

The President will provide an initial response within 14 working days of receiving a report of violence, take such action as s/he considers appropriate and report back to the complainant and respondent on the process taken to address the issue.

Follow-up

Any act of violence will be dealt with in accordance with the law. Most acts of violence involve either assaults or destruction of property. Both are punishable under the *Criminal Code*. The police may be contacted and if charges are warranted they will be laid. If the situation does not require the intervention of external authorities then the matter will be addressed by the BTG in accordance with its Code of Conduct. Potential responses include apologies, anger-management training, demotion, restricted access to BTG and/or dismissal (whether volunteer or staff) from BTG.

Part 2 – Other Unacceptable Conduct (including Harassment)

Resolution Efforts

If harassment or any other form of unacceptable conduct occurs, those involved should make a reasonable effort to resolve the situation immediately.

Reporting

If that approach proves unsuccessful, or the behaviour continues or increases, those involved or witnessing the conduct should report it as soon as possible to their supervisor (directors, producer, assistant director and stage manager, assistant stage manager) or a member of the Executive Council to see if it can be resolved. Any person who perceives that they have been subjected to unacceptable conduct and that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, may, without delay, make a complaint in writing to the President.

Investigation

The President of the BTG will provide an initial response within 14 working days of receiving notice of a complaint, take such action as s/he considers appropriate and report back to the complainant and respondent on the process taken to address the issue.

Follow-up

Potential responses include apologies, anger-management training, demotion, restricted access to BTG and/or dismissal (whether volunteer or staff) from BTG.

Part 3 – Response Scenario for Disruptive Patrons

When a staff member or volunteer encounters a patron who is being disruptive or engaging in any other unacceptable behaviour, then the following steps should be followed.

STEP 1. Identify yourself by the position you are filling (usher, backstage crew, member of the cast, director etc.) and point out the behaviour of the individual(s) is unacceptable and request that they refrain or they will be asked to leave.

If a patron is intoxicated, also inform them that it is illegal to be intoxicated in a public place and offer to call them a cab to get them home.

STEP 2. If the patron does not comply with the request, get the Director of House (DOH) or designate(s)*, explain the situation to them. The DOH, or designate(s), should then go to the patron and repeat the request to refrain from the unacceptable behaviour.

STEP 3. If the unacceptable behaviour persists, repeat step 2 with one or two other volunteers as a show of conviction that they will comply or be escorted from the premises. Inform the patron that this is the last warning.

STEP 4. Call the police. Inform them of the situation and the steps taken. They will handle it from there.

At no point should any member of BTG actually touch the patron or make any threat, verbally or otherwise, as this often escalates the situation beyond your control and is potentially libellous.

*In this **Code of Conduct Program**, “designates” refers to those volunteers schedule by

the Director of House to work on House duties (i.e. selling 50/50 tickets, attending the concession bar, performance ticket collection, elevator operation, theatre clean up etc.)

Part 4 – Response Scenario for Intruders

When a staff member or volunteer finds an intruder/stranger, then the following steps should be followed:

- STEP 1.** Identify yourself by the position you are filling (usher, backstage crew, member of the cast, director etc.) and show you are working on and ask them who they are.
- STEP 2.** If they are not able/willing to introduce themselves and identify the show they are working on, point out that they are in a restricted area (backstage or in the house without a ticket for example) and ask them to leave.
If the intruder is intoxicated, also inform them that it is illegal to be intoxicated in a public place and offer to call them a cab to get them home.
- STEP 3.** If the intruder does not comply with the request get the DOH, or designate(s), (if the intruder is in any theatre public areas) or the Stage Manager (if the intruder is any of our backstage areas) and explain the situation to them. The DOH, or designate(s), should go to the intruder and repeat the request for them to leave and that the authorities will be called if they fail to comply.
- STEP 4.** If the intruder fails to comply, repeat step 2 with one or two large volunteers as a show of conviction that they will comply or be escorted from the premises. Inform the intruder that this is the last warning.
- STEP 5.** Call the police. Inform them of the situation and the steps taken. They will handle it from there.

At no point should any member of BTG actually touch the intruder or make any threat, verbally or otherwise, as this often escalates the situation beyond your control and is potentially libellous.

Part 5 – Robbery Prevention (The Box Office shall be locked at all times)

If an armed assailant (or even one who claims to be armed) enters the box office and demands money, the following steps should be followed:

- STEP 1.** Surrender all money in the drawer. Be as compliant as possible with the assailant and do nothing to offer them an opportunity to escalate the situation.
- STEP 2.** Do not leave the booth unless you think that your life is in danger.
- STEP 3.** Take note of all distinguishing characteristics of the assailant such as height,

weight, body type, race, clothing, etc. in order to identify them to police.
Prevent the area involved from being disturbed pending an investigation.

STEP 4. Once the assailant has left, lock the doors and call 911 for the police.

STEP 5. Write down all distinguishing characteristics while you wait for the police.

STEP 6. Contact your supervisor and/or the senior staff member on site and inform them of the situation. If no one else is on site, contact the Director of House or any other member of the Board of Directors using the emergency phone numbers provided.

STEP 7. Take a moment and breathe.

Part 6 – Roles and Responsibilities

Here is a clarification of what positions are here to support the implementation of the **Code of Conduct and this Program**.

Supervisors: Producers, directors, assistant directors, stage managers, and assistant stage managers. It is their responsibility to ensure that the show is doing well and that everything is on time. These people can be contacted for the basic concerns such as questions about where items should go, what order to do tasks in, clarification of duties and anything else specifically show related. When in conflict with a fellow volunteer, it is always best to allow a supervisor to mediate any confusion or dispute. If not handled carefully these confrontations can escalate quite quickly.

Managerial Staff: The Stage Manager in most cases is your first contact if you are working on a show. The Director of House, or delegate(s), are also on site during shows, especially if the conflict is with unhappy patrons or intruders. The Director of Programme, Director of Technical, or Director of Public Relations and Marketing, are also members of BTG staff who can assist in dealing with conflicts. If a matter is not dealt with in a prompt fashion or if a dispute is with a supervisor, then contact one of these individuals for assistance. While the President is also a potential resource, it is his/her responsibility to receive and deal with reports and complaints if a situation fails to be resolved or requires an official or legal response. Nevertheless, the President may be contacted directly if the issue is with a member of staff. The President is also responsible for briefing the Board on all reports, complaints and calls to the police or other outside authorities.

Members of the Board of Directors: For those who are not aware of who is on the Board (FYI: most BTG productions will have a board member involved as director, designer, actor etc.; get to know them they are great people!), they are listed on all show programs. In most cases it is the President who will bring matters to their attention but if all else fails or your problem is with the President, then contact a member of the Executive Council of the Board of Directors (**Section IV.C of The Bylaws of the Belleville Theatre Guild 2018** identifies this as: The President, Vice-president, Past-President, Treasurer

and Secretary).

Appendix

Assessment of Risks for Potential Violence/Harassment in the Workplace

Violence / harassment in the Workplace Assessment Report

With the nature of BTG as a business and social activity centre there are several potential areas where the frustration, fear, peer pressure, close proximity to each other and external influences may result in harassment and/or violence. It is vital that we, as members of the Belleville Theatre Guild Corporation, recognize the conditions that may contribute a negative environment. These potential conditions include, but are not limited to:

Stress Levels. Due to the strict deadlines involved with the live entertainment industry, the constant changes to schedules due to unseen circumstances and the fact that almost all of the people involved on any production are volunteers with varying degrees of experience, people can become frustrated. If this frustration is not allowed a healthy release then a negative internalizing or externalizing of this frustration may result. Examples of this would include shortness of temper, snapping or yelling at others with little provocation, excessive use of profanity, drinking/drug consumption at work/rehearsal, constant negative statements, unkempt appearance, a messy work environment, a sullen attitude, an unfriendly demeanour and so on.

1. **Stage Fright.** Factors that induce fear responses can quickly escalate to verbal and physical violence due to the fight or flight response of the human psyche. This is not limited to the actors as many of our running crews are required to go on stage at times to preset, change staging elements and make emergency repairs. Backstage operators (including control booth personnel) can experience a 'stage fright' even though they never go on stage. The fear of embarrassment or failure can manifest itself in many ways and have horrific effects if not recognized. These symptoms can manifest as profuse sweating, sullen or erratic behaviour, drinking/drug consumption while performing tasks, excessive and/or loud talking, unexplained anger or uncontrolled emotional outbursts and so on.
2. **Strong Personalities.** As with most social groups, members of the group may try to win the favour of the group leader (a leader in the BTG environment would include staff, members of the Board of Directors, directors, designers, crew heads and lead actors). While there are many positives to this action some of the negatives include emulating the negative attitudes or opinions of the leader or trying to undermine other members of the group to impress the leader. The negative aspects of this activity can lead to alienating/ostracizing group members and either allowing the harassment of the individual(s) by the group or

result in a reaction of harassment/violence by the singled out individual(s) to the group. Situations that should be avoided are negative gossip or complaints that are not actually brought to the attention of those in authority, unresponsive authority figures when confronted with a complaint, concealing one's feelings or emotional state about the work environment and/or co-workers.

3. **Cramped Conditions.** Areas like the box office, dressing area, back stage during a show and the control booth can all be areas of high activity and high stress at times. These areas can also become noisy at times when clear communication is vital. Add the limited space to the mix and you can quickly get into stressful and aggressive situations. While there is little to do about the volume of activity and lack of space, things we can do to reduce stress in these environments include scheduling shorter work shifts and several breaks, ensuring proper training has been given to people in these work environments, and staying out of these areas if you are not required to be there.

4. **External Influences.** This is the area of trespassers, stalkers and/or excessive noise from outside the building. Trespassers are usually easy to spot as they may look nervous or not sure where they are or where to go. As a member of BTG you should feel comfortable to politely confront a potential stranger by introducing yourself and asking who they are. If you feel uncomfortable talking to the individual(s) then note their location and contact a supervisor or staff member ASAP. In most cases the stranger will be someone who is a new volunteer who is not sure of where to go or how to get there. Stalkers are rare, but always potentially dangerous and so should be handled with the utmost care. Please refer above: **Part 4 – Response Scenario for Intruders (p.7)** for details on answering the stage door and admitting unknown people.

The key identifying quality of a stalker is that they will appear frequently; ask specifically to see one individual for reasons not related to the production— (most personnel will announce the expectation of someone's arrival and the reason for said arrival); demand entry into the building and/or not leave the vicinity if refused entry. Excessive noise outside of the building is usually due to our transient population hanging out by the lobby and stage doors. The first step is to ask them to leave the area. If they are unwilling to do so or if staff feel uncomfortable to approach them, then they should call the police.

**The Police phone number for non-emergency situations is:
(613) 966-0882, Ext. 2211**

This phone number will also be located on the emergency numbers list which is posted on the bulletin boards located in the Annex Conference Room, the Theatre change room, the Box Office and behind the Concession Stand.

5. Unhappy patrons. There are times when a patron becomes unhappy. When dealing with confrontations of this nature it is important to understand BTG policy and the law in order to be clear to these individuals that we are only enforcing BTG policies and the law. The law prohibits being intoxicated, violent and disruptive in a public place and BTG follows these rules. Obvious signs of intoxication are staggering, slurring of words, inability to remain conscious and reeking of alcohol. Angry patrons are usually heard first, but at times you can see an obvious look of hostility or fear on their face prior to an outburst. There is a very clear procedure for dealing with Disruptive Patrons in BTG's Code of Conduct Program. See above **Part 3 – Response Scenario for Disruptive Patrons, (p.6)**

6. Theft/Robbery. The number one contributor to theft is perceived ease of the theft, for example, leaving money in plain sight and unattended and/or storing money in easily accessible areas and the second is the amount involved. The two primary areas at issue here are the concession bar, 50/50 ticket sales table, and the box office area.

However, it should be pointed out that no one should ever leave their valuable personal belongs in any area that is accessible, like the dressing room or an unlocked office.

Theft is very often difficult to prove unless the parties involved are caught in the act or with the stolen property. In some cases, the identity of the thief is strongly suspected and in this situation recrimination or violence can start due to the personal nature of the crime or the lack of clear proof. In other situations, an intruder has not been noticed and/or identified.

Robbery (especially armed robbery) is most often the work of strangers or people with little attachment to the workplace or people involved, however thieves of this nature are also known to have accomplices who work or volunteer at the location. Take note of people who seem to hang around the building and are watching the comings and goings of staff, volunteers and/or the audience. If a theft has occurred, take note if it seems as if they knew where the valuables were located. Theft should be dealt with as any other situation of potential violence and harassment. There is a very clear policy in BTG's Code of Conduct Program for dealing with robbery. See above **Part 5 – Robbery Prevention (p.7-8)**

Approved by Motion recorded in minutes of: 2 May 2018

Recorded by: Nancy Garrod

Position: Secretary

Review: As Needed