

## MANAGEMENT REPORT



Date: April 8, 2015  
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Meeting date: April 23, 2015  
To: Library Board  
From: Jacqueline van Dyk – Director, Library Services

Subject: **HEALTH AND SAFETY BACKGROUNDER – FOR INFORMATION**

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### **SUMMARY**

This report is to provide background for the Board concerning the Library’s Health and Safety program, including the Prevention of Violence in the Workplace program. The Library sincerely encourages and seeks out ways to support worker health and safety. The Library has a busy Joint Health and Safety Committee currently with 5 members and all locations are represented. The committee meets monthly.

### **PURPOSE**

This report is for information.

### **BACKGROUND**

The following outlines key elements of the NVDPL health and safety program:

#### **◆ Surveys**

Periodically the Library’s Joint Health and Safety Committee (commonly referred to as JOH&S) surveys library staff on topics pertaining to health and safety. In August 2014, a **Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace Survey** invited all staff to respond to questions concerning the workplace culture with respect to any actual or potential exposure to bullying or harassment experienced or witnessed, and it inquired how any bullying was experienced/what form it might take. Respondents were assured this was a confidential survey.

Survey results were indicative of a workplace culture undergoing great shifts, with a legacy of an older-style management, and it was also a time when the new language and legislation around bullying was

coming into staff's consciousness. According to survey results, over 65% of the incidents experienced or witnessed referenced a 'manager' as perpetrator. This survey is considered an initial benchmark and will be repeated in August 2015 so that we may take note of any changes and improvements since the new policy, procedures, methods and new management team have been adopted.

Respondents indicated their feeling that while there had been some bullying in the past, there was a strong sense the Library was, as of August 2014, an organization prepared to minimize or eliminate their exposure to bullying and harassment at work.

Additionally, in March 2015 the library conducted a **Violence in the Workplace Staff Survey**. At its April 2015 meeting, the library's Joint Health and Safety Committee will be deliberating on the results and next steps. Preliminary investigation into the results, however, are very encouraging, and show 97% staff feel "very safe all of the time" or "very safe most of the time". The threats most likely to occur concern verbal abuse and the precipitating factors most identified were: patrons' 'psychological problems', 'drugs/alcohol' or 'library policy disputes' (e.g. disputes over fines, overdues). Other preliminary results indicate some improvements in training and documentation are warranted.

#### ◆ **Training**

As employer, the Library is responsible to ensure new and young workers are trained in safety procedures when beginning work. The Library has a Health and Safety training plan for new workers.

As well, other training opportunities abound. For example, all JOH&S committee members take a mandated 8 hours of training to be effective at their committee obligations. Other staff training takes place in scheduled training events for instance, first aid or violence in the workplace. Ad hoc training occurs in departments and when changes in processes take place. In late 2014 we rolled out new spills clean up kits and system-wide training ensued to explain and demonstrate the kits.

#### ◆ **Branch Safety Inspections**

The committee does annual site inspections of the branches to ensure work units are free of hazards, to inquire about the safety of workflows and to recommend improvements. For example, lighting, tripping hazards, areas that might need repair or securing, ergonomics, etc.

#### ◆ **Health and Safety Resources for Staff**

We make numerable resources available to staff to support their safe work environments. (See [Appendix I](#) for a listing).

### **DISCUSSION**

The training budget enables management to address training needs in the library workforce, including health and safety-related training. Employees benefit from the training, and it demonstrates the employer's commitment. In 2014, we conducted JOH&S committee training, first aid training, violence prevention training, and in-service training when we deployed our new spills clean-up kits. In 2015, we

are upgrading our first aid training to Occupational First Aid (OFA) level one, rolling out new Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS requirements), scheduling additional OFA level one training and JOH&S committee member training. Plans are also underway to conduct Due Diligence training for the employer and supervisors.

In 2015, there will be new WCB requirements around incident investigation once Bill 9 (Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2015) is passed, and the Library will be ensuring training and documentation in this area is underway.

Training costs vary, depending on the course, and can include: cost of trainer, staff time, replacement time, and supplies.

### **FINAL REMARKS**

Our Joint Health and Safety Committee is proactive and looks for ways to play its role, address gaps and increase its visibility among staff. It would be ideal if there were a separate and distinct budget line for health and safety operations at the Library to better manage expenditures in created to this area and this important committee and to demonstrate the Employer's commitment.

A Public Address (PA) system for all locations will be requested in 2016 as a useful tool in the safety program.

Since Lynn Valley has an AED installed (gifted by the Heart and Stroke Foundation in 2013), it would be ideal to have one in Capilano and Parkgate libraries as well. This would be a budget issue.

Additional surveys are planned to allow us to keep in touch with employees concerning their experience of the Library as a safe place to work.

In 2015 more OFA level one first aid training will take place.

Improvements to our documentation, always considered a work-in-progress, are planned in 2015.

**Health and Safety Resources at NVDPL include:**

- The staff intranet health and safety repository for written instructions, forms, minutes and announcements about related topics such as safe lifting.
- Branch bulletin boards for printed posters, committee minutes, announcements and standards
- A dedicated email list for the JOH&S committee
- Training--various (new worker orientation, special training in topics like first aid, violence prevention, Aches and Sprains, staff workshops with RCMP, Understanding Dementia, led by the Alzheimer Society)
- Branch and department meetings where health and safety topics are regularly discussed. The Senior Leadership Team weekly meeting includes a standing agenda item of Health and Safety
- First aid, emergency kits, spills clean up kits at all sites
- Emergency and Security Procedures (written documentation): freshly updated in 2015
- Annual flu shot clinic
- Library's HR Advisor, Chris Gonev (with H&S expertise)
- WorkSafe OHS BC Regulations
- AED [defibrillator] installed in Lynn Valley in 2013\*\* (see also Final Remarks)
- Board policies on health and safety, prevention of violence in the workplace and anti-bullying, disabilities management.
- Installation of a telephone in the Lynn Valley basement receiving room for staff safety
- Employee and Family Assistance Program

What's coming in 2015: additional policies and management guidelines to address critical incident management, and alcohol and drug issues.