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Our Voice

Reducing Risk/Protecting People Focus on Safety and Security

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to share the third of four newsletters as part of our project entitled *Reducing Risk/Protecting People: Resources and Tools to Build Risk Management Capacity*. This project is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

Risk management is an extremely important topic: to LBS agencies, to MTCU, to other government ministries, and to the general public. CLO's *Reducing Risk* project is designed to give LBS agencies tools, resources and training to help them to improve their risk management processes and policies.

As part of the *Reducing Risk/Protecting People* project, CLO will be producing four webinars and four newsletters on the topics of:

- **Privacy** (November 2012). The newsletter is available at www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/newslet/dec_2012_our_voice.pdf, and the recorded version of the webinar can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/52630059>
- **Cyber Risks** (January 2013). The newsletter is available at www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/newslet/jan_2013_our_voice_cyber_risks.pdf, and the recorded version of the webinar can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/57610015>
- **Safety and Security** (February 2013)
- **Risk to Reputation** (March 2013)

The webinars will be delivered live, and a recorded version will be freely available online. The newsletters are also available online via CLO's website.

Literacy agencies work hard to ensure that they provide safe and secure environments for everyone — learners, staff, volunteers and visitors. They do this through following good practices, staying up-to-date with legislative requirements, and by implementing effective policies and procedures. Safety and security is everyone's responsibility, and together we can minimize the risks associated with physical locations as well as with unforeseen events, violence and other safety and security issues.

In this newsletter, we will share ideas, links to resources and extensive sample policies and procedures to help literacy practitioners, volunteers, learners, visitors, and other stakeholders, stay safe.



Focus on Safety and Security

Creating Safe Spaces

The first priority of risk management is protecting people, and that means keeping staff, learners, volunteers and visitors safe and secure. Risk management must incorporate physical safety and security.

There are many possible physical risks that should be considered when developing safety and security policies and procedures. Some of these risks can be covered by insurance, but insurance is an “after the fact” protection — it doesn’t protect against damage or harm. It is better to reduce or minimize the risks from the outset so that injury or damage doesn’t happen.

The following is a list of some things to think about that can help reduce risk to both people and property.

- **Trip hazards:** Are hallways, stairways, sidewalks and other areas kept clear and uncluttered? Do carpets or mats lie flat? Are mats and carpets non-slip?
- **Fire:** Is there at least one working fire extinguisher on the premises? Does anyone know how to use it? Is it inspected regularly? Are smoke detectors installed and in working order? Are they checked regularly? Does everyone know proper fire and evacuation procedures? Are fire drills practiced regularly?
- **Theft:** Are valuables kept locked up when not in use? Leaving portable devices such as a laptop computer, cell phone or iPad unattended could be an invitation for a thief to take them. What type of locks are on entry doors? In high risk areas, do you need to consider bars on the windows or other deterrents? Are personal belongings such as purses kept in locked drawers? Is there a working alarm system?
- **Keys:** Who has keys to the premises? Is there a policy for who has keys? Are locks changed after a change in staff?
- **Accident or illness:** Is at least one staff trained in first aid? Is there a policy in place for responding to emergencies?
- **After hours safety:** If staff or others are on the premises after hours, are there policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety? For example, are doors kept locked or is there a requirement that no one is allowed to work alone?
- **Working hours safety:** Is there a panic button installed in the event of a threat? Are there safe words or phrases that can be used to alert others of a threat? Are staff trained in non-violence crisis intervention? Do you have policies in place around workplace violence and harassment?
- **Records and other documents:** Are items such as confidential records kept in locked cabinets and/or in password-protected files? Are computer documents backed up and stored offsite, either in a safe physical location, on a remote server or on the cloud?
- **Travel:** Are staff or volunteers required to travel to carry out their duties? If so, do you have policies and procedures in place regarding distances travelled or overnight stays in case of fatigue or inclement weather? Do you have policies around taking passengers?
- **Health:** Do you have policies and procedures around health and safety such as staying home when ill?



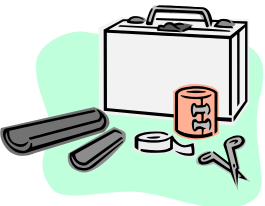



Sample Office Risk Assessment Policy




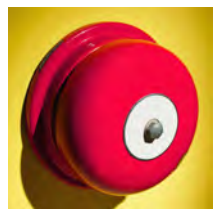

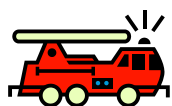
Community Literacy of Ontario has created a draft Office Safety and Security Risk Assessment and Management Policy. We are pleased to share it with you and encourage you to adapt it as needed to best suit the needs of your agency.

RISKS AND PROCEDURES:

When performing an annual review of the workspace, staff will ensure that all types of risks are considered including: natural, man-made or civil. All parties entering the premises will be considered in the evaluation of risks.

Identified Risks	Preventative Measures	
1. Working alone or after hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, work is done during standard office hours • Exterior door is locked before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. • If possible, another person (e.g., friend, family, another staff person) is aware of the staff member's planned arrival and departure times • Attendance schedules are communicated among staff • Maintain well-lit office space • Exterior window blinds are available 	
2. Fire and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office space has sprinkler system • Fire alarm system is available in accessible location • Emergency exits are adequate and staff are aware of evacuation route • Medical safety kit is available in office and at least one staff member is certified in Std. First Aid (in accordance with WSIB regulations) • Emergency lighting system is available in case of power outages • Telephones are available at each work station • Fire extinguisher is available on the premises 	
3. Workplace housekeeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping and office cleanliness means work areas are neat and orderly to prevent slip/trip hazards, fire hazards and health hazards. Debris is removed on a regular basis. • All walk areas are maintained to avoid slippage or tripping (e.g. wet floors, electrical cords, loose carpet/tiles) • An anti-slip mat is used inside the office door to prevent accumulation of water or snow 	

Focus on Safety and Security

Identified Risks	Preventative Measures	
3. Workplace housekeeping (continued) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace layout provides adequate evacuation and communication access Storage is adequate to prevent mould, pests, or inhibit indoor air quality All potentially dangerous objects are secure (e.g. scissors, utility knives) Office Administrator desk will face entrance area 	
4. Handling money 	<p>Onsite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All monies (cheques/cash) will be stored in a locked location to prevent theft. Deposits will be made on a regular basis to ensure no large accumulation of funds are on site <p>Offsite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member traveling offsite will vary the time of day/week when banking is conducted Staff will travel directly to bank using the shortest/safest route 	
5. Summoning Assistance 	<p>In case of emergency, staff can summon assistance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone (calling 911) Call out for assistance in public hallway of building Each staff person will have a personal alarm by their desk Activate fire alarm in public hallway Staff will use a code word amongst each other to indicate the need for immediate help Number for all emergency services (police, fire, ambulance, poison control, hospital, etc.) are posted on CLO's office bulletin board 	
6. Work Travel 	<p>Staff will make a personal judgment on inclement weather and travel conditions regarding travel to out-of-town meetings and events, knowing that CLO considers personal safety as of the utmost importance. Meetings can be rescheduled but personal safety cannot!</p>	
7. Disaster 	<p>In the event of a disaster, staff are to immediately evacuate premises, whether onsite at CLO offices or offsite at an event. Office files/contents are not to be considered at time of emergency as CLO believes in personal safety as the priority.</p>	

Sample Pandemic Policy

Community Literacy of Ontario is happy to share its sample pandemic policy.

The goals of CLO's Pandemic Plan are to protect the health and safety of staff and volunteers and to minimize the disruption to CLO's business activities in the event of a pandemic.

i) Preventative

CLO supports the actions recommended below by the Public Health Agency of Canada in its "Flu prevention checklist". See www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/flupc-eng.php

- Wash your hands frequently
- Keep your hands away from your face
- Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hand
- Get your flu shot
- Keep common surface areas clean and disinfected
- Stay healthy
- If you get sick, stay home



Additional preventive measures are:

- Community Literacy of Ontario will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer at every staff work station and in all common areas. All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to regularly use this.
- CLO staff will daily wipe down their keyboards and work surfaces with alcohol-based wipes or cleaning solutions.

ii) Sources of information

- CLO staff and board will monitor the official federal and Ontario government websites for new information on the flu and for information on pandemics.
- Federal government: www.fightflu.ca
- Ontario government: www.Ontario.ca/flu
- Ontario government and flu pandemic planning: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/emu/pan_flu
- The local Health Unit website: www.simcoemuskokahealth.org



Focus on Safety and Security

iii) Operational

In the event of a declared pandemic, a Co-Executive Director, in consultation with the Chair of the Board, is empowered to close a site to protect the health and safety of staff.

All staff and volunteers are encouraged to stay home in the case of illness to avoid the spread of a pandemic.

In the case of a pandemic, CLO supports flexible work arrangements where staff can work from home or work flexible hours.

CLO supports key operating documents being placed online on CLO's internal systems and a secure online file-sharing service to ensure that critical information can be accessed by staff or board members in the event that the CLO office is closed for a long period of time due to a pandemic.

During flu season, CLO supports holding meetings online or via teleconference where possible to reduce the need for face-to-face meetings and resulting travel.

All core staff (Co-Executive Directors and Administrative Assistant) should ensure that computer and other passwords are shared amongst each other and with the board Chair in a secure manner and are posted online in a secure CLO area in an online file-sharing service.

Home and cell contact information should be shared amongst all staff and the board Chair in a secure manner and posted online on a secure CLO area of a secure online file-sharing service.

Sample Security Plan

The Niagara Regional Literacy Council has generously shared the following security plan.

Building:

- The building must be double-locked during non-business hours
- The alarm must be tested on the first Monday of each month
- The alarm must be set at the end of each business day
- Floors must be free of debris at all times

Emergency Closure:

During severe weather and any other state of emergency, the safety of staff, volunteers, learners and directors is an overriding concern. The Executive Director has the authority to close the office or shorten work hours under these circumstances.



Sample Health and Safety Policy

The following sample policy is based on policies provided by Community Learning Alternatives in Belleville.

ABC Literacy is committed to providing a clean, safe and healthy working environment for all employees, volunteers, learners and visitors as set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Code.

Procedures

- All staff, volunteers, learners and visitors are expected to make health and safety a part of their daily routine and to ensure that everyone is following safe work methods, policies and regulations while on ABC business.
- All workplace hazards, potential hazards or health and safety concerns will be immediately brought to the attention of the Executive Director and/or Health and Safety Officer.
- Any work-related accident/injury will be reported immediately to the Executive Director and/or Health and Safety Officer and an incident report completed.
- A first aid kit will be kept in an accessible location in case of minor injuries.



Health and Safety Officer

ABC will designate and train a staff member as Health and Safety Officer.

Procedures

The Health and Safety Officer will ensure staff is trained in First Aid and CPR, fire safety, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, and Harassment and Violence in the Workplace training as soon as possible upon hire.

The Health and Safety Officer's duties include:

- Risk assessment
- Hazard prevention
- Emergency response coordination
- Maintains first aid supplies and logs
- Inspection and certification of fire extinguishers



Health and Safety will be included as a standing item on the agenda of all staff meetings.

Focus on Safety and Security

Hazard Prevention

Staff, volunteers and learners have a responsibility to report any safety hazards within the office or the building to the Executive Director and/or Safety Officer as soon as they are identified.

The Executive Director, in coordination with the Health and Safety Officer, will address all risks identified in the annual site Risk Assessment.

The Health and Safety Officer will ensure that fire extinguishers and smoke alarm batteries, where such alarms are in place, are functional and changed each April and October.

Staff will review safety and emergency procedures at least once a year at a staff meeting.



Harassment, Abuse and Violence Prevention

ABC Literacy will conduct an annual assessment of potential risk for workplace violence, abuse and harassment in consultation with staff, learners and volunteers in order to reduce the risk of violence or abuse. This assessment will consider both physical design of the premises as well as a review of work routines and practices.

Emergency Response

ABC will maintain up-to-date emergency response policies to protect all persons using its facilities, in accordance with all current municipal and provincial regulations.

Procedures

A list of emergency numbers, including ambulance, police, fire, landlord/superintendent are kept readily visible on the Health and Safety bulletin board.

A series of safe words will be established.

All staff and volunteers will be trained in the proper fire drill and evacuation procedures. Staff will be familiar with where the fire extinguishers are located and be familiar with operating one.

The Health and Safety Officer will:

- Ensure the first aid kit is properly stocked at all times
- Help develop, maintain and test emergency response and evacuation procedures
- Ensure that the Evacuation Plan is up-to-date, clearly visible and posted in every work area



The Health and Safety Officer acts as primary lead in the case of an emergency. The Health and Safety Officer will:

- Call Emergency Services (911) as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency or pull the fire alarm if unable to access a phone
- Liaise with Emergency Services when they arrive on site and apprise them of the situation
- Ensure that all persons on site have been evacuated during an emergency and correlate their names against the attendance record
- Ensure that the site is locked down to prevent access in the case of an external threat
- Remove the lock-down once they are assured that the external threat no longer exists
- Complete a detailed Incident Report following the emergency

Fire/Evacuation Plan

An Evacuation Plan will be posted on the Health and Safety bulletin board. The Evacuation Plan must clearly indicate the:

- Location of all exits, designating them as primary or secondary
- Location of all fire extinguishers
- Emergency response number (911)
- Post-evacuation assembly area



Fire Drill/Evacuation Procedure

- If the fire alarm sounds, learners and staff will exit the building in as orderly a manner as possible through the front door or the back door if that exit is blocked.
- Participants will assemble at the designated assembly site, clear of the building, incident and/or fire equipment.
- If time and safety permits, staff members will check each program area for participants, turn off lights and close the doors upon exit.
- The Fire Drill/Evacuation Plan will be practiced twice each year.

Staff and Learner Safety

ABC Literacy will not tolerate any form of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or psychological abuse nor any form of harassment.

Procedures

- Staff, volunteers and learners will be made aware of what constitutes abuse and the consequences of abuse whether in the form of harassment or violence at any work-related site.
- Staff, volunteers and learners are required to report all incidents of abuse and will be assured that no reprisal will be made against anyone reporting abuse.
- The Executive Director will investigate every reported incident of abuse and will complete an incident report, including the response to the alleged incident. In the event that the Executive Director is implicated, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board.



Focus on Safety and Security

Harassment

ABC Literacy is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy and accepting work environment that respects the self-esteem and dignity of all learners, volunteers, staff and visitors. Everyone at ABC is committed to preventing harassment. ABC takes a position of zero tolerance in regard to workplace harassment or bullying.

Any incident of harassment, that causes offence, humiliation, embarrassment and/or takes advantage of another person's status, whether at our location or another meeting site in the community, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or removal from the program.

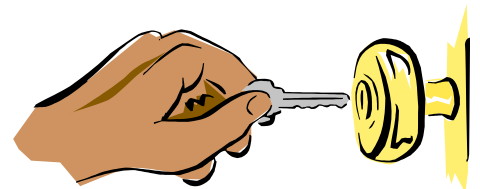
This policy is not intended to limit or constrain the reasonable exercise of learning/facilitation or management functions at ABC but rather to respect individual dignity and to foster a supportive work/learning environment.

Procedures

- The ABC Harassment Policy will be posted on the Health and Safety bulletin board.
- ABC will include the Ontario Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Act definition of harassment, citing examples, in its orientation program for all staff, volunteers and learners.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained in procedures to address incidents of harassment with learners and guests, if they witness it or it is reported to them.
- As part of its Orientation Program for all staff, volunteers and learners, ABC will outline the sanctions, including dismissal, against perpetrators of harassment.
- Staff, volunteers and learners must report all incidents of harassment, in full assurance that no reprisal will be made against anyone reporting such behaviour.
- ABC commits to investigating and dealing with every allegation of harassment in a timely and fair manner, respecting the privacy of all concerned as much as possible.
- When a formal complaint is filed, the Incident Report will include a written response to the investigation of the incident and the action taken.
- The Executive Director shall submit a copy of all formal harassment complaints to the Board of Directors.

Facility Security

ABC commits to maintaining a safe and secure environment at all its sites for the benefit of all staff, volunteers, learners and visitors.



Access to Keys:

- The Executive Director has responsibility for access to the premises.
- Whenever keys are loaned, they will be signed out in the key log, noting the name of the borrower, the date and time, and the reason for access. When the keys are returned, the date and time will be recorded.
- The Office Manager will be responsible for the distribution and documentation of keys to staff.
- Individuals receiving a key must sign and date the documentation sheet.
- In the event of a lost or stolen key, a site may be re-keyed at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- An extra set of keys will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Alarms

- The Executive Director will ensure that there is a functioning alarm system. Staff should report any malfunctioning alarm warnings to the Executive Director.
- All staff will become familiar with the alarm system.
- The last person to leave at the end of the work day shall ensure that the doors and windows are locked and that the alarm system is activated.



Document Security

The Executive Director will ensure that all personnel documents for staff, volunteers and learners are kept in a secure location (both physical and electronic). Similarly, all learner education records will be kept in a secure location. Access to documents will be restricted to staff, volunteers and learners on a “need to know” basis.

Physical Assets

- Purses and other personal valuables should not be left unattended in the office. They should be put in a locked drawer out of site. ABC will not be responsible for the loss or theft of any valuables.
- All laptops provided for use by staff, volunteers and learners will be encrypted and password protected.
- A record will be kept of the serial numbers of all computers, computer-related hardware and other capital assets.
- All laptops and projects must be stored in a secure location when not in use.

Staff Security Outside of Working Hours

All staff working alone after regular working hours must ensure that the facility is secure while they are working there.

Information Technology (IT) Security

- Access to IT assets will be password protected
- All default passwords on IT equipment and software will be changed with the equipment or software is installed
- The user’s role within ABC will determine the range of permissions granted to access IT resources.
- In the event of a user’s departure, the user’s personal account will be terminated immediately. All global passwords will be changed immediately.
- Appropriate use of IT resources will be to support ABC’s mission, including program-directed learning and skills development.
- Any inappropriate use of IT resources may lead to revocation of the user’s access privileges, and further sanctions as deemed appropriate.



Focus on Safety and Security



CLO's BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Lorraine Bergstrand (Haldimand Norfolk)
- Nanditta Colbear (Sturgeon Falls)
- Elizabeth Debergh (Wellington County)
- Pierrette Desrochers-Kavanagh (Iroquois Falls)
- Alfred Jean-Baptiste (Toronto)
- Teresa Kerr (Peterborough)
- Eileen Lee (Huntsville)
- Patti Miller (London)
- Maria Reolin (Mississauga)
- Marsha Roadhouse (Belleville)
- Johanna White (Red Lake)

CLO's STAFF

- Joan Beaudry (Office Administrator)
- Jette Cosburn (Co-Executive Director)
- Joanne Kaattari (Co-Executive Director)
- Vicki Trottier (Online Learning Consultant)

February 2013 Newsletter

Research and writing by Vicki Trottier
Editing by Joanne Kaattari

OUR FUNDER

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EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Additional Resources

There are many helpful websites that you can visit to find resources, tips and tools to help keep people safe. Here are just a few:

- ⇒ **Flu:** Both the Canadian federal government and the Ontario government provide helpful websites with information on how to avoid catching and spreading the flu. For information, see www.fightflu.ca or www.Ontario.ca/flu
- ⇒ **Pandemic Planning:** Is your workplace prepared in the event of a pandemic? Here are two websites that provide useful information and tools to help you develop policies and to prepare for a possible pandemic. For information see: www.pandemicbusinessstoolkit.ca/dchecklist and www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/emu/pub/pan_flu/panflu_ops_workbook.pdf
- ⇒ **Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal disorders:** In an office or learning environment, you can find yourself sitting for long periods of time or doing repetitive activities that can cause strain. The Ontario Ministry of Labour and the Workplace Safety Insurance Board both provide valuable information on how to assess your workplace for ergonomics and how to avoid musculoskeletal disorders. For information see: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/gl_comp_erg.pdf and www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/public/PreventMSD
- ⇒ **Preventing eye strain when using digital devices:** With the increase in the use of digital technology comes an increased risk for eye strain. Mashable shares some helpful tips and advice at: <http://mashable.com/2013/02/19/digital-eye-strain-tips/>
- ⇒ **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety** offers information, online courses, podcasts and more to help you stay healthy and safe in the workplace: www.ccohs.ca
- ⇒ **Ontario Work Smart:** This program from the Ontario Ministry of Labour provides useful information and tips for staying safe at work: www.worksmartontario.gov.on.ca