

Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviours from Stakeholders Policy

PURPOSE

This policy states the Commission’s position about persons who exhibit unacceptable behaviours, which could potentially cause harm to Commission staff. It also explains what those behaviours could look like; the rights of staff in these situations; and the Commission’s expectations of developing ongoing communication lines with those clients.

SCOPE

This Policy sits along-side the Tasmanian State Service Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy, the Commission’s Strategic Plan, Workplace Health & Safety Policy and the Commission’s undertakings to complainants about the way in which complaints will be dealt with. It applies to the Chief Executive Officer, employees, contractors, assessors and authorised persons.

POLICY STATEMENT

Complaints handling is an important aspect of the Commission’s misconduct functions. The manner in which the Commission handles complaints, and the timeliness and appropriateness of the complaint handling process, are important. They influence the public perception of, and confidence in, the Commission and impact upon the public confidence in the integrity of the public sector and the capacity of Agencies to appropriately prevent and deal with misconduct.

Within the Commission, complaints handling involves personal, written and over the phone contact with complainants. The Commission has developed undertakings which are outlined on the website and in documentation provided to complainants detailing its commitment to the manner in which it deals with complaints.

The Commission’s aim to deal appropriately with complainants is coupled with an obligation to provide a secure and safe working environment to Commission staff when performing their duties.

Portfolio:	Personnel-HR		
Title:	Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviours from Stakeholder Policy	Page 1 of 3	

Whilst the Commission provides a high standard of service, it acknowledges that sometimes clients may feel their needs are not met and they act in ways that are challenging and unacceptable. Those behaviours are generally exhibited through aggression and come in many forms, the most common are –

- **Verbal abuse** such as swearing, shouting insults and condescending language.
- **Physical abuse** such as hitting, spitting, kicking, pushing, scratching, throwing objects and sexual assault.
- **Psychological abuse** such as intimidating body language, glaring at people, and threats to inflict harm.
- **Harassment** such as bullying (including cyber), stalking and humiliating behaviour.
- **Damage to property** such as vandalism, arson, throwing items and theft.

Irrespective of the client’s intent, this type of behaviour is abusive and could cause harm to the Commission’s staff.

It is the Commission’s position that aggression from complainants or other stakeholders, in any form, is unacceptable and every effort will be made to ensure that staff are not exposed to such behaviour.

The Commission confirms that:

- staff have the right to refuse to continue to serve a person where they feel threatened or unsafe; and
- appropriate training will be provided to staff who deal with clients so they can respond effectively to potential incidents and as far as possible, prevent them from occurring.

The Commission will implement alternative communication methods and strategies for people who display unacceptable behaviours, so they are dealt with respectfully and fairly.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors

- Provide appropriate support to staff following incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including appropriate debriefing on all occasions and counselling where necessary.
- Ensure staff are aware of the Employee Assistance Program provided via the Department of Justice.
- Consider options in terms of initiating action against the person exhibiting the inappropriate behaviour, taking into account the particular circumstances involved, the needs and views of affected parties, any relevant Commission and/or legal requirements and the most suitable process to follow.
- Ensure that all incidents are correctly and promptly reported, including if the situation requires that operational and/or critical incident stress debriefings be conducted.
- Maintain confidentiality of, and limit access to records of a debrief, to a health professional, the individual concerned, the CEO and Human Resources DoJ.
- Refer Policy Framework for general responsibilities.

Portfolio:	Personnel-HR		
Title:	Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviours from Stakeholder Policy	Page 2 of 3	

Employees

- Take appropriate action to reduce their exposure to inappropriate behaviour.
- Familiarise themselves with, and apply, basic principles for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- Make themselves familiar with security protocols in the workplace.
- Report incidents in line with established procedures.
- Attend debriefings as required by their Director.
- Seek appropriate assistance (if they need support) following an incident of aggression or challenging behaviour.
- Refer Policy Framework for general responsibilities.

A First Aid Officer has specific responsibility (shared with management) for exercising the Crown's duty of care, not only towards staff, but also to members of the public on Commission premises, by providing first aid or summoning aid.

Document Management – Corporate Services

RELATED DOCUMENTS

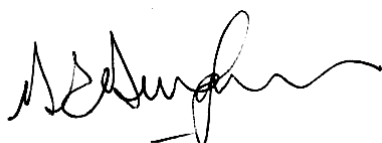
- Commission's Policy Framework
- *State Service Act 2000*
- Tasmanian State Service Occupational Violence and Aggression – Definition and Statement of Principle
- DoJ – Employee Assistance Program

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Release Date	Doc ref:	Reason
1.0	8/11/14	2011/002151	Release
2	11/9/19		New version

APPROVED

Richard Bingham, Chief Executive Officer



11 September 2019

Portfolio:	Personnel-HR		
Title:	Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviours from Stakeholder Policy		Page 3 of 3