

# Policy Template Guide

Sample Policies for Transition Houses,  
Second Stage Housing and Safe Homes

March 2015

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## Overview

This guide offers samples of policy to assist BC Society of Transition Houses' member organizations (Transition Houses, Second Stage Houses and Safe Homes) that are interested in developing agency policy about their programs, personnel, safety and security, health and safety and emergency preparedness. It does not presume to dictate the contents of policy for individual organizations but instead to guide and provide a framework from which to work from.

**Framework:** Agency XYZ is dedicated to working within an anti-oppression framework that recognizes the intersectionality of power/privilege and oppression faced by all women. Policies reflect core beliefs of the work, so there is no anti-oppression policy; instead all policies have been written from a feminist anti-oppressive framework.

### **Policies include the following components:**

- **Rationale:** The rationale represents a statement of reasons/aims/objectives that detail why the policy has been developed and is important to the service. The rationale gives context (political or organizational) to the policy development. (OAITH, 2010)
- **Policy Statement:** The policy statement describes the rules, guidelines and boundaries of a specific issue. This statement should demonstrate the organization's position or decision about how the organization will carry out its activities. (OAITH, 2010)
- **Procedures:** Procedures are the methods to implementing a policy. They are action oriented. Procedures detail who performs the procedure, what steps are performed, when the steps are performed, and how the procedure is performed.
- **Policy created date:** Date policy created.
- **Policy review date:** Date policy up for review.
- **Policy designate / overseen by:** Who is responsible for overseeing the policy, for example, finance person, executive director, and volunteer coordinator.

Note: The following policy templates include only the rationale and the policy statement. Procedures have been left out intentionally as these will vary greatly between agencies.

# Program Policy Templates

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.0 Equality and Diversity

#### Rationale

Working from an anti-oppressive framework Agency XYZ is committed to providing equal and socially inclusive services so that no one faces discrimination based on race, culture, national origin, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender identity, health, social condition, and mental or physical disability or ability. We recognize that we live in a society characterized by individual and systemic discrimination against particular groups, and are sensitive to the fact that oppressed groups and individuals experience marginalization and encounter barriers to full access and participation in services and the community. Agency XYZ strongly values equality and diversity and recognizes that providing equality of access and opportunity means challenging discrimination and removing barriers to accessing our services. We acknowledge the rich diversity of women and promote the benefits of a diverse community to help break down barriers, stigma and the negative attitudes that get created through lack of understanding, misinformation or fear of the 'other'.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ recognizes that under the Canadian Human Rights Act, it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of race, colour, age, national or ethnic origin, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, child-birth and a pardoned criminal conviction. As such, Agency XYZ ensures that our services and programs are accessible to women and their dependents and that our agency will not practice or engage in unlawful discrimination on the basis of culture, spiritual beliefs, gender identity, social condition, physical ability and any prohibited ground of discrimination covered by the Canadian Human Rights Act as listed above. Agency XYZ will provide services that are sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of the women and children it serves and promote cross-cultural understanding and respect for diversity among clients and staff.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.1 Service Eligibility

#### Rationale

Agency XYZ understands and recognizes that violence is rooted in, and enabled by systemic and social oppression that places all people who identify as female, and those dependent on them, at risk of violence. We recognize the multiple and compounding health and social impacts of experiencing abuse and the myriad ways women cope. We also recognize the diversity of women's lives and experiences and that some women are more marginalized and face increased vulnerability to experiencing violence. Agency XYZ's commitment to working from a feminist anti-oppressive framework ensures that we acknowledge the social and structural barriers women encounter when accessing support and the length of time it can take women leaving an abusive situation to safely re-establish herself. Hence Agency XYZ works to reduce such barriers by providing accessible services that seek out and engage with all women in need of safety and support.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is accessible to individuals who identify as women over the age of 19 and their dependent female and male children under the age of 19 who identify as:

- Having past and/or current experiences of abuse from a partner, family member(s), caregiver(s) or members of the community;
- Being at risk of violence from a partner, family member(s), caregiver(s) or members of the community; and/or
- Dealing with ongoing social and/or health impacts resulting from her/his experiences of violence that affect her safety, health and wellbeing.

#### Part A: Dependents

Program services may be accessed by women and their dependent children with disabilities, regardless of age. Where feasible, services are also provided to other family members who are dependent on the woman.

#### **Part B: Women under the age of 19**

Young women under the age of 19 who live independently and are currently experiencing or at risk of violence are eligible to access services with the permission of

their parent or guardian (including the Ministry of Children and Family Development).

**Part C: Inclusivity**

Women will not be denied or provided lesser service on the basis of belonging or being perceived to belong to any category protected by the Canadian Human Rights Act. They will not be denied service on the basis of: ethno-cultural background, race, color, creed, marital or parental status, national or regional origin, religious or spiritual beliefs, ability or disability, health or mental wellness, social context, sexual orientation, gender identity, pre- or post-operative sex-reassignment, health or surgery status, being pregnant or having children, income level, immigration or refugee status or lack thereof, mental health status, substance use status, criminal record or type of employment.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.2 Client Rights

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ respects the rights and dignity of the people it serves. We acknowledge that the women we serve will most likely have experienced a lack of power and personal freedoms in their abusive situations. As such, Agency XYZ is committed to empowering women and providing them with the support, resources and time they need in a safe and non-judgmental, non-coercive environment. Working from an anti-oppression framework, Agency XYZ is committed to providing equal opportunities and socially inclusive services to ensure that no person faces discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that women and their dependents accessing Agency XYZ are aware of their rights and what they are entitled to from the organization, its employees and volunteers.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ recognizes the rights of women and their dependents as defined in current governmental laws and regulations, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *BC Human Rights Act* and *Employment Standards*, and as defined by the service principles or expectations outlined by the relevant funding body/BC Housing.

Agency XYZ provides information on rights and responsibilities to women accessing services in ways that are clear and understandable when women first come in contact with services and annually if the woman accesses services for longer than one year.

Agency XYZ acts in accordance with and recognizes that each individual woman and her dependents accessing programs has the right to:

- Be free from abuse, neglect, retaliation, humiliation, financial or any form of exploitation;
- Be considered for accommodation and housing based on fair policies;
- Safe shelter and support;
- Physical security and well-being;
- Emotional support;
- Assistance during a crisis or to prevent a crisis;

- Have her basic needs, and those of her dependents, met. Agency XYZ will provide, at a minimum:
  - Safe, secure and appropriate sleeping accommodation for women and their dependents;
  - Bedding, towels and personal hygiene products for women and their dependents;
  - Laundry facilities or laundry products and services, either on-site or off-site, at no cost to the woman;
  - Food as specified in the Agreement Summary
- Voluntary participation, which includes her right to:
  - Progress through programs at her own level of comfort, including making her own decisions and choices without coercion or undue influence;
- Informed consent and choice, which includes her right to:
  - Be informed about the policies of Agency XYZ that have a direct impact on her;
  - Access information and opportunities that enable her to explore options and understand the potential implications of any choices;
  - Be central to any planning or decision-making processes that affect her and/or her children;
  - Be informed and included in the decisions made about her and her family;
- Confidentiality and privacy in accordance with the Private Information Protection Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, including the maintenance of confidentiality of records;
- Respect and dignity including to be treated without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, social condition, and physical or mental disability or ability;
- Be informed of her human, legal and civil rights and to speak up and be heard when she feels her rights have been violated;
- Access legal representation when required;
- Make a complaint or appeal a decision.
- Independence from the religious, political and social beliefs or affiliations of the organization's employees and volunteers;

Agency XYZ:

- Is committed to client rights being consistently maintained throughout all programs; and,
- Will redress any violation of client rights immediately.

The Client Rights policy will be posted in high visibility locations throughout Agency XYZ.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.3 Length of Stay

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ recognizes that complex social and structural barriers exist which makes leaving an abusive relationship and re-establishing oneself very challenging. As such, women need to be supported within reasonable timeframes to have the rest and respite they need, to establish their own goals and to be assisted in achieving their goals, safety and wellbeing. Agency XYZ believes it is more important to take the time to successfully support a woman than it is to ensure she departs our facility within 30 days.

#### **Policy Statement**

**Transition House:** Women may receive core services and temporary shelter at Agency XYZ for as long as 30 days, however, stays may be extended to suit individual circumstances. These circumstances may include: [Agency XYZ to identify]

**Safe Home:** Women may receive core services and temporary shelter at Agency XYZ for as long as 10 days but stays may be extended to suit individual circumstances. These circumstances may include: [Agency XYZ to identify]

**Second Stage Housing:** Women may receive core services and short-term housing in independent units at Agency XYZ for as long as 18 months but stays but may be extended to suit individual circumstances. These circumstances may include: [Agency XYZ to identify]

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.4 When a Request for Housing or Shelter cannot be Accommodated

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ recognizes that all women with experiences of violence or at risk of violence are worthy of and have the right to safety and support. Women with experiences of violence face social and structural inequalities that further marginalize them and increase their vulnerability to further violence. As such, Agency XYZ is committed to reducing barriers to create accessible and safe services for all women in need of support.

Agency XYZ acknowledges that women with experiences of violence typically reach out for support when in crisis. When women are unable to access services in this moment they may be reluctant to reach out again when in need. It is therefore imperative in this moment that emotional support is provided, that she feels that you believe her safety and wellbeing are important and that all attempts are made to connect her with appropriate services.

#### **Policy Statement**

When a woman is not able to access the services of Agency XYZ because:

- There is no vacancy at Agency XYZ; or
- She does not fit the eligibility criteria; or
- Limited staffing and limited resources exist.

Agency XYZ will offer an immediate safety assessment and short-term plan as well as emotional support. Every effort will be made to connect her with the services and support she requires (e.g. find temporary shelter in an appropriate service, arrange a hotel voucher with Ministry of Health and Social Development) including facilitated contact between the woman and the agency to which she is being referred, to the extent possible. When appropriate, victim services and outreach will be provided.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.5 Second Stage Housing Tenant Rent Contribution

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ recognizes that poverty, housing insecurity and homelessness have significant impacts on women experiencing violence and that these social and structural inequalities further marginalize women and increase their vulnerability to further violence. For women with children, these factors also make her more vulnerable to child welfare involvement, and/or create additional barriers to her getting her children back in her care. Agency XYZ recognizes the need for ongoing support and advocacy for women who are seeking safety and well-being. As such, Agency XYZ is committed to making Second Stage Housing financially accessible to all women who could benefit from such a program, as well as ensuring that a clear and consistent formula is applied when determining tenant rent contribution within all Second Stage programs.

#### **Policy Statement**

Women residing at Agency XYZ Second Stage Housing must pay a set percentage of their income for rent (currently set at thirty (30) percent). Tenants on income assistance pay the maximum shelter component provided for in the *BC Employment Assistance Act*.

#### **Part A: Tenant Income**

Tenant income and rent will be calculated in accordance with BC Housing's Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program (WTHSP) Rent Scale.

For the purposes of this policy, income is defined as:

- All income from earnings, including commissions and tips;
- All income from all public and private pension plans, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement;
- All income received under the Employment and Assistance Act, the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act, or successor legislation ("Income Assistance");
- Disabled Veteran's Allowance;
- Alimony;

- Child support;
- Workers' compensation benefits; and
- Employment insurance.

For the purposes of this policy, the following are exempt from inclusion in income:

- Child Tax Benefit;
- Capital gains, such as insurance settlements, inheritances, disability awards and sale of effects in the year they are received;
- Up to \$200.00 per month for each person residing in a Second Stage Housing unit receiving income from employment. Earnings of less than \$200.00 can be deducted up to the amount earned;
- The earnings of a person aged eighteen (18) and under;
- Student loans, student loan equalization payments and student grants (Note: non-repayable training allowances, research fellowships or similar grants are not excluded);
- Income of full-time students aged nineteen (19) or over from temporary jobs between school years or semesters to a maximum of four (4) months per calendar year (Note: regular ongoing income is not exempt);
- Living out or travelling allowances;
- Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters ("SAFER") or Rental Assistance Program ("RAP") payments received prior to moving into the Development (Note: Tenants where the WTHSP Rent Scale applies are not eligible for SAFER or RAP);
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) rebates and Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) rebates;
- Taxable benefits;
- Government provided daycare allowance; and
- Payments for foster children, or Child in Home of Relative (CIHR) income under the Employment and Assistance Act.

#### **Part B: Tenants on Income Assistance**

Agency XYZ will set the Tenant Rent Contribution for each Second Stage Housing unit where the Tenant is in receipt of Income Assistance at the maximum shelter component (as may be changed from time to time) provided for in the *Employment and Assistance Act*, the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, or successor legislation, less a fixed allowance for utilities as approved by BC Housing, on a regional basis.

For greater clarity only one allowance for utilities per Second Stage Housing unit can be used in calculation of Tenant Rent Contribution.

- If the tenant is a single person, Tenant Rent Contribution will be based on the Income Assistance shelter component for a single person.
- If the Tenants consist of two (2) related persons (e.g., married or common-law relationships), Tenant Rent Contribution will be based on the Income Assistance shelter component provided for two (2) related persons.
- If the Tenants consist of two (2) unrelated persons, Tenant Rent Contribution will be based on two (2) times the Income Assistance shelter component for single persons.
- If the Tenants consist of more than two (2) persons, Tenant Rent Contribution will be calculated based on the number of Tenants and their relationship as per the above.
- If the maximum shelter component of Income Assistance changes, Tenant Rent Contribution will be changed at the same time after reasonable notice to the tenant.

#### Part C: When Minimum Rent Constitutes Financial Hardship

Agency XYZ will apply a minimum Tenant Rent Contribution based on applicable household size and age of the tenant. BC Housing recognizes that the payment of a minimum rent may, in some situations, constitute an undue financial hardship for a woman. Agency XYZ, acting reasonably, has discretion to waive the minimum rent requirement on an individual basis if the minimum rent requirement would prevent a woman from accessing necessary services.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PROGRAM POLICY

### 1.6 Departure Planning

#### Rationale

Agency XYZ recognizes that all women with experiences of abuse are entitled to safety and support and is committed to offering services that meet women's diverse needs throughout a woman's stay and upon departure. Agency XYZ acknowledges that its services will not meet the needs of all women nor will every woman fit with Agency XYZ's current capacity, programming and policies. As such, in the event of an involuntary departure we believe in the importance of continuing to promote a safe, supportive environment so as to not replicate her experiences of powerlessness, trauma, shame or negative judgments. Furthermore, recognizing that women on average leave an abusive relationship 8 times before successfully leaving, we want to ensure that women continue to see Agency XYZ as a safe, supportive and accessible service that they can reach out to when needed.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is committed to ensuring that when service is terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, that employees follow a clear and respectful process.

A departure may occur when a woman:

- Achieves her goals and is ready to discontinue service;
- No longer wants to stay at Agency XYZ and receive service;
- Refuses to adhere to the policies and procedures of Agency XYZ;
- Has needs that exceed the resources and expertise of Agency XYZ.

#### Part A: When a Woman is Leaving Agency XYZ Voluntarily

When a woman is leaving Agency XYZ, employees should check with the woman leaving to see what resources and supports she has in place and provide her with assistance linking to additional resources and safety planning if she desires.

#### **Part B: When a Woman is Leaving Agency XYZ Involuntarily**

In the event that a woman is asked to leave Agency XYZ, the manager must sign off on the decision. Employees should be honest with the woman about why she is being asked to leave and remain compassionate and non-judgmental in their approach.

Every effort should be made by the employee(s) to assist the women in safety planning and linking her to other appropriate services and making alternate arrangements prior to her leaving Agency XYZ. If appropriate (and where services exist), Agency XYZ can offer outreach and/or victims services to the woman once departed.

If employees are concerned that the woman being asked to leave involuntarily may respond aggressively or be abusive and that staff may be the target of that aggression, staff should ensure that they are not alone during the conversation.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

# Personnel Policy Templates

## PERSONNEL POLICY

### 2.0 Recruitment and Selection

#### Rationale

As an Agency that serves a diverse population of women, Agency XYZ welcomes and values diversity amongst its staff and seeks to ensure that all candidates for employment are treated fairly, and that selection is based solely upon the individual merits of candidates and on selection criteria relevant to the post. Given the nature of the work and the vulnerability and marginalization of the women we serve, our agency uses several tools in its selection process, including interviews, vulnerable sector criminal records check, and references, to help us ensure that potential staff have the skills and sensitivity to support women and their dependents in a safe, supportive, non-abusive, non-coercive and non-judgmental manner.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is committed to a hiring process that ensures equal opportunity for potential candidates and a fair and consistent selection process that is consistent with employment legislation and good practice and free from discriminatory practices.

Candidate selection is based upon the assessment of education, training, experience, required certification, personal suitability, eligibility to work in Canada, eligibility for bonding, absence of a job-related criminal record, positive reference checks, and other factors considered relevant by Agency XYZ and in compliance with the collective agreement where applicable.

At no time will Agency XYZ discriminate against any applicant on the basis of race, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, or conviction unrelated to employment, except where such discrimination constitutes a bona fide occupational requirement.

Prior to making a final selection, Agency XYZ will conduct a minimum of three (3) reference checks and a criminal record check on all external applicants.

**Part A: Criminal Record Check**

Agency XYZ will ensure that all potential employees and volunteers working with children and/or vulnerable adults, or any employee as required by contract, shall have completed a vulnerable sector criminal record check according to the requirements of the Criminal Records Review Act (RSBC1996) Chapter 86, prior to the commencement of employment and [Agency XYZ define frequency of subsequent criminal record checks e.g. every five years] thereafter. Any criminal record result will be reviewed by our agency using our Safety and Security policy on criminal records checks. (See Safety and Security policy 3.1).

**Part B: References**

Agency XYZ requires that candidates provide official documentation of all employment requirements and three references which include the most recent employer. In the event that the most recent employer is not available or appropriate, the candidate will be asked to provide alternate references. In the event that an employee of Agency XYZ is transferring to a different position within the agency, further references will be foregone as they were provided to the Agency at the time of initial hire.

References will be checked and the information obtained will be used by the selection committee to assess suitability for the position.

Employment requirements and credentials will be verified at the source and if there is a question of validity, the Executive Director or appropriate Program Director will consult with the candidate and failing satisfactory verification will bring this to the attention of the selection committee.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PERSONNEL POLICY

### 2.1 Remuneration

#### Rationale

Agency XYZ recognizes the importance of transparency and clarity in regards to staff remuneration. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff have a clear and consistent understanding of the compensation they receive while employed by Agency XYZ.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is committed to ensuring that all staff are compensated appropriately and that benefits are competitive with other non-profit organizations with similar responsibilities.

#### Part A: Wages

Upon hiring, Agency XYZ will provide successful candidates with a letter of appointment, specifying the details of their remuneration.

Remuneration will be dispensed [Agency XYZ to fill out how often payments are made e.g. biweekly] through either of the following:

- By cheque, draft or money order, payable on demand, drawn on a savings institution; or
- By deposit to the credit of an employee's account in a savings institution, when authorized by the employee in writing.

A comprehensive statement detailing all payments, allowances and deductions shall be provided for each pay period.

Agency XYZ will conduct annual salary reviews in conjunction with annual performance evaluations.

The Board of Directors must approve all adjustments and compensation for the Executive Director. The Executive Director must approve all adjustments and compensation for program managers. Program managers, in consultation with the

Executive Director must approve all adjustments and compensation for service staff, including the program coordinators.

**Part B: Health and Welfare Benefits**

As determined by the Collective Agreement and Contract funding, Agency XYZ will provide [Agency XYZ to define staff eligible for benefits] employed for at minimum [Agency XYZ to define minimum number of hours/week] with health and welfare benefits. Health and Welfare Benefits will include:

- [Agency XYZ to define details of health and welfare benefits e.g. BC Medical Service Plan, Dental Plan, Extended health plan]

Staff may opt out of participating in any health and welfare benefits by written request to the [Agency XYZ to define who request needs to be made to e.g. finance manager].

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PERSONNEL POLICY

### 2.2 Orientation and Training

#### **Rationale**

Working with women and their dependents who have experiences of abuse requires sensitivity and compassion as well as concrete skills, such as crisis intervention and non-violent conflict resolution. It is essential that staff are competent and comfortable in all areas of their job responsibilities. As such, Agency XYZ ensures employees are qualified to fulfill their job responsibilities and to promote awareness and sensitivity to the diverse women they serve. The aim of this policy is to ensure that employees are sufficiently oriented to Agency XYZ and trained to meet the needs of women with experiences of abuse.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ is committed to ensuring that all staff have the appropriate skills, training, qualifications and knowledge for the services that they perform. Within an employee's first [Agency XYZ to define time frame e.g. 2 weeks] of employment, Agency XYZ will provide all new employees with an orientation:

- To Agency XYZ's written policies and procedures, including program, personnel, health and safety, safety and security and emergency procedures;
- To the agency, including pertinent details of the work environment, its layout, and available facilities; and
- And training in crisis intervention, de-escalation training and nonviolent conflict resolution;

Additional training will be provided as appropriate and necessary. Training that an employee is directed to take by her immediate supervisor or that is required by Agency XYZ (e.g. First Aid) is paid for by the Agency.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PERSONNEL POLICY

### 2.3 Standards of Conduct Policy

#### Rationale

Agency XYZ recognizes that employees may confront challenging ethical demands and dilemmas in their work. The aim of this policy is to ensure employees of Agency XYZ are well informed about the standards of conduct expected of them. As such the Standards of Conduct policy is essential to the maintenance of a healthy and safe environment, the ethical integrity and accountability and the preservation of Agency XYZ's credibility with the public and the women we serve.

#### Policy Statement

All employees and volunteers of Agency XYZ shall maintain an appropriate and professional relationship with present or former clients, volunteers and colleagues, consistent with a professional code of ethics and Agency XYZ policies.

All employees and volunteers should always use good judgement and conduct themselves in a professional manner appropriate to a community social service environment. All employees and volunteers of Agency XYZ are prohibited from:

- Behaving in an abusive manner to clients. This includes verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse/harassment and emotional abuse;
- Discriminatory and/or disrespectful behaviour towards clients or colleagues;
- Initiating or participating in intimate or otherwise nonprofessional relationship with clients or behaving in a manner that is perceived to be sexual in character, either during or outside of work hours;
- Fraternizing or having personal relationships with clients outside of work;
- Visiting in clients' rooms, homes, or apartments unless for official business reasons;
- Lending or giving money to clients or to each other;
- Providing services to clients outside of work e.g. child care;
- Driving clients in their own or the client's car, except in cases where it is required as part of your work;
- [Agency XYZ to add any additional codes of conduct].

Compliance with the Standards of Conduct policy is a condition of employment. Violation of this policy will be seen as a matter of serious consequence and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## PERSONNEL POLICY

### 2.4 Conflict of Interest Policy<sup>1</sup>

#### **Rationale**

Maintaining the best interests of the women and their dependents whom we serve is the primary professional obligation of Agency XYZ. Non-profits such as Agency XYZ have a role in protecting the public interest. Any erosion in public confidence and the integrity and accountability of Agency XYZ is particularly harmful. It is crucial that all employee professional, personal, and occupational interests do not affect their judgment, competence or relationships with those they serve or with whom they do business and that all activities and responsibilities are conducted in an atmosphere that is free of actual or apparent conflicts of interest.

The aim of this policy is to ensure all employees and volunteers are well informed of what constitutes a conflict of interest, raise awareness, and encourage disclosure and discussion of anything that may be a conflict during the course of their employment with the goal of protecting the integrity of Agency XYZ, the decision-making process and to enable the public and women we serve to have confidence in the integrity, intentions and actions of the management, employees, board members and volunteers.

#### **Policy Statement**

Management, employees, volunteers and Board members of Agency XYZ are expected to act in the best interests of Agency XYZ and its clients and adhere to the highest standards of personal and professional integrity.

Management, employees, volunteers and Board members must keep their role as private citizens separate and distinct from their responsibilities associated with Agency XYZ. Personal gain shall not conflict with duty to Agency XYZ.

If a potential conflict exists because of an employee's personal related interest in a matter, the employee shall advise their supervisor immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy includes Board Members, however BCSTH recommends that a version of this policy exists in Board policies also.

An employee shall be considered to have potential conflict of interest:

- Where an employee or volunteer's private affairs or financial interests are in conflict with his/her work duties, responsibilities and obligations, or may result in a public perception that a conflict exists;
- Which could impair the employee or volunteer's ability to act in the public interest;
- Where an employee or volunteer's actions would compromise or undermine the trust which the public places in the organization;

Examples include acceptance of personal gifts beyond moderate courtesy, and/or written or public statements in conflict with Agency XYZ. No employee shall accept compensation or rewards from individuals or agencies because of the position they occupy in Agency XYZ. Money offered should be firmly but kindly refused. Occasionally minor gifts can be accepted with the knowledge of [Agency XYZ to define e.g. the Executive Director or Program Manager]. No employee shall sell goods or services to a client(s) nor accept money or loans from a client(s).

Employees should not place themselves in a situation where they are under obligation to any person who might benefit from or seek to gain special consideration or favour. The honesty and impartiality of employees must be above suspicion.

Employees may engage in remunerative employment with another employer, carry on a business, or receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position provided that:

- It does not interfere with the performance of their duties as a staff member;
- It does not bring Agency XYZ into disrepute;
- It is not performed in such a way as to appear to be an official act or to represent the organization's opinion or policy;
- It does not involve the use of Agency XYZ's premises, services, equipment or supplies to which the staff member has access by virtue of their employment.

This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable standards of practice outlined by the various accreditation and registration boards that govern our professions in regards to conflicts of interest.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

# Safety and Security Policy Templates

## SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY

### 3.0 General Safety and Security

#### Rationale

It is the duty of Agency XYZ to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practical, that all employees, volunteers and the women and their dependents they serve are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Agency XYZ believes that safety and the prevention of accidents, injury or loss is essential to the efficient operation Agency XYZ. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff are aware of the safety and security policies and protocols which are to be employed to promote the personal health and safety of employees, volunteers and the women and their dependents they serve.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all women and their dependents accessing its services and programs. This includes, but is not limited to personal safety, providing a safe and secure place to store belongings, cleanliness and creating a welcoming atmosphere. Agency XYZ will ensure that systems, policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly to promote the highest level of safety and security. All staff, clients and visitors will be oriented on the implementation of applicable safety and security policies and procedures.

Agency XYZ is committed to the following protocols to promote the safety and security of clients, visitors, staff and volunteers.

- Agency XYZ to include statements about:
  - Security/alarm systems
  - Security checks (e.g. frequency)
  - Working alone policy and procedure
  - Answering of phones
  - Staffing (e.g. 24 hours a day)

- Security of staff office
- Front door security (e.g. Who opens door, Procedures if person unidentified)
- Staff criminal record checks(See Safety and Security policy 3.1)
- Emergency procedures (See Emergency Preparedness Policies 5.0 – 5.6)
- Security and confidentiality of client information

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY

### 3.1 Criminal Record Checks

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to secure the health and safety of employees, volunteers and the women and their dependents they serve. Criminal records checks of all potential employees, volunteers and practicum students promotes a safe environment for employees and for the women and their dependents served by Agency XYZ.

Furthermore, Agency XYZ is committed to a hiring process that ensures equal opportunity for potential candidates and a fair and consistent selection process that is consistent with employment legislation and good practice and free from discriminatory practices. The aim of this policy is then two-fold: To promote the safety of employees, volunteers and the women and their dependents served by Agency XYZ; and, to provide clarity in regards to hiring decisions where a criminal record exists. This written policy and procedures as to how Agency XYZ will proceed with criminal record checks and deal with the results, will eliminate confusion or suspicion of unfair treatment or discrimination when selecting and hiring.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all women and children accessing its services and programs and ensures that all potential employees, volunteers and practicum students working with children and/or vulnerable adults, or any employee as required by contract, shall have completed a vulnerable sector criminal record check according to the requirements of the Criminal Records Review Act (RSBC1996) Chapter 86, prior to the commencement of employment and [Agency XYZ to define frequency of subsequent criminal record checks e.g. every five years] thereafter.

Agency XYZ must ensure that all potential employees, volunteers and practicum students working with children and/or vulnerable adults, or any employee as required by contract, are aware that appointment to the position is dependent upon a criminal record check. When the results of the criminal record check indicate that there is a criminal record that is relevant to the position applied for, a review must take place with respect to the applicant's suitability for appointment.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY

### 3.2 Client Valuables and Personal Effects

#### Rationale

As a communal living environment, Agency XYZ recognizes the potential for loss and/or theft of valuables and belongings. To safeguard against such occurrences and the potential conflict that may result, Agency XYZ will provide women and their dependents with a safe and secure place to store their belongings.

Agency XYZ also recognizes that the lives of women with experiences of abuse can be chaotic and that women may leave Agency XYZ quickly, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This can result in women and their dependents leaving valuables or personal effects at Agency XYZ. The aims of this policy are to: promote the safe keeping of women's and their dependents valuables; to relieve Agency XYZ of responsibility when the loss, damage or destruction of women's belongings, or those of their dependents, occurs while residing at Agency XYZ; and to clarify procedure when valuables or personal effects are left at Agency XYZ after departure.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is committed to fostering a safe and secure environment for women, their dependents and their belongings, however Agency XYZ is not responsible for the loss, damage or destruction of women's belongings, or those of their dependents, while they are residing in Agency XYZ.

#### **Part A: Security of Client Valuables and Personal Effects**

Agency XYZ will provide all women with a safe and secure place (e.g. locker) to store their belongings.

#### **Part B: Unclaimed Client Valuables and Personal Effects**

When women (and/or their dependents) leave valuables or personal effects at Agency XYZ after departure, reasonable attempts will be made to contact her. If after 30 days no contact has been made, and/or no attempts have been made on behalf of the woman to retrieve her belongings, they will be stored for (Agency XYZ to define timeframe); disposed of; or donated to. Agency XYZ will take into consideration such factors as the value of the item(s), ethical considerations, conflicts of interest and costs associated with storage, disposal or donation.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY

### 3.3 Medication Management Policy

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ recognizes that women with experiences of abuse often have multiple and compounding mental, emotional and physical health impacts. The prescription and over-prescribing of medications by physicians for women's symptoms of abuse means that many women accessing the services of Agency XYZ will be taking prescription medications. The use of substances, including prescription and over the counter medications often enables women to cope with impacts of their experiences of abuse. Recognizing this, Agency XYZ provides women with a safe and secure place to store their medications. The medications are the property of the woman and therefore the administration of the medication is the responsibility of the woman. Furthermore, the BC Pharmacists, Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act prohibits anyone who is not licensed as a pharmacist from dispensing a "limited access drug." The aim of this policy is to ensure that women have a safe place to store their medications and are empowered and have control over their medications while ensuring that they are safely out of reach of other residents of Agency XYZ.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ acknowledges a woman's right to be able to store and dispense her own medication(s). Agency XYZ will provide women with a safe and secure place (e.g. lock box) to store their medications. Medications should only be made available to the woman to whom they are prescribed and be kept out of reach of children.

If Agency XYZ staff become concerned that a woman is currently, or at risk of, overmedicating or self-harm, staff will have a discussion with the woman about their concerns and offer to provide assistance with her prescription medication dosages.

**Procedures:**<sup>2</sup>  
**Policy created date:**  
**Policy review date:**  
**Policy designate / overseen by:**

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<sup>2</sup> Include client and staff guidelines for self-administration of medication (e.g. the labeling, storage and access of medications; procedures when a woman has vials of multiple mixed pills; procedures for talking with and supporting a woman’s autonomy and health if staff notice a woman is not taking her medication or is taking too much or too little of her medication).

# Health and Safety Policy Templates

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 4.0 Occupational Health and Safety

#### Rationale

Agency XYZ recognizes that all employees are entitled to work in a healthy and safe environment and have the right to be informed of any hazards in the workplace. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all employees are aware of their obligation to follow Agency XYZ guidelines and safe work procedures and of the training they are entitled to to promote personal safety, the safety of colleagues and of the women and children accessing Agency XYZ services and programs.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ is committed to the health, safety and wellness of its employees and to providing a healthy and safe environment that minimizes the risk of workplace injuries, accidents and illness. Agency XYZ is responsible for providing employees with adequate instruction and training in health and safety and for addressing unsafe situations in a timely, effective manner. All employees are required to know and follow Agency XYZ guidelines and safe work procedures.

All Health and Safety equipment will be regularly maintained and supplies replenished as required.

#### **Part A: Hazardous Materials**

Agency XYZ will ensure that all employees are trained in Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHIMS) and provided education for any hazardous materials they may come in contact with while carrying out their work responsibilities.

#### Part B: Standard First Aid and CPR

[Where funded for Transition Houses] Agency XYZ will ensure that one staff member on duty is certified in Standard First Aid and the appropriate Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) level of training (CPR Level B is required for agencies serving children) at all times. Where it is applicable to an employee's position, Agency XYZ is responsible for providing such employee with First Aid and CPR training.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 4.1 Client Health and Wellbeing

#### **Rationale**

Women with experiences of abuse have often lived in an unsafe environment where they often had little control over their environment and the risks within it. Agency XYZ believes that the safety and security of women and children accessing its services is paramount. The aim of this policy is to ensure employees are aware of their duty to promoting a healthy and safe emotional and physical environment and addressing unsafe situations in a timely effective manner.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ is committed to the health, safety and wellness of all women and their dependents accessing its services and programs and to providing a healthy and safe environment that minimizes the risk of injuries, accidents and illness. Management and employees of Agency XYZ are responsible for addressing unsafe situations in a timely and effective manner.

#### **When services are delivered in a development over which Agency XYZ does not have full control**

When services are delivered in a development over which the society does not have full control (e.g. hotel room), management and employees of Agency XYZ will do their due diligence in promoting a healthy and safe environment. This includes being familiar with the health and safety policies of the development and ensuring women are oriented to them (e.g. fire regulations and procedures, guest or client privacy protections and confidentiality policies).

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 4.2 Food Handling

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ is accountable for the safe handling and preparation of food and can fulfill this responsibility by conforming to the legislated regulations and best practice guidelines for food safety.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ will ensure that all food handling, preparation, storage and serving is in accordance with the *Food Premises Regulation* of the *Health Act* (or successor legislation). In the event that this legislation does not apply, Agency XYZ will follow accepted best practice guidelines for food safety.

Agency XYZ will ensure that all individuals handling food have the level of training on food safety, nutritional standards and food handling that is required by provincial regulations. Staff will follow the procedures for safe handling and preparation of food. Agency XYZ will ensure women have access to information about food safety (e.g. hanging posters in kitchen areas, discussing food safety at resident meetings).

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 4.3 Building Maintenance

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of employees and the women and their dependents it serves at all times. The maintenance of buildings is important not only for the women, children, employees and volunteers, but relates to every person who enters the Agency XYZ.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ will take all necessary steps to keep the property and premises well maintained, clean, safe and free from hazards. It will maintain the development's mechanical systems in a working order sufficient to provide hot water, heating and ventilation. Agency XYZ complies with all legal requirements and acts promptly when repairs are necessary.

Agency XYZ will ensure that there is a financial contingency plan built into their financial policies, that includes funds being put aside annually and built up for regular maintenance and unexpected repairs.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 4.4 Pest Control, Inspection and Treatment Plan

#### **Rationale**

A pest infestation has implications for an entire building, the employees and the women and their dependents residing in the building. Agency XYZ recognizes the importance of ensuring that employees and women are aware of the pest control policy and are active in maintaining a healthy and pest free environment. It also recognizes the importance that any communication; treatment and follow up occurs in a timely manner and in accordance with the policy and procedures.

#### **Policy Statement**

Agency XYZ is committed to maintaining a healthy and pest free environment. Inspections will occur [Agency XYZ to define how frequently]. In the event that pests are reported (e.g. lice, scabies, bed bugs) effective and efficient control procedures and treatment plan will be initiated as promptly as possible.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 4.5 Fire Regulations

#### Rationale

Agency XYZ believes that the safety of employees and the women and their dependents that they serve is paramount. The aim of this policy is to ensure that employees and all individuals accessing services are aware of the systems, policies and procedures related to fire safety and thus promote a high level of safety.

#### Policy Statement

Agency XYZ endeavors to protect all persons on its premises from the hazards of fire and is committed to ensuring that applicable fire protection codes and internal standards are respected. Specifically, Agency XYZ is committed to ensuring:

1. That in case of fire adequate means of exit exist for all persons on the premises;
2. All doorways and fire exits are correctly maintained, kept free of obstructions and available for safe and effective use at all times;
3. That all fire detection and annunciation equipment required to give warning in the event of a fire is properly installed and maintained;
4. That all equipment for containing or fighting fire (e.g. fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers) comply with all applicable codes and standard and are maintained in proper working order;
5. That appropriate fire safety training is developed and provided to all staff, including knowledge of fire safety practices and evacuation policy and procedures;
6. That all premises and fire protection devices receive a fire safety inspection at reasonable intervals that are reflective of the BC Fire Code regulations<sup>3</sup>.
  - a. Agency XYZ will;

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<sup>3</sup> The B.C. Fire Code Regulations require that fire protection devices be maintained in operating condition in accordance with Part 6 & 7 of the BC Fire Code <http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/testing/wlap/firecode.htm>. In most cases the Fire Code does not specify in detail the necessary inspection, maintenance, and testing procedures; instead, it references standards such as those developed by the National Fire Protection Association, Canadian Standards Association, and Underwriters Laboratories of Canada.

- i. Retain records on site pertaining to the annual inspection, testing and maintenance of fire protection systems including smoke alarms, and the review of the Fire Safety Plan;
  - ii. Post the annual Fire Inspection Certificate (including any remedial action plans if necessary).
7. That a Fire Safety Plan is maintained that includes policies and procedures for
  - a. Control of combustibles around the perimeter of buildings;
  - b. Protection of emergency equipment; and
  - c. Storage and housekeeping.
8. That all staff and volunteers are aware of and comply with this policy;
9. That the Fire Safety Plan is posted and publicized to clients and included in their orientation, including knowledge of location of fire exits, and requests to help keep all exits clear of obstructions;

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

# Emergency Preparedness Policy Templates

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POLICY

### 5.0 Emergency Response

#### **Rationale**

Agency XYZ believes that the protection and safety of employees and the women and children it serves is of paramount concern. It is also committed to protecting the property and environment of Agency XYZ. The aim of the Emergency Preparedness policies is to provide a framework for employees to respond effectively to an emergency situation and thereby enhancing the personal safety and the safety and security of colleagues and the women and their dependents residing at Agency XYZ.

#### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Agency XYZ to reasonably protect the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers through the development and implementation of emergency response plans that are in accordance with the applicable local, provincial and federal regulations. All employees will be oriented to and knowledgeable about the various emergency response plans. In the event of a disaster (i.e. fire, earthquake, natural disaster, flood, utility failure, pandemic), staff is to respond immediately and ensure client and personal safety to the best of their ability.

Emergency supplies are readily available and maintained at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ. Employees are orientated to the location and use of emergency supplies at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ.

Agency XYZ will maintain current at least two copies of a site specific Emergency Preparedness Manual (one in the emergency supply container; one in the program office). Each manual will include the following information, but is not limited to:

- Map of site
- Emergency Contact Information
- General Emergency Procedures

- Evacuation Procedures
- Fire Safety Plan
- Utility Failure Procedures
- Earthquake Procedures
- Flood Procedures
- Critical Incident Reporting Procedures
- Emergency Supplies Lists

## **5.1 Fire**

It is the policy of Agency XYZ to reasonably protect the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers. All staff are required to be familiar with the Fire Safety Plan. In the event of a fire, staff is to respond immediately and follow the procedures outlined in the Fire Safety Plan and ensure client and personal safety to the best of their ability. Emergency supplies are readily available and maintained at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ. Employees are orientated to the location and use of emergency supplies at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ.

## **5.2 Flood**

It is the policy of Agency XYZ to reasonably protect the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers. All staff are oriented to and familiar with the flood disaster preparedness and evacuation plans. In the event of a flood, employees will implement the established plan of action to protect clients, volunteers and staff from the potential effects of a flood.

Emergency supplies are readily available and maintained at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ to ensure essential services are maintained in the event of a flood. Employees are orientated to the location and use of emergency supplies at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ.

## **5.3 Utility Failure**

It is the policy of Agency XYZ to reasonably protect the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers. All staff are oriented to and familiar with the utility failure procedures. In the event of utility failure such as power outage, gas leak, gas odour, water leak or flooding, water being turned off by the city, water main failure, heat loss

or electrical outage, employees will implement the established plan of action to protect clients, volunteers and staff from the potential effects of an interruption in utility services.

Emergency supplies are readily available and maintained at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ to ensure essential services are maintained in the event of a utility failure. Employees are orientated to the location and use of emergency supplies at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ.

#### **5.4 Earthquake**

It is the policy of Agency XYZ to reasonably protect the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers. All staff are oriented to and familiar with the Earthquake Preparedness Plan. In the event of an earthquake, employees will implement the established plan of action to protect clients, volunteers and staff from the potential effects of an earthquake.

Emergency supplies are readily available and maintained at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ to ensure essential services are maintained in the event of a utility failure. Employees are orientated to the location and use of emergency supplies at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ. The supplies should be sufficient enough to last for approximately 72 hours.

#### **5.5 Pandemic**

It is the policy of Agency XYZ to reasonably protect the health and safety of clients, employees and volunteers. All staff are oriented to and familiar with the Pandemic procedures. In the event of a pandemic, employees will implement the established plan of action to minimize risk and protect clients, volunteers and staff from its potential effects. Employees of Agency XYZ will have clearly defined procedures to continue to meet client needs to the best of their ability.

Emergency supplies are readily available and maintained at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ to ensure essential services are maintained in the event of a pandemic. Employees are orientated to the location and use of emergency supplies at all sites owned, leased or operated by Agency XYZ.

## 5.6 Labour Dispute

Agency XYZ is committed to providing essential services at all times. In the event of a labour dispute, every effort will be made to continue to provide essential services to women and their children. If in the event of a strike or lockout, a situation of an emergency nature arises, the Employer and the Union will agree to provide services of an emergency nature.

**Procedures:**

**Policy created date:**

**Policy review date:**

**Policy designate / overseen by:**

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