



### **Vancouver Tool Library Safer Spaces Policy Jan 25, 2022**

This policy is a living document. We will update it periodically to include changes as they come up while we learn and grow as a coop community. We will formally review and update it at least once per year via Board review. We welcome feedback and input from our community at any time. Our Board of Directors commits to reflecting on feedback and incorporating responsive changes to ensure the safety of all people involved with our library and programs.

The VTL operates programs and events in various venues, and this policy applies to all our programs and events, regardless of where they take place. The safety of our staff, volunteers, members, facilitators, and program participants is of the highest importance to us. We strive to create an inclusive environment for people of every gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, ethnicity, ability or disability, socioeconomic standing, body size, or physical appearance.

We encourage everyone within the VTL community to join us in this effort. We will not tolerate any forms of discrimination, oppression or harassment, including but not limited to: sexism; racism; white supremacy; homophobia; xenophobia; transphobia; classism; ableism; fat phobia or ageism.

If you have questions about what these terms mean, or how we apply this philosophy in our shop, please contact our General Manager at [manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com](mailto:manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com). We welcome questions, comments, or feedback on this policy at any time.

#### **Profiling**

Profiling based on assumptions or stereotypes is a form of harm that we do not tolerate in our shop. We recognize that people of colour, femme presenting people, queer people, people with disabilities, and people of other equity seeking communities are often excluded from organizations that serve makers and tool users, such as the VTL. We actively seek to change this, and we have identified profiling as a micro-aggression that impedes our goals and values and causes harm to the people in our community.

In order to uphold this policy, we ask our community to check their assumptions about who knows about tools, woodworking, construction, leather-working, and other projects shop users might engage in. Think critically about whether you are applying stereotypes like the idea that women or non-binary folks don't know very much about tools, or whether you are making assumptions about someone's skills based on how you perceive their physical abilities. Acknowledge that white supremacy is deeply ingrained in settler culture and think critically about how that might impact your own ideas about others.

Profiling includes sexism, racism, xenophobia, white supremacy, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, classism, fat-phobia and ageism. It is a form of harassment.

#### **Harassment**

Harassment includes offensive verbal comments or attitudes related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability or disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic standing; deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of the event, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention. Profiling is also considered a form of harassment.

People asked to stop any harassing behaviour are expected to comply immediately.

### **What to do about Harassment**

The VTL is based on cooperative values, and we expect all members of our community to uphold the expectations outlined in this policy. If you see someone being harassed, consider what you can do to de-escalate the situation and help ensure that person's safety. All members have the authority to refer to this policy and ask anyone committing harassment to stop the harassment immediately. We also invite feedback and reports to our General Manager, at [manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com](mailto:manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com), or anonymously through the following QR code:



### **Violence**

Profiling and harassment are both forms of violence and will be treated as such when witnessed by or reported to VTL staff, volunteers, or facilitators, including through the anonymous QR code.

Our volunteers and staff will ask anyone committing verbal violence to leave the shop or workspace immediately.

If there is a threat of physical violence, it may be necessary to call the police. The VTL recognizes that policing is not an equitable service and can present an increased risk of danger and violence, particularly for Black and Indigenous people. We ask our volunteers, staff, and community to consider these alternatives to calling the police:

1. De-escalate the situation if you feel comfortable. Remain calm and say whatever seems necessary to make the aggressor leave the shop or workspace. Lock the door behind them and check on anyone remaining in the shop. Ensure they are safe to leave. Offer to call a friend or family member to escort them if necessary.
2. Don't feel obligated to defend property. If someone attempts to steal property or money from the shop, comply and report back to our general manager, at [manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com](mailto:manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com).
  - a. If your personal property is stolen and you need to file a police report, please consider going to the police station instead of bringing police into the VTL.
3. Call or text VictimLink at 1-800-563-0808 for immediate support and to be connected with resources for people experiencing mental health episodes.
4. In case of sexual violence, call the 24-hour WAWAW crisis and information line at 604-255-6344.

5. Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society offers a space where Indigenous community members can feel comfortable reporting criminal activity including threats to their safety. VACPCS can be reached at 604-678-3790 or [info@vacpc.org](mailto:info@vacpc.org).

### **How the VTL will respond to profiling, harassment, and other forms of violence**

Any incident of violence that is witnessed by or reported to VTL staff, volunteers, facilitators, or reported through the anonymous QR code will be investigated by the VTL Board.

Steps will be taken to support anyone who experienced or witnessed the violence, including harassment and profiling.

After investigating, the VTL Board will take action, with the full consent and input of anyone impacted by the violence, to address the incident with the person who committed it whenever possible. Board action will be proportionate to the level of aggression found to have occurred, and may include:

- Notifying the aggressor that they have breached our Safer Spaces Policy and explaining that a further breach will result in expulsion from membership or VTL events.
- Expelling the aggressor from VTL membership and events.
- If the aggressor is a volunteer, facilitator, staff, or board member, notifying them that they have breached our Safer Spaces Policy and requiring that they take relevant training to better understand the harm they have caused. Explaining that a further breach will result in expulsion from their position at the VTL.
- If a crime has been committed, including sexual violence or hate crimes, our Board and General Manager will support anyone directly impacted in reporting to police or community policing services if they choose to do so.

### **Our Commitment**

Our staff and volunteers commit to uphold the vision, mission and values of the VTL in all of our activities, by providing a safer space for all members of our community. We commit to upholding the prevention of profiling, harassment, and other violence as outlined in this policy. We welcome feedback on our efforts to create a safer space. All feedback will be reviewed, valued, and incorporated into our activities and applicable policies.

Please feel free to contact any of the following people with questions, comments, or feedback on this policy:

General Manager, Laine Hughes at [manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com](mailto:manager@vancouvertoolibrary.com)

President, Board of Directors, Silas Woodsmith at [president@vancouvertoolibrary.com](mailto:president@vancouvertoolibrary.com)

Vice President, Board of Directors, Liza Hughes at [vicepresident@vancouvertoolibrary.com](mailto:vicepresident@vancouvertoolibrary.com)



Anonymously, through our online form at: <https://forms.gle/GiWndKKW1eGKLbRt6>