

DIRECTIVE

Directive No.: 2024-01
Date Issued: April 24, 2024

Authority

This Directive is issued under the authority of the General Manager of Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS).

Subject

Amendments to the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#) (TSS) and [Toronto 24-hour Respite Standards](#) (TRS) to support the implementation and rollout of the Behavioural Risk Alert Safety System (BRASS).

Background

TSSS is committed to shelter safety and the prevention of workplace violence across the shelter system. We recognize the deep impact that situations of workplace violence have on everyone involved, including workers, clients, and visitors. In accordance with TSSS' Council-approved [Homelessness Solutions Service Plan](#), we are committed to regularly updating the Toronto Shelter Standards and 24-Hour Respite Site Standards to strengthen health and safety provisions. As part of this work, we are launching the Behavioural Risk Alert Safety System in the Shelter Management Information System (SMIS).

As the Service System Manager of the City's shelter system and Service Administrator of SMIS, TSSS is launching BRASS to enhance workplace safety for all shelter providers and meet the City's legislative requirement to provide information to its workers related to a risk of workplace violence under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#). BRASS will allow for increased information sharing across programs using SMIS about clients with a history of violent behaviour.

When clients are involved in incidents of [workplace violence](#), meaning their behaviour resulted in physical injury or threatened physical injury, a Behavioural Risk Alert will appear on their SMIS record following the completion of an incident report in the SMIS Incident Report module. Incidents that result in workplace violence will require review and approval by a supervisor that has SMIS supervisor role access per [SMIS Role Access Guide](#). A Behavioural Risk Alert is automatically generated when a documented incident of workplace violence is approved and completed in SMIS by a supervisor.

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When admitting a client with a Behavioural Risk Alert, providers will be prompted to contact TSSS' System Oversight Duty Office to receive necessary information about the client's past violent behaviour to help protect workers from risks of physical injury. Shelter providers may use this information to create a proactive safety and case plan for the client. **The presence of a Behavioural Risk Alert does not provide grounds for providers to deny access or services to clients.**

Directive or Required Action

Effective immediately, this Directive amends TSS standards 8.1 Intake/Assessment, 8.3 Admissions, 8.4 Shelter orientation, 12.5.2 Incident Report, 12.6.2 Collection of Client Information; and TRS standards 6.1 Intake and Assessment, 6.3 Admissions, 10.3.2 Incident Reporting, and 10.4.2 Collection of Client Information to align with rollout of the Behavioural Risk Alert Safety System.

Section 8.1 Intake / Assessment – TSS

(m) ***new*** The presence of a Behavioural Risk Alert does not provide grounds for shelter providers to deny access or services to clients.

Section 8.3 Admissions – TSS

(q) ***new*** The presence of a Behavioural Risk Alert does not provide grounds for shelter providers to deny access or services to clients.

Section 8.4 Shelter Orientation – TSS

(d) ***new*** During orientation, shelter providers will verbally review the SMIS [BRASS Notice of Collection](#) with clients, notifying the client that:

(i) Should they be part of an incident of workplace violence, meaning their behaviour results in physical injury or threatens physical injury to another person, the incident will be recorded in SMIS and a Behavioural Risk Alert will appear on their SMIS record.

(ii) Information about the incident can and may be shared with other programs using SMIS when the client accesses other services.

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(iii) This information will be provided to workers to reduce the risk of another incident of workplace violence and to support proactive safety and case planning.

Section 12.5.2 Incident Reporting – TSS

(c) Shelter providers will document serious occurrences in SMIS using the SMIS Incident Report module as soon as possible, but no later than twelve (12) hours after the incident.

- (i) ***new*** Incidents that resulted in workplace violence will be required to be reviewed and approved or rejected in SMIS by a supervisory staff with supervisor SMIS role access as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the incident.
- SMIS supervisor role access is defined per [SMIS Role Access Guide](#), if you have questions about who at your site has SMIS Supervisor Role access, please contact [your SMIS Access Manager](#).

12.6.2 Collection of Client Information – TSS

(e) ***new*** Shelter providers will inform clients of the SMIS BRASS Notice of Collection and will:

(i) Post it in conspicuous areas where client information is regularly displayed (e.g., intake/admission area, counselor or case worker office).

(ii) Verbally review the [BRASS Notice of Collection](#) and ensure the client understands that incidents of workplace violence, where their behaviour results in physical injury or threatens physical injury to another person, will be recorded in SMIS and shared with other shelter programs to preserve health and safety of workers.

Section 6.1 Intake and Assessment – TRS

(g) ***new*** The presence of a Behavioural Risk Alert does not provide grounds for providers to deny access or services to clients.

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Section 6.3 Admissions – TRS

(h) Program orientation information will be provided to all clients upon admission or as soon as reasonable and no later than 24 hours after their admission. At a minimum, program orientation information will include:

(x) ***new*** Verbally reviewing the SMIS [BRASS Notice of Collection](#) with clients, notifying the client that:

i) Should they be part of an incident of workplace violence, where their behavioural resulted in physical injury or threatened physical injury, the incident will be recorded in SMIS and a Behavioural Risk Alert will appear on their SMIS record.

ii) Information about the incident can and may be shared with other programs using SMIS when the client accesses other services.

iii) This information will be provided to workers to reduce the risk of another incident of workplace violence and to support proactive safety and case planning.

Section 10.3.2 Incident Reporting – TRS

(b) Providers will document incidents and serious occurrences involving workplace violence in SMIS using the SMIS Incident Report module as soon as possible, but no later than twelve (12) hours after the serious occurrence.

(ii) ***new*** Incidents that resulted in workplace violence will be required to be reviewed and approved or rejected in SMIS by a supervisory staff with supervisor SMIS role access as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the incident.

- SMIS supervisor role access is defined per [SMIS Role Access Guide](#), if you have questions about who at your site has SMIS Supervisor Role access, please contact your SMIS Access Manager.

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10.4.2 Collection of Client Information – TRS

(c) **new** Providers will inform clients of the SMIS BRASS Notice of Collection and will:

(i) Post it in conspicuous areas where client information is regularly displayed (e.g., intake/admission area, counselor or case worker office).

(ii) Verbally review the [BRASS Notice of Collection](#) and ensure the client understands that incidents of workplace violence, where their behavioural resulted in physical injury or threatened physical injury, will be recorded in SMIS and shared with other shelter programs to preserve health and safety of workers.

Purpose of Directive

To support the rollout and implementation of TSSS' Behavioural Risk Alert Safety system in SMIS.

The City of Toronto is the Service Administrator for SMIS and Service System Manager for City-funded shelter and support services but does not retain responsibilities as an employer for third-party agencies.

Documenting incidents of workplace violence in SMIS does not replace an organization's existing workplace violence policies and procedures. Employers are required to meet legislated obligations to protect the health and safety of a worker in accordance with the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).

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Resources

- For additional information regarding BRASS, please refer to:
<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/95c1-Bulletin-2024-02-Behavioural-Risk-Alert-Safety-System.pdf>
- For BRASS Notice of Collection in shelters, please refer to:
<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/9747-CS-24-0117BRASS-posterTSS11x17AODA.pdf>
- For BRASS Notice of Collection in respites, please refer to:
<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/8f2a-CS-24-0117BRASS-posterTRSrespitestandards11x17AODA.pdf>
- For more information on workplace violence, please refer to:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/preventing-workplace-violence-and-workplace-harassment>

Contact Information

For more information about and support in implementation of this Directive, please contact your Manager or Agency Review Officer.