

## RECOGNITION OF AN EXPLICIT OBLIGATION FOR EMPLOYERS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT WORK IN QUEBEC: RESEARCH REPORT

### SUMMARY

(Translation by  
Principal Author)

Link to the complete  
Report (French Only) :

[https://sac.uqam.ca/upload/files/Violence\\_conjugale\\_reconnaissance\\_explicite\\_obligation\\_employeur\\_Cox\\_2.pdf](https://sac.uqam.ca/upload/files/Violence_conjugale_reconnaissance_explicite_obligation_employeur_Cox_2.pdf)

COX, Rachel, avec la collaboration de Marie-Eve DESMARAIS et de Shanie ROY. (2019). *La reconnaissance d'une obligation explicite de l'employeur en matière de violence conjugale au Québec : rapport de recherche*. Montréal : Service aux collectivités de l'Université du Québec à Montréal.

©UQAM, CAVAC Côte-Nord, Maison l'Amie d'Elle, Maison des femmes de Baie-Comeau, Centre femmes aux 4 vents, 2019.

Domestic violence remains a scourge that Québec society must address. Recognizing an explicit obligation for employers to prevent and stop manifestations of domestic violence in the workplace is an important step in the overall prevention of domestic violence. It sends a clear message that it is in everyone's interest to put an end to domestic violence, and puts to rest the idea, for once and for all, that it is somehow "a private matter".

Maintaining the employment relationship and protecting the income of victims of domestic violence greatly increases their capacity to escape violence. However, an aggressor can often find a victim at their workplace, which makes them particularly vulnerable at work and exposes other people in the workplace to domestic violence.

Regions like the North Shore of Québec have a particularly high rate of domestic violence. It is urgent that we act in order to offer meaningful and equal protection to the women, including the Native women, who live in these regions.

In Ontario, and then again in Alberta, a woman was assassinated on the job by her ex-spouse. Inquiries found that both these deaths were foreseeable. In Ontario (2009) and in Alberta (2017), this finding was the catalyst for adoption of legal provisions recognizing an explicit obligation for employers to protect workers when they are victims of domestic violence at work. New Brunswick (2018) and Newfoundland and Labrador (2019) have also adopted regulations stipulating that occupational health and safety law includes obligations for employers with respect to domestic violence at work, as was already implicitly the case in Manitoba (since 2011) and in British Columbia (since 2012). However, in Quebec, to date, our occupational health and safety legislation offers no protection to women who are victims of domestic violence at or near their workplaces.

The *Institut national de santé publique de Québec's* 2018 Report on Violence and Health called for a diversification of strategies to prevent domestic violence, and the Report identified the workplace as one sector that could be mobilized to this end.

It is time for Quebec to update its legislation, by recognizing an explicit obligation for employers to stop manifestations of domestic violence at work in our Occupational Health and Safety Act !