

Checklist for Workplace Violence

Everyone has the right to feel safe at work. Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* sets out standards, the rights and the duties of all parties involved. Employers, supervisors and workers all have responsibilities. The term 'Workplace Violence' encompasses a broad range of issues, including; threatening behaviour, verbal or written threats, harassment, verbal abuse, and physical attacks.

Canada's Criminal Code will apply to situations involving violent acts, threats and stalking. The police should always be contacted in these situations.

It is also important to note that harassment may also fall under Ontario's Human Rights Code.

Below is a checklist for organizations and employers who are looking to review their Workplace Violence preparedness.

What Constitutes Violence in the Workplace

- YES NO 1. Is the area a 'workplace'? Is the worker being directed and paid to be there or to be near there?
- YES NO 2. Is the incident a case of workplace violence?
- Was there physical force by a person, against a worker in the workplace?
 - Was there an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker in the workplace?
 - Was there a statement made, or behavior, that suggests a threat of physical force against a worker in the workplace?
- YES NO 3. Is the incident a case of workplace harassment?
- Was there vexatious comments or conduct that was unwelcome?
 - Was there bullying, intimidation or offensive jokes?
 - Was there inappropriate pictures circulating through the workplace?

Understanding Violence in Your Workplace

- YES NO 1. Have neighbouring facilities/businesses experienced violence or crime?
- YES NO 2. Is your workplace in a high risk category for workplace violence? Such as:
- Handling money or prescriptions
 - Working with the public
 - Carrying out inspection or enforcement duties
 - Working with unstable or volatile persons
 - Working where alcohol is served
 - Working alone or in small numbers
- YES NO 3. Have employees been asked about their experiences and whether they are concerned for themselves or others?
- YES NO 4. Have past incident reports, first aid records and health and safety records been reviewed?

YES NO 5. Is there information regarding workplace violence in similar workplaces from any umbrella organizations, industry associations, publications or newspapers?

YES NO 6. In reviewing all available material, is there any information that can be used in your prevention program?

Policies & Procedures

YES NO 1. Are there Policies & Procedures in place on effectively handling violence in the workplace?

YES NO 2. Are there guidelines for workers to report both actual violence and suspected trouble?

YES NO 3. Is there an atmosphere created where workers are encouraged to bring concerns or fears to management, and to report threats if they occur?

YES NO 4. Is there an appropriate chain of involvement established if further action or investigation is required? (ie. supervisor → human resources → legal department → security → police)

YES NO 5. Is the objective to displace, deter and control violence in the workplace?

YES NO 6. Does the Policy do the following:

- Define 'Workplace Violence' in precise, concrete language.
- Provide clear examples of unacceptable behaviour.
- State the organization's commitment to prevention of violence in the workplace.
- Outline the preventative measures that are taken, or will be taken.
- Assure confidentiality for employees reporting incidents.
- Outline procedures for investigating and resolving complaints.

YES NO 7. Is the organization and its supervisors maintaining an awareness of any information that may lead them to believe a violent act may occur; and if there is such information, are they taking appropriate action?

The Facility Design: Outside

YES NO 1. Are entrances to the building clearly visible from the street?

YES NO 2. Is the area surrounding the building free of bushes and other hiding places?

YES NO 3. Is there video surveillance outside of the building?

YES NO 4. Is there enough lighting to see clearly outside of the building?

The Facility Design: Inside

YES NO 1. Are there sufficient exits and routes of escape?

YES NO 2. Can exit doors be opened from the inside only to prevent unauthorized entry?

YES NO 3. Are all exits clear from debris and obstruction?

YES NO 4. Is the lighting adequate to see clearly in all indoor areas?

- YES NO 5. Is the access to work areas through a reception area only?
- YES NO 6. Are there physical barriers where appropriate (ie. elevated counters, plexiglas partitions)?
- YES NO 7. Are broken windows and locks repaired promptly?
- YES NO 8. Are there security cameras in high risk areas?

The Workplace

- YES NO 1. Is there someone responsible for building security?
- YES NO 2. Are the workers aware of who is responsible for security?
- YES NO 3. Are there trained personnel accessible to workers in a timely manner?
- YES NO 4. Is there an established liaison with the local police?
- YES NO 5. Is the parking lot attended or otherwise kept secure?
- YES NO 6. Are special security measures taken to protect people who work late at night (ie. escorts, locked entrances)?
- YES NO 7. Are visitors or clients escorted to offices for appointments?
- YES NO 8. Are authorized visitors required to wear ID badges?
- YES NO 9. If there are workers in the field, does someone know where each worker is at all times?
- YES NO 10. Are extra precautions taken during times of high stress like terminations and layoffs?
- YES NO 11. Is there assistance available to help workers obtain a restraining order if necessary?
- YES NO 12. Are workers aware of the 'safe area' or meeting place established for workers fleeing from a violent situation?

Training

- YES NO 1. Is there an emergency response plan?
- YES NO 2. Are the workers trained in the emergency response plan (ie. escape routes, 'safe room', notifying proper authorities)?
- YES NO 3. Are workers trained to report violent incidents or threats?
- YES NO 4. Are workers aware of the importance of reporting violence or threats in their personal relationships? And do they understand this information is confidential?
- YES NO 5. Are workers trained in ways to prevent or defuse potentially violent situations and/or conflict resolution training?

- YES NO 6. Are all employees (supervisors, workers) trained to recognize “Red Flag” behaviours such as:
- Having an obsession with weapons.
 - Making direct or veiled threats.
 - Intimidating or instilling fears in others.
 - Displaying unwanted romantic interest.
 - Exhibiting paranoid behavior.
 - Being unaccepting of criticism.
 - Having recent family, financial, legal or other personal problems.

A Recognized Violent Person

- YES NO 1. Are all workers/staff aware of the potentially violent person, and have a description?
- YES NO 2. Are workers advised to stay vigilant in their personal security and office security policies?
- YES NO 3. Is there a system in place to report any sightings of the person in or around the workplace property?
- YES NO 4. Are workers directed to notify authorities if the person is seen on the property?
- YES NO 5. Are workers advised to secure themselves and then advise others to leave the area if the person is on the property?
- YES NO 6. Is there a buddy system set up?
- YES NO 7. Have all workers been reminded of the established ‘safe area’?
- YES NO 8. Is there an incident report filed?

Moving Forward

- YES NO 1. Are there protocols in place for the continual assessments of threats, risks and hazards?
- YES NO 2. Are accurate records being kept of all pertinent reports and incidents?
- YES NO 3. Are protection orders/restraining orders monitored for end dates?
- YES NO 4. Is there a regular program review and evaluation set up?