

Safety Topic: Violence in the Workplace

The negative impact of workplace violence is significant. This Safety Swap provides information about the role that workplace safety and health committees play in violence prevention and in the follow-up if a violent incident takes place in the workplace.

Questions that could be used to spark discussion:

How does the *Workplace Safety and Health Regulation* define Violence?

Part 1 of the *Workplace Safety and Health Regulation 217/2006* defines "violence" to mean:

- (a) the attempted or actual exercise of physical force against a person; and
- (b) any threatening statement or behaviour that give a person reasonable cause to believe that physical force will be used against the person.

When a workplace is subject to Part 11 of the *Regulation*, the employer must assess the risk of violence in the workplace, create and implement a violence prevention policy, and be prepared to investigate an incident of violence.

Does Part 11 of the *Regulation* apply to all workplaces?

A workplace is subject to Part 11 of the *Regulation* and must have a violence prevention policy if the workplace involves any of the following services or businesses:

- healthcare services (see the *Regulation* for further information)

- pharmaceutical-dispensing
- education
- financial
- police, corrections or other law enforcement
- security
- crisis counselling and intervention
- public transportation if the workplace is a taxi cab or a transit bus
- retail sales (between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.)
- is a licensed premises (within the meaning of The *Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act*).

If your workplace does not provide the services or businesses listed above, your employer is still required to assess the risk for violence at your workplace. If the assessment identifies a risk of violence to a worker, your workplace is subject to Part 11 of the *Regulation* and must develop a violence prevention policy.

What is the committee's role in violence prevention?

- Encourage worker awareness about violence prevention and the workplace violence prevention policy.
- Participate with the employer to conduct workplace violence risk assessments.
- Bring safety concerns forward to the employer for resolution.
- Review the annual report of incidents of violence and make recommendations as necessary.
- Understand the workplace violence prevention policy and be a part of the consultation process for developing and reviewing the policy.

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What are employers required to do to help prevent violence in the workplace?

The minimum requirements of the *Regulation* that an employer must adhere to are as follows:

- 1) Assess the risk of violence in the workplace and take measures to eliminate the risk or to control the risk if it is not reasonably practical to eliminate the risk of violence to a worker.
- 2) Create and implement a violence prevention policy that sets out the actions and measures the employer will take.
- 3) Train its workers on the violence prevention policy and ensure they comply with the policy.
- 4) Investigate incidents of violence and implement control measures.
- 5) Prepare an annual report of incidents of violence and provide it to the workplace safety and health committee, or the representative, or when there is no committee or representative, the workers at the workplace.

The employer must also consult with their workplace safety and health committee (or representative/the workers in workplaces that do not have a committee) when they are developing the violence prevention policy.

What is the committee's role if an incident of violence occurs in the workplace?

- Ensure an incident of violence is reported to an immediate supervisor. A committee member may assist the worker when talking to supervisor.
- Supervisor should investigate, and engage committee members if the incident is serious.
- Committee can discuss safety concerns and make recommendations to the employer.
- If the incident of violence meets the definition of a "serious incident" under Part 2 of the *Regulation*, it must also be reported to the Workplace Safety and Health Branch immediately by the employer, and by the

fastest means of communication possible.

What can the committee do to support the workplace long-term after a violent incident has occurred?

Committees should:

- work with the employer to make sure policies and procedures are reviewed after an incident of violence has occurred and update them, if necessary
- continue to educate workers to bring forth safety concerns
- monitor the effectiveness of controls
- continue to review internal statistics for issues and trends and make recommendations to the employer
- review the risk assessments to determine if hazards have been eliminated or mitigated; and if not, take actions to eliminate or mitigate the hazards.

If a worker approaches the committee after experiencing an incident of violence, committee members can recommend the following resources to the worker, depending on availability and circumstances:

- Employee assistance plan/workplace insurance program
- Family doctor
- Local community resources
- Family members

What are some examples of threats of violence or acts of violence?

- Physical and sexual assault
- Property damage and vandalism
- Swearing and verbal abuse
- Threats or intimidation

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What are the risk factors associated with violence in the workplace?

- Working alone or in small groups
- Working in isolated locations
- Working with the public
- Handling money or valuables, including drugs, liquor or tobacco
- Working at night or early in the morning
- Working with drugs, liquor or tobacco
- Working in public buildings or areas
- Having young or inexperienced staff
- Working in areas with a history of violence or crime
- Previous incidents of violence in the workplace

Top Tips:

1. **Ensure employers assess the risk of violence in the workplace.**
2. **When employers identify risks during an assessment, a violence prevention policy should be developed and put in place.**
3. **Encourage awareness and training for violence prevention.**
4. **Be aware of your personal safety.**

Additional Resources and References

Some additional resources on violence in the workplace include:

CCOHS:

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence.html>

SAFE Work Manitoba:

[Preventing Violence in the Workplace Guide](#)

SAFE Work Manitoba E-Learning Courses:

- [Violence in the Workplace: Awareness](#)
- [Violence in the Workplace: Recognize the Risk and Take Action](#)
- [Violence in the Workplace: Establish a Prevention Program](#)

Share your ideas!

Share your ideas! If you would like to share your best practices with other safety and health committee leaders, we'd like to hear from you. Your idea might be featured in an upcoming issue of Safety Swap! Email us: information@safeworkmanitoba.ca for more information

For more information

Visit safeworkmanitoba.com or call 204-957-SAFE (7233) or toll-free 1-855-957-SAFE (7233).

