

## Introduction

Knowing what workplace violence is and what you can do about it goes a long way to ensuring your safety.

## About Workplace Violence

### Intimidation

Intimidation ranges from threatening body language, damage to facilities or equipment, or to threatening notes or letters. Someone blocking your path can also be intimidation.



### Harassment

Most people tell jokes about their friends and give them unflattering nicknames, but this is not considered harassment until that person says "NO" and it continues anyway. Unwanted attention from a co-worker that doesn't stop, or being continually propositioned: both are patterns that fall under harassment.

### Verbal Assault

Yelling, screaming, and name calling are just three examples of verbal assault. It also includes threats to you or your property.



### Physical Assault

We all know what physical assault is. Or do we? As well as direct physical harm done to you, it can also include someone tossing you materials that are too heavy to catch.

### Homicide

Homicide is another name for murder. The International Labour Organization has found Canada – not the United States, among the top five nations in terms of workplace homicides.

## Recognizing the Warning Signs

The following signs are considered clear indicators that workplace violence could occur if not addressed promptly.



- An outgoing, usually communicative employee becomes withdrawn and quiet.
- An employee is always late, is argumentative with other employees, contractors or sub-contractors, and behaves erratically.
- An employee expresses a keen interest in violent behaviours or actions.
- An employee expresses a keen interest in guns, weapons and violent sources of media.
- An employee makes comments about violent means of dealing with, or coping with, a particular situation.
- An employee talks about "having nothing to lose" or "not caring about anything anymore."

## Reporting Warning Signs

Any observed warning signs should be discussed with your Foreman or Supervisor. If you are concerned that the Foreman or Supervisor will not take you seriously, you should contact the Project Manager. Acting on our warning signs is the best way to prevent an occurrence. Speak up!

## Reacting to Irate Persons

- Focus on emotions first, try to remain calm and try to calm the other person.
- Try to avoid escalating the situation. Find ways to help the irate person save face.
- Listen carefully and try to put yourself in the person's shoes, so you can better understand how to solve the problem.
- If you cannot calm the person, ask for help from another employee, Foreman or Supervisor.
- When dealing with clients, a risk assessment will be undertaken to determine if violent behaviour may be encountered.



## Minimizing the Risk

- Know the warning signs and report concerns to a Supervisor.
- Remove yourself from any situation that looks like it could lead to workplace violence or harassment and immediately report to your Foreman or Supervisor.

## Reacting to Workplace Violence

### Say No

First make it clear to the aggressor that you are not interested in this situation. Remain calm if this is possible, but communicate clearly that you will not take part.



### Remove Yourself

Removing yourself from an uncomfortable situation is one of the best ways to avoid a potentially violent incident. The potential for a violent act can often be removed when aggressors have time to cool down.



### Initial Actions

Immediate actions when an incident occurs:

- Any employee who observes or becomes a victim of a violent act or threatening behaviour is expected to first secure their own safety, get out and immediately report to any member of the Supervisory Staff or Management and let them know what is going on.
- If the situation requires immediate medical or law enforcement assistance call 911.

### Addressing Reports

- All reported incidents of workplace violence, including any form of a threat or threatening behaviour, will be dealt with promptly. Each incident will be handled with discretion, confidentiality, and respect for both the humanity and rights of all persons concerned.
- Employees may be encouraged to report the incident to the local RCMP. The company may report the incident to the local authorities as well.
- Employees may, at the Supervisor's or Manager's discretion, be referred to an assistance program.