

Prevention of Workplace Violence

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What is workplace violence?

- Definition : Regulation 4.27

“Violence means the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives the worker reasonable cause to believe he or she is at risk of injury.”



Not part of the job!

- ❑ Violence is not acceptable at any workplace
- ❑ Violence is not an inherent risk
- ❑ Employers have a legal obligation to eliminate the risk of violence to workers
- ❑ Workers have a legislated right to have a non violent workplace



How big is the problem?

- 2007 Stats Canada Report:
 - 356,000 incidents of workplace violence per year
 - 1/5th of all violent incidents occurred at work
 - 71% are assaults
 - 33% in social services and healthcare
 - 14% in food services and retail
 - 11% in education services



Under reporting

- ILO reported:
 - Females reported 32% of assaults to police, 24% to other authorities and 44% were unreported
 - Males reported 38% of assaults to police, 14% to other authorities and 48% were unreported



Where is Workplace Violence most likely to occur

- ❑ Working alone
- ❑ Contact with the public
- ❑ Handling money, prescriptions drugs
- ❑ Carrying out inspections or enforcement



Where most likely to occur

- ❑ Providing service, care, advice or education
- ❑ Mobile workplace
- ❑ Premises where alcohol is served
- ❑ Working with unstable or volatile persons
- ❑ During periods of downsizing or cutbacks



Occupational Groups most at risk

- ❑ Health care workers
- ❑ Correctional Officers
- ❑ Social service workers
- ❑ Teachers
- ❑ Municipal workers
- ❑ Retail workers



The Law

- ❑ **Working alone regulation:** Section 4.20.1-4.23
- ❑ Requirement for employers to provide procedures for checking well being of workers working alone
- ❑ Includes provisions for late night retail workers



The Law

- ❑ **Workplace conduct regulation: Section 4.24 – 4.26**
- ❑ Deals with violence between co workers
- ❑ **Violence in the workplace regulation: Section 4.27 – 4.31**
- ❑ Deals with violence from clients, patients, customers, students



Risk Assessment

- Employer required to conduct a risk assessment considering:
 - Previous experience at workplace
 - Experience at similar workplaces
 - Location and circumstances in which work will take place



Factors to consider

- Number, severity, nature, frequency of violent incidents
- Workplace environment: lighting, layout of workplace, private/public spaces



Factors to consider

- Types of tools, equipment, utensils used
- extent and nature of contact with clients, patients, inmates, customers



Factors to consider

- ❑ Existing work procedures
- ❑ Staff deployment, scheduling, working alone, working at night
- ❑ Peak workload times which can cause strain on public
- ❑ Provisions for exchange of information between staff re: daily conditions, client mood



How to gather information

- ❑ Develop a risk assessment checklist specific to the workplace
- ❑ Worker survey can be useful in gathering information from workers about the history of violent incidents against staff



How to gather information

- ❑ Encourage workers to report incidents of violence
- ❑ Include violence in inspections checklist
- ❑ Conduct investigations into violent incidents



There is a problem, lets fix it

- ❑ What are the options?
- ❑ Can the hazards be eliminated or will they need to be controlled?
- ❑ What is the best long term solution?



Preferred solutions

- ❑ **Elimination – withdrawing service when client has history of violence during a home visit**
- ❑ **Substitution- having clients come into office rather than doing home visits**



Preferred Solutions

- Engineering :
 - Workplace layout: escape avenues, lighting, electronic surveillance, physical barriers
 - Minimizing number of entrances
 - Placing office furniture so that employee is closer to exit than client



Preferred Solutions

- Administrative: decisions about how business is conducted
 - Keep cash to a minimum
 - Regular cash removal by security firm
 - Identification system for patients and visitors
 - System for identifying of violent clients, patients, etc



Preferred solutions

- Work Practices:
 - Employer must develop policies and procedures for workers working alone
 - Use buddy system if you feel personal safety is threatened
 - Call 911



Preferred Solutions

- Work Practices cont'd
 - Maintain adequate staffing levels in high risk situations
 - Adjust staffing levels to deal with peak flows of patients, clients customers



Implementation

- ❑ Employer responsibility
- ❑ As quickly as possible
- ❑ Committee to determine most effective solution
- ❑ Do a written recommendation to employer



After the fix is in

- Remember to follow up after a solution is implemented
 - Has it eliminated or controlled the hazard?
 - Has it created new problems?
 - May have to do a reassessment and come up with further solution



Table Discussion

- ❑ Facilitator at each table will guide you through this exercise
- ❑ Opportunity to identify the risk factors at your worksites
- ❑ Come up with some solutions
- ❑ What is one thing you will do at your next committee meeting regarding workplace violence?



Resources

- ❑ www.bcgeu.ca (for course schedules and registration details)
- ❑ www.worksafebc.com (lots of good info on workplace violence prevention)
- ❑ www.ccohs.ca
- ❑ www.cdc.gov/niosh