



# Workplace violence

Work-related violence and aggression is defined as: 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'. Cases of violence and aggression in the workplace are most commonly seen in jobs where there is interaction with the public, multicultural/ national/ regional workers in a same place, different trade groups working in same place, work pressure, personal / family problems etc .

Both employers and employees have an interest in reducing workplace violence. For employers violence can lead to poor morale and poor image for the organization, making it difficult to recruit and keep staff. It can also mean extra costs with absenteeism, higher insurance premiums and compensation payments. For employees, violence can cause pain, distress and even disability and death. Physical attacks are obviously dangerous but serious persistent verbal abuse or threats can also damage employees' health through anxiety and stress.



## What can we do to help avoid involved in violence?

Normally all the companies has a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence, whoever is involved, irrespective of their position and nationality. The personnel involved in workplace violence will have to face strict disciplinary action – leading to termination or legal action of found guilty. Some general suggestions are.

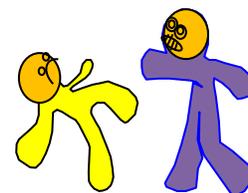
- ✓ Everyone should know what conduct is not acceptable, what to do if someone is a witness or are subjected to workplace violence, and how to protect himself.
- ✓ Secure the workplace.
- ✓ Limit the amount of cash on hand. Keep a minimal amount of cash with you.
- ✓ Instruct employees not to enter any location where they feel unsafe. Introduce a "buddy system" or take an escort in potentially dangerous situations or at night.

## What is workplace violence?

Workplace violence is violence or the threat of violence against workers. It can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide, one of the leading causes of job-related deaths. However it manifests itself, workplace violence is a growing concern for employers and employees nationwide.

## What to do?

- Awareness and preparation are key factors.
- Clearly explain what behavior is acceptable, what is not, and what will be done by whom, if violence occurs
- Create clear levels of authority and procedures
- Stress may be chief reason among them. Some of this is work-related – fatigue and frustration from pressure to get the job done, sometimes without days off and with exceedingly long hours. Seniors of the concerned workers / department should manage to reduce these work related stress



- Non-work stress factors can be just as significant – medical problems, financial difficulties, relationship issues and family matters.
- Sometimes, supervisors and employees bring the stress to work and take it out on subordinates or co-workers. LEAVE YOUR STRESS BEHIND.
- In certain situations, hostility and violence are fueled by racial, gender or other prejudices.
- Some individuals are controlled by bigotry and bias.
- Most commonly, violence manifests itself as **harassment** or **bullying**.



**Harassment** is any unwelcome, discriminatory conduct that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, skin color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.

**Bullying** means intentionally applying an imbalance of power or strength to intimidate or unnerve a target.

## Don't Let Intimidation, Violence Invade Workplace

Unfortunately, workplace violence is a common problem. Although it often appears random and uncontrollable, precautions can be taken to limit the potential for violence and mitigate the harm that violent incidents may cause. Examples are-

- Fighting, including pushing, shoving and slapping
- Verbal abuse in person or over the phone
- Offensive jokes or pranks, slurs, ridicule
- Insults, threats, Ganging up, bullying and intimidation
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Robbery, Concealing or brandishing a weapon
- Malicious damage to property of employees, clients or the business

