

Workplace Violence

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IS COSTLY

Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Acts have a general requirement that the employer take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.

The damaging legal, economic and human costs caused by workplace violence, demands that employers take practical steps to address the issue proactively and responsibly. A properly designed workplace violence program will meet that objective.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO?

SCREENING

Obtain a thorough work history from prospective employees and ensure that you conduct complete background and work related reference checks.

RISK ASSESSMENT

“To identify risks and existing problems, you must conduct a workplace specific risk assessment. Working together, employees and management are in the best position to identify existing and potential hazards for their unique situation.”

TRAINING

- Train managers on appropriate ways to handle terminations, layoffs and discipline.
- Train employees in conflict resolution, harassment, and stress management techniques.
- If applicable, train your staff on diffusion techniques to reduce the chances of a violent outcome during a robbery.
- Offer training in personal safety to help employees avoid being victimized.

POLICY

In developing a program, the organization must first decide where to draw the line. The policy statement disseminated to employees should be firm but positive, emphasizing that the well being of employees is the main priority. Based on this belief, any form of violence, whether actual or perceived, will not be tolerated. Employees should be encouraged to report all incidents involving threats, harassment, or other inappropriate behaviour without fear of reprisal or criticism. Consider the development of a threat incident report. Documentation is crucial.

SECURITY

Physical security measures should only be undertaken once a thorough risk or threat assessment has been completed. This will help determine the origins of the threat, which will assist in developing policies and making appropriate hardware selections. Threats and vulnerabilities are constantly changing therefore a regular review of your security strategy is essential to maintaining the integrity of the system.

CONCLUSION

If you are concerned that violence prevention training is an unnecessary expense, just consider the cost of not having it at all. You are not going to predict all cases of workplace violence, but with proper training, awareness and company policies in place, you may reduce the risk of a violent incident.

