SASKATCHEWAN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION

SCSA Violence Policy Guide

What is the Violence Policy & Prevention Plan?

This is a new requirement for organizations in the Construction Industry. It intends to help guide organizations to identify risks of violence and implement strategies to minimize or eliminate those risks.

Disclaimer:

This template was made with the entire construction industry in mind. It is very general and will not suit every organization as it is written.

This is intended to help guide an organization to implement a violence PSPP. The template document as it stands is missing components of a complete PSPP.

SEA section 3-21(1)(a)(b)(c) tells us that the **OHC**, representative, (or if neither of those exists) the workers must be consulted in the development of this **PSPP.**

** The addition of the violence PSPP **does not** replace or change the requirements for an organization to have an up-to-date harassment policy (required by Saskatchewan legislation) **

** The Violence Policy & Prevention plan should be kept separate from the harassment policy. **

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Legislation

As of May 17th, 2024, the Saskatchewan Employment Act (**SEA**) will require that all workplaces in Saskatchewan implement a policy statement and prevention plan (**PSPP**).

Section 3-21 in the **SEA** places the duty to have a **PSPP**. The **PSPP** must be written in consultation with the Occupational Health Committee (**OHC**).

The Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 (**SK OH&S, 2020**) is written pursuant to **SEA 3-21.**

Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020.

Violence

Section 3-26 (1) In this section, "violence" means the attempted, threatened or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause injury, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that the worker is at risk of injury.

(3) A policy statement and prevention plan required by subsection 3-21(1) of the Act must be in writing and must include:

a) The employer's commitment to minimize or eliminate the risk;
b) The identification of the worksites where violent situations have occurred or may reasonably be expected to occur;
c) The identification of any staff positions at the place of employment that have been, or may reasonably be expected to be, exposed to violent situations;
d) The procedure to be followed by the employer to inform workers of the nature and extent of risk from violence, including, except if the disclosure is prohibited by law, any information in the employer's possession related to the risk of violence from persons who have a history of violent behaviour and whom workers are likely to encounter in the course of their work;
e) The actions the employer will take to minimize or eliminate the risk, including the use of personal protective equipment, administrative arrangements and engineering controls;
f) The procedure to be followed by a worker who has been exposed to a violent incident to report the incident to the employer;
g) The procedure the employer will follow to document and investigate a violent incident reported pursuant to clause (f);
h) A recommendation that any worker who has been exposed to a violent incident consult the worker's physician for treatment or referral for post-incident counselling; and
i) The employer's commitment to provide a training program for workers that includes:
    i. The means to recognize potentially violent situations;
    ii. Procedures, work practices, administrative arrangements and engineering controls that have been developed to minimize or eliminate the risk to workers;
    iii. The appropriate responses of workers to incidents of violence, including how to obtain assistance; and
    iv. Procedures for reporting violent incidents

SCSA's Template

The template that the SCSA has developed contains a policy statement and other components listed in **SK OH&S, 2020 3**-26(3).

The Policy Statement was written with guidance from "An employer's guide for developing a policy statement and prevention plan" (listed as a resource above)

What's included:

- Contains a basic policy statement reflecting requirements from the SEA & SK OH&S, 2020.
- Definition of violence
- Generic example responsibilities
- A procedure for receiving violence reports/complaints of violence.
- Generic example risk factors for construction.
- A checklist style assessment tool for identifying potential violence risk factors.
- Violent Incident Report form Template

What is not included:

- A complete training plan for violence in the workplace.
    - The organization must ensure the risk is assessed and appropriate levels of training are provided to employees.

Policy Statement

The policy contains information required by **SK OH&S, 2020.** This must be customized to include what your organization will do to fulfill the commitment to minimizing the risk of violence in your workplace.

Key items:

- Statement explaining the employer's commitment to minimizing & eliminating the risk of violence.
- Inclusion of workers in developing, maintaining & updating the policy statement
    - The OHC/Worker Representative/ The workers (when there is no OHC or worker representative)
    - More workers can be collaborated with as well.
- Inclusion of a description of the training program for violence prevention that includes:
    - The means to recognize potentially violent situations.
    - Procedure, practices, administrative arrangements, & engineering controls designed to minimize or eliminate risk to workers.
    - Procedure(s) for workers to follow in response to violent incidents.
        - Including how to attain assistance.
    - Procedure for reporting violent incidents.
    - A means to help workers understand their legal obligation to refrain from participating in or carrying out acts of violence.
        - This may come in the form of a test/ exam post-training.
            - This should reflect the training your organization deems appropriate.

Determining the employer's risk(s) of violence is important to build a policy that reflects the level of risk your worker faces.

Consulting the **OHC/ Representative/ Workers** (where there is no OHC or Representative) is important at this stage.

Training Program

SEA: 3-1(1)(ff) "train" means to give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject matter and to require a practical demonstration that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject matter;

Training for violence prevention must include:

- The means to recognize potentially violent situations.
- Procedure, practices, administrative arrangements, & engineering controls designed to minimize or eliminate risk to workers.
- Procedure(s) for workers to follow in response to violent incidents.
- Procedure for reporting violent incidents.
- A means to help workers understand their legal obligation to refrain from participating in or carrying out acts of violence.

The employer must conduct an initial risk assessment to determine the risk areas. The next step is to collaborate with the OHC/ Representative on appropriate procedures & control measures for the risk of violence.

Training is key to providing workers with awareness regarding any risks and how to mitigate or eliminate them.

Training must reflect different position's responsibilities. *For example:* those who are designated to investigate violent incidents must be trained to do so.

In general, supervisors must receive training in their duties as a supervisor. Some courses, including the SCSA's Leadership for Safety Excellence (LSE) course, have modules on investigation of incidents.

Training ideas:

- Introduction to the Violence PSPP in the new hire orientation.
    - Review and discussion of key violence prevention procedures & practices.
        - Exam/ test to confirm their understanding.
- Internal training sessions with employees regarding their responsibilities to legislation & internal company policies.
    - Scenarios & role-playing exercises.
        - Tests & competency evaluations for those activities
        - Testing response procedures and conflict resolution tactics
- Guest presentations regarding recognition of violence
    - Police services, specialists,
    - Etc.
- 3rd party training courses for specific risk factors. Some examples:
    - Investigation training
        - SCSA's Leadership for Safety Excellence (LSE) Course
        - OHC Level 2
    - Conflict resolution training
    - Effective communication training
    - CCOHS' "Violence in the Workplace: Recognize the Risk and Take Action"
    - CCOHS' "Violence in the Workplace: Awareness"
- Spot Audits (Not a COR Audit) for training verification
    - This can help to see if the information learned was retained.

Responsibilities:

The template is an outline of responsibilities for prevention of violence in the workplace. These can be moved to appropriate areas in your manual or remain within this section.

** Keep in mind that you will have different positions and responsibilities than those outlined in the template **

Awareness of these Responsibilities is a key component of effective training.

The employer holds the most responsibility for worker safety in Saskatchewan (SEA & SK OH&S, 2020). However, Supervisors & workers have responsibility as well.

The list of responsibilities provided with the template is only some of the potential responsibilities. Review legislation, your training programs, and your organization's existing policies to make clear responsibilities for all levels of employees.

Workers must be made aware of these responsibilities. Use effective communication strategies such as training sessions, information sessions, orientations, toolbox & safety meetings, etc.

Procedure, Resolution and Corrective Actions, & External Complaints:

Reporting Procedure:

The procedure given is for reporting an incident of violence. Review this and ensure it reflects your organization's internal chain of command.

This procedure must be understood by all levels of workers. It should be included in your training program. Report forms & procedure should be readily available to workers.

Violence Report Form

An organization should develop, adopt, or add sections to an existing report form to ensure the report form documents complaints of violence.

A generic report form is included in the forms package. ** The included report form template is not an investigation **

An investigation goes deeper into the situation. All violent incidents must be investigated ethically.

Violence Risk Assessment, Checklist, Employee Survey & Risk Areas

This tool has been adapted from "An employer's guide for developing a policy statement and prevention plan" and adapted to construction.

The tool contains a table containing Potential Risk Factors in Construction. These are examples intended to give some context to possible risk factors in construction.

Conducting the Violence Risk Assessment

Step 1: Gather Information:

- Review relevant sources of information for guidance on the assessment of risk.
    - Sources of information to consider:
        - Previous Violence Incident reports
        - Incident reports, first aid reports, near miss reports, and OHC/ representative meeting records.
        - Online resources i.e. CCOHS, Saskatchewan specific violence prevention guidelines.
        - Example policies, safe job procedures, safe work practices.
        - OHC/ Safety Representative, the workers.
        - Worker Surveys/ Interviews

Step 2: Review Sources of Information and Ask Questions

- Make note details of previous Violent Incidents (if available) of:
    - Location, nature, and circumstances of the work and the incident(s).
    - Workplace locations and job classifications or positions affected.
    - Similar or repeated patterns or details like time of day, job duty or location.
    - Frequency of these incidents.
    - Occupations and locations that are at the most risk.
- Ask Questions Like:
    - Are we putting workers at risk of violence? (see index of potential risk factors below)
    - Is there an orientation and training program to train new and existing workers?
        - Does the training program help workers?
    - How do we identify potentially violent situations, and how can workers use avoidance techniques?
    - Are there risks we have not addressed?
    - Are there controls we can implement that follow the hierarchy of controls?
- Assess the Physical Environment of the Work Environment.
    - Offices:
        - Look for high risk theft items.
        - Have very limited cash if any with the front desk.
            - Have signage to reinforce this.
        - Do doors lock/ are they locked when people are working alone?
        - Do they have adequate means of communication should an event occur?
        - Are areas where workers take breaks, parking lots, entrances & exits well-lit?
            - Especially if workers work during dark hours.

- Jobsites:
  - Is work organized efficiently?
  - Is work scheduled so it limits potential of interpersonal conflict?
  - Are safety practices in place?
    - I.e. housekeeping, cleaning etc.
  - Are supervisors of all companies present trained to resolve conflict?
  - Is there an orientation that outlines zero tolerance for violence?
- Review and Assess the Quality of Administrative Documents
  - Practices, Procedures, Rules, and Policies should reflect the potential risk.
    - Review these with OHC/ Representative

Step 3: Expand your Review

- Include incidents that have occurred in the past 10 years.
  - If these incidents are recurring, ensure new controls are considered.
    - Review this with the OHC/ Representative

Step 4: Conduct a Comparison

- Use the information sources gathered to compare the workplace to similar industry workplaces. These are preventative measures to ensure they won't happen in our workplace.
  - Compare the risks they face and consider controls for those on the **Violence Risk Assessment**

Step 5: Fill in Assessment and Use Results

- Complete the checklist to determine which risks of violence might exist in the workplace and develop strategies to control the risk.
  - Address the following on the assessment:
    - The tasks/ jobs that put workers at risk of violence.
    - The work locations Violence is most likely to occur.
    - Missing administrative items
      - I.e. Policy, procedure, rules, practices, training, etc.
- Use the information gathered from steps 1-4 to determine if risks exist that are not listed on the checklist.
  - If this is the case, add them to the checklist for future use.
- With the assessment completed, determine what training is required and who should take it.
  - Determine if this is 3rd party or internal training.

** This is one method of conducting the Violence Risk Assessment. Consult with the **OHC/ Representative/ (Worker(s)-** where there is no OHC or Representative) on this and determine what is appropriate for your organization **

Worker Surveys

A worker survey is a viable way to include your organization's workers in the risk identification phase. They will likely have valuable insight into what goes on at work.

There is a worker survey template included with the SCSA's Template. This was taken and adapted from the Government of Saskatchewan's "Employer's guide for developing a policy statement and prevention plan".

Risk Areas:

Workers in Saskatchewan have the **right to know** the hazards at work. It is the employer's duty to ensure the hazards & risks are communicated to the workers.

In the prevention plan, employers must include what risks of violence were identified.

- Ensure the greatest/most severe risks are identified.
    - Reflect on:
        - Where workers work. I.e.:
            - High crime rate locations.
            - Prisons
            - Housing
            - Distant locations
            - Congested work areas
        - When workers work. I.e.:
            - Nighttime
            - Early morning shifts
        - Who workers work with
            - People who have been violent
            - Other trades/ companies
        - Stressors i.e.
            - Tight timelines
            - Distanced from their support groups (family, friends, etc.)
            - Congested work areas with
- Consider all previous violent incidents reported within your organization.

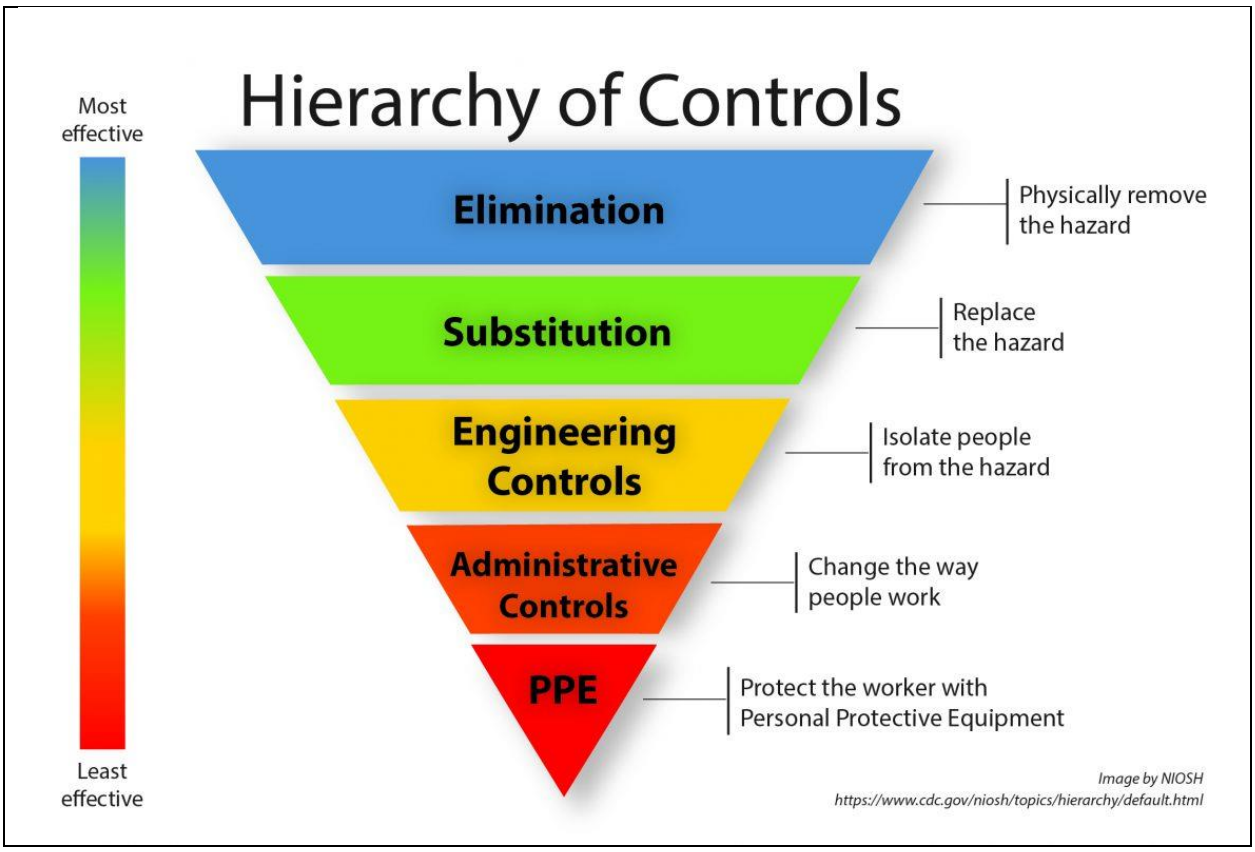
Documenting Risk Areas

The Risk Assessment will determine the risk areas.

The policy has a table for identified "Risk Areas". This is an example of a place risk areas could be documented. Include this information and ensure it is communicated to workers.

Control Strategies

Controlling the risks of violence should follow the hierarchy of controls:



Ensure that the controls selected are reasonable. Policies, training, procedures, practices, job rotation are examples of administrative controls.

Where possible, consider implementing higher level controls, such as Elimination, Substitution and Engineering controls.

Helpful Resources to review prior to Implementation of PSPP

- **Saskatchewan.ca: "An employer's guide for developing a policy statement and prevention plan"**
  - **https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/68983**
- **Saskatchewan Employment Act**
  - **https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/70351**
- **Saskatchewan Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2020**
  - **https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/112399**
- **WorkSafe Saskatchewan- "Violence in the Workplace: Establish a Prevention Program"**
  - **https://www.worksafesask.ca/education/online-courses/violence-in-the-workplace-establish-a-violence-prevention-program/**
- **Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) "Violence & Harassment in the Workplace"**
  - **https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence/violence.html**
- **Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) Violence in the Workplace: Awareness (free online course)**
  - **https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/violence_awareness**

Legends:

Highlighting Legend:

Important Note: Throughout the document, there is highlighting where a change must be made to adapt it to your organization.

Use this legend to determine what the highlighting indicates:

- Yellow= the company name (find and replace to suitable company name)
- Green= indicates documentation frequency
- Blue= multiple choices (I.e. Location, document type/name/label)
- Purple= position of a person responsible for something in the manual- this can be changed to represent your employee structure

Abbreviations Legend:

- **SEA**= Saskatchewan Employment Act
- **PSPP**= Policy Statement & Prevention Plan
- **OHC**= Occupational Health Committee
- **SK OH&S, 2020**= Saskatchewan Occupational Health & Safety Regulations, 2020
- **CCOHS**= Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety
- **LSE**= Leadership for Safety Excellence