

What is Violence?

Workplace violence is defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations:

3-26(1) as “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.”

Why Do I Need a Policy?

Violence in the workplace should never be tolerated and can have severe physical and psychological consequences for individuals. These acts can come from clients, customers, coworkers or external individuals. It is crucial that we take proactive steps to prevent it. Recognizing the signs and understanding the impact of violence is the first step in prevention.

Currently, 3-21 of the Saskatchewan Employment Act has specified businesses that are provincially regulated need violence policies as of May 17, 2024. This policy will need to be developed by the employer in consultation with your OHC, OHS Rep or with the workers.

What the Program Should Contain

1. A policy that outlines the employer's commitment to minimize or eliminate violence and to provide a training program for workers.
2. Worksite and staff positions that have experienced or may be reasonably expected to deal with violence need to be identified.
3. A procedure for informing staff about the type and extent of violence they may be exposed to and, unless prohibited by law, inform staff about anyone that has a history of violence that they may encounter while performing duties.
4. Have measures in place to protect the staff that may be exposed to violence.

5. Procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting any violent situation and developing and amending any measures that are in place to protect staff.
6. Outline a training program that covers how to recognize potentially violent situations, controls that have been put in place to protect staff, appropriate responses to violence, how to get help and outline the procedures for reporting violent situations to the employer.

Reporting Procedure

1. A worker who believes that they have personally been subjected to violence should immediately report the violence to their employer, supervisor and/or OHC committee.
2. Once a complaint is received, that person shall immediately bring the complaint to the attention of the employer.
3. The employer will then notify the alleged perpetrator of the complaint, provide the alleged perpetrator with information concerning the circumstances of the complaint and undertake a confidential investigation.
4. Following the conclusion of the investigation, the employer will inform the complainant and the alleged perpetrator of the results of the investigation.

Conclusion

Having a violence policy in place is not only a legal responsibility, but it also provides employees with a standardized guideline for instances of violence. It creates confidence that the matter will be taken seriously. Violence prevention is everyone's responsibility and by working together, we can create a safer workplace for all.

For more information please refer to: *Section 3-21 of the Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety regulations, 2020*