

# Preventing Workplace Violence

*A Program Overview*

MARCH 2011



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The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to working collaboratively with employees, unions, contractors and client groups to ensure a safe, secure and respectful workplace and to prevent all forms of violent behaviour and inappropriate conduct at our workplaces. This guide is intended to assist government departments and their managers in maintaining this commitment as well as being compliant with the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Regulations.

In accordance with Newfoundland OH&S legislation, workplace violence is defined as:

*The attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of physical force to cause injury to a worker, and includes threatening statements or behaviour which gives a worker reason to believe that he or she is at a risk of injury. (Section 22, Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2009)*

Violence can happen at any workplace and can have a serious impact on victims, their families and productivity and morale in the workplace. For this reason, Sections 22, 23 and 24 of the OH&S Regulations were changed on August 31, 2009, requiring provincially regulated employers to conduct a risk assessment, establish procedures to control the risk for workplace violence and communicate those procedures to workers. For more information on the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, please visit the following website:

[www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc090070.htm#22\\_](http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc090070.htm#22_)

This document addresses issues of workplace violence by a client or visitor, against an employee of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Each department may need to establish protocols and safe work procedures specific to the individual needs of their department, based on the outcome of the departmental risk assessment.

# Elements of a Workplace Violence Prevention Program

## 1.0 Roles and Responsibilities

### Departments

It is the responsibility of the individual departments to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the prevention of workplace violence and associated behaviours.
- Lead by example in showing respect and dignity in all interactions with others in the workplace.
- Take a proactive role in the prevention of violent, inappropriate, or objectionable behaviour and conduct.
- Become familiar with potential violent situations by identifying/assessing the risk of violence in the workplace and provide adequate protection to employees from these potential threats.
- Develop procedures to minimize the risk of violent situations occurring.
- Provide proper training and awareness for employees in workplace violence prevention practices and procedures.
- Identify criminal behaviour (assault, destruction of property, threats, etc.) and treat it as such by reporting them to police.
- Support the victim in exercising his/her legal rights in regards to a violent incident.
- Investigate and take action on all legitimate reports, suspicions or indications of workplace violence.

### Employees

It is the role and responsibility of all employees to:

- Be aware of the workplace violence prevention program.
- Act in a professional and respectful manner towards both co-workers and clients and abstain from conduct that is inappropriate.
- Participate in any required training regarding workplace violence prevention practices and procedures.
- Report to a manager or supervisor any incidents or suspicions of workplace violence or other conduct that is affecting the morale or productivity of the workplace.

## **Public Service Secretariat (PSS)**

It is the role and responsibility of the PSS to:

- Develop programs, toolkits and other support materials with respect to workplace violence prevention.
- Design and assist with facilitation of educational and awareness sessions on workplace violence prevention.
- Assist with the development of emergency response protocols.
- Provide direction and support to departments and agencies who are dealing with incidents of workplace violence.

## 1.1 Role of the OH&S Committee

As part of the internal responsibility system, the employer should consult and involve the occupational health and safety (OH&S) committee or the health and safety representative at each stage of work place violence prevention. An OH&S committee is an advisory group comprised of worker and management representatives that is required in all workplaces where ten or more workers are employed. Their primary role is to improve health and safety in the workplace by assisting in the development, implementation and promotion of an occupational health and safety program.

In striving for a violence-free workplace, the members of the OH&S committee, or the representative, should be familiar with what defines workplace violence as well as the factors that may contribute to it. With this knowledge they will be more effective in taking part in the different steps of a violence prevention program such as the development of practices, procedures, and controls. They will also be able to assist in completing workplace inspections which will help to determine any vulnerabilities that exist that may encourage or escalate incidents involving workplace violence.

To effectively manage the prevention of workplace violence, it is recommended that the committee members who participate in the process be given the training that will enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

## 1.2 Risk Assessment

The purpose of doing a Risk Assessment (RA) is to create an awareness of possible hazards and risks in the workplace. The assessment identifies who is at risk and what the risk(s) may be to an individual. It is also an opportunity to determine if existing controls that are in place are adequate, and allows for the risk(s) to be prioritized and measured.

### **Step 1 - Establish a risk assessment team**

In order to successfully prevent workplace violence it is necessary to first look at all the factors that may contribute to violence in the workplace. Once this has been done the factors can be assessed and controls can be implemented **before** these factors actually result in violence. Working together, management and employees are in the best position to identify existing and potential hazards for their workplace. As such, a team comprised of both management and front line staff who work in the area being assessed should participate in the risk assessment. A sample Risk Assessment Questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

### **Step 2 - Review previous incidents of workplace violence**

There are risk factors, processes, and interactions associated with certain jobs that may put someone at risk. The employees, the location and circumstances in which the work activities take place make each workplace unique. Additionally, the risk of violence may be greater during certain times of the day or year (e.g. night time/early morning, holidays) or because of the geographical location (e.g. near buildings/businesses susceptible to violence, isolated from other buildings/structures).

Managers can learn from experiences, such as incidents that may have occurred in similar workplaces, by obtaining information from any organizations with which they are associated (e.g., industry association, Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, Department of Government Services).

Managers should also review any incidents of violence by consulting existing incident reports, first aid records and occupational health and safety committee minutes.

It is critical to take these experiences into account when determining appropriate controls. It is also important to review the information that is collected to identify any common factors or business processes that may contribute to workplace violence. This information can then be used to identify jobs, locations or times when there is elevated risk for violence.

Make a note of any potential solutions that may be implemented to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Some factors to consider in carrying out a risk assessment include:

- **The nature of the work activities** such as the type of work (handling valuables, including cash; dealing with clients face to face), make-up of the staff and type of client group.
- **Working conditions** such as working alone or in remote locations or locations/areas under the control of the client. Also consider the neighborhood or region.
- **The design of the work activities and surrounding environment** such as characteristics of the work area (noise, stuffiness, uncomfortable temperatures and other conditions that may make clients more irritable).
- **The frequency of situations that present a risk of workplace violence.**
- **The severity of the adverse consequences to the employee exposed to a risk of workplace violence.**
- **Observations and recommendations of the OH&S committee or the health and safety representative, and of the employees.**
- **The measures that are already in place to prevent and protect against workplace violence.**

### **Step 3 - Obtain staff input**

Managers and/or the risk assessment team should also talk to employees for feedback about their experiences with workplace violence and about whether they are concerned for themselves or for their co-workers. Managers should emphasize that perceived or real threats of violence, near misses and actual incidents of physical violence are all important.

This information can be gathered from employee interviews or staff surveys. Ensure that all concerns are documented.

### **Step 4 - Conduct a workplace inspection**

A visual inspection of the workplace should be conducted by the risk assessment team to determine the physical layout and workplace design as well as a review the work procedures taking place in each area. This should include a review of administrative practices, such as visitor policies as well as work practices. This will help determine any vulnerabilities that exist that may encourage or escalate incidents involving workplace violence. A sample inspection form can be found in Appendix D.

The following table can be used as a quick reference guide when doing a risk assessment:

### **Evaluate the history of violence in your own workplace**

- ✓ Ask employees about their experiences, and whether they are concerned for themselves or others
- ✓ Survey every employee
- ✓ Use interviews, a short questionnaire, or a checklist

### **Review any incidents of violence by reviewing**

- ✓ Incident reports
- ✓ First aid records
- ✓ OH&S committee records

### **Determine whether your workplace has any of the identified risk factors associated with violence**

- ✓ Work processes, situations or interactions (working alone, working with the public, handling cash)
- ✓ High risk occupational groups
- ✓ Time of the day, night or year
- ✓ Geographic location

### **Conduct a visual inspection of your workplace and the work being done, including**

- ✓ Workplace design and layout
- ✓ Administrative practices
- ✓ Work practices

### **Review legislative requirements.**

### **Organize and review the information you have collected.**

### **Ask yourself**

- ✓ How many incidents of workplace violence have been documented or reported in the workplace?
- ✓ How many incidents of potentially violent situations such as threats, have been documented or reported in the workplace?
- ✓ What occupational groups or individual employees appear to be more at risk of violence or potential violence?
- ✓ Is there any particular location that appears to have experienced a higher proportion of incidents of violence?
- ✓ Is there a time of day, month or year when incidents of violence have occurred more often?

### **Record the results of your assessment**

For each type of risk that is identified, it is important to determine:

- the frequency of the occurrence.
- the impact to staff and business operations.

Once risk factors have been identified, these factors must be assessed in order of priority so that prevention measures can be prioritized, without losing sight of the final objective, which is to control all of the risk factors. The information gathered in Steps 1, 2 and 3 should be summarized using the Violence Risk Assessment Form. A sample form can be found in Appendix B.

Following completion of Step 4, all information should be documented using the Risk/Hazard Assessment Report Form found in Appendix D. Not only will this documentation assist in any future legal issues that may arise but it will also serve as a baseline for future risk assessments that will be conducted. This will ensure the effectiveness of the program over time.

## 1.3 Implementing Controls

Controls are the practical measures that can be taken to prevent and protect against workplace violence. The risk assessment will have identified the most significant concerns for the workplace. The next step is to develop controls to minimize or eliminate these risks. Preventative measures include training and education as well as improvements to the physical workplace design, administrative practices and work practices.

Of all the possible prevention techniques, **eliminating the risk** altogether is the most effective. The goal is to remove the risk, condition or activity, and where necessary, replace it with another condition or activity that does not involve the risk.

If the risk cannot be eliminated, **attempt to reduce** it through control techniques that can help limit the severity if work place violence does occur.

Protection techniques make it possible to counter a workplace violence occurrence or diminish the scope of potential violence. There are two types of protection: **group and individual**. Group protection involves blocking potential aggressors or keeping them apart from the employees. For example, installing access card readers on doors to prevent unauthorized access to employee areas. Individual protection may involve implementing safe work procedures to safeguard employees working alone.

In taking a measure to control a present risk, a current working condition or an existing activity, it will be necessary to ensure that the measure itself is not a source of risk before implementing it. For example if a locked security door is installed to prevent unauthorized access, confirmation should be received that it meets the applicable fire protection requirements in case of an emergency.

A prevention measure must not create a new hazard. If a new hazard arises, it must be dealt with as soon as possible. For example, if a customer service area is closed off with protective glass, there should be proper ventilation for the employee working in the closed-off area.

The following are some examples of how to control risks in a variety of situations:

## **A. Working Alone**

An effort should be made so that working alone in an area of recognized risk is avoided. When employees are required to work alone the employer should consider the following options:

- Establish a check-in procedure. Make sure regular contact is kept with all workers.
- Establish ways to account for people (visually or verbally) while they are working.
- For most lone workers, the telephone will be the main source of contact. If work is at a desk or station, have a telephone close by. If work is away from a main office or work station, the use of a cellular phone is recommended. If a cellular phone is unreliable in the area, attempt to have alternative methods of communication available (such as use of public telephones, site visits or satellite technology).
- Schedule high risk tasks during normal business hours, or when another worker is capable of helping if an emergency situation arises.
- Position workers, where possible, in locations of highest visibility.
- Keep windows clear to allow the worker to be clearly visible to the public.
- Encourage the use of a "buddy system" in high risk situations - ensure that workers are aware that this option is available to them.
- Where appropriate, use a security system such as video surveillance cameras, mirrors, observation windows, etc., however, ensure that informed consent is obtained from

## **B. Parking Lot Safety**

### **Encourage employees to:**

- Park near the building in a highly visible and well-lit area.
- Park near the stairs or a well-lit exit in an underground lot.
- Use the main building entrance -- avoid rear or secluded exits.
- Lock the doors and roll up windows once they are in the vehicle.
- Have a plan ahead of time. Know where to go for safety and how to call for help.

Tips when walking to and from the car after dark or in a high-risk neighbourhood:

Always try to walk with a co-worker, or a security guard. Give them a ride back to the main entrance so they do not have to walk back alone.

### **If employees have to walk alone:**

- Have a co-worker watch him/her from a window.
- Encourage him/her to wave to a window even if no one is watching to give the illusion that someone is there.
- They should be reminded to stay on well-lit streets, and in the centre of the sidewalk. Stay away from hiding spots such as bushes, doorways, alleys and parked cars. Cross the road if necessary.

Employees should be reminded to be aware of their surroundings and to trust their instincts when they feel something is not right.

### **Employees should not:**

- Dig in their purse or bag.
- Wear headphones or be distracted by a cell phone conversation.
- Carry heavy briefcases or bags that may get in the way.

### **Have ready:**

- Keys to unlock the vehicle.
- Keys or cardkey to unlock building doors.
- A whistle or other personal alarm.

As employees approach their car they should look around, inside, and even glance underneath for people who may be present. If they are suspicious they should walk away and go to a safe place and call for help.

## C. Working Late

When employees are working late there are precautions that should be taken:

- The employee should let a security guard or supervisor know that he/she is working late and when he/she expects to leave.
- Before dark, all employees should move their cars to a well-lit area close to the building.
- All those working late should be reminded to let a friend, family member or security guard know they are working late and when they expect to leave.
- Have a check-in procedure in place. Arrange for employees to work late on the same night as a colleague.
- Have a procedure in place to ensure that all windows and doors are locked and that nobody is in the washrooms and storage rooms before employees leave for the day.
- If an employee enters a room and suspects that someone might be inside, he/she should back out quietly and go to a safe area with a lockable door and call for help.
- If an employee encounters someone unfamiliar he/she should indicate that they are not alone. He/she may want to say something like "my supervisor will be right here and will be able to help you".
- If an employee suspects that someone is lurking outside, he/she should call the police or security officers.
- Encourage employees to be aware of the services offered by local transit companies such as Metrobus, for after-hours commuters (e.g., they may have a "request stop" service that allows commuters to get off anywhere along the route after dark, rather than at a designated stop).

## D. Working Off-site

It is sometimes necessary for employees to conduct business away from the traditional office setting and in these situations employees should be advised to exercise extra caution. Work practices include all the things that employees do while performing a job. Procedures or safe work practices should be developed to ensure that these employees:

- Have access to a cell phone to allow them to remain in contact with others in case of emergency.
- Prepare a daily work plan so that others know where they are as well as when they are expected somewhere. Develop a check-in procedure.

Do not enter any situation or location where they feel threatened or unsafe.

- Arrange to meet clients in a 'safe' environment where other people are around.
- Always wear or carry an identification badge. It will show that they are acting in an official capacity and that they are an employee doing their job.
- Keep records and indicate if the client is known to be aggressive, hostile or potentially violent.

## **E. Handling Stalking Situations**

- Keep a record of all relevant information such as the date and time of incidents, witnesses, and anything that could help establish the identity of the stalker.
- Encourage the victim to report the incidents to police.
- Alter the work pattern of the threatened employee such as his/her hours and parking arrangements.
- Provide assistance for the victim such as changing his/her work telephone number and having calls screened through voicemail.

## **F. Safety Precautions for the Workspace Layout**

- Provide sufficient personal work space.
- Arrange furniture in a manner to prevent employees from being confined and to maintain a minimum distance between the employee and the client in order to minimize the opportunity for physical contact.
- Minimize the amount of furniture in a given room and provide a clear route from an employee's work area to the door.
- Provide alternative exits if possible and make employees aware of such alternative exit routes.
- Minimize the number of objects that could be possibly thrown or used as a weapon.
- If possible, provide rolling chairs for staff and stationary ones for clients.

## 1.4 Reporting and Managing Workplace Violence

Unfortunately, even after the hazard identification and assessment process has been completed and controls have been implemented, workplace violence may still occur due to unforeseen factors and the nature of the work being done. It is important for managers to instruct employees that they have an obligation under the OH&S Act to report any workplace violence that they are aware of, even if they are not involved. Some minor conflicts or incidents may be able to be resolved through mediation by a manager or supervisor and an attempt should be made to do so if possible and when appropriate. The employer should call the police in case of uncertainty and the police will then decide whether the incident is a matter for them to handle. It is important to note that even if the employees involved do not wish the police to be contacted, it remains the responsibility of the employer to make the final decision regarding police involvement to address the incident. However, if the employees involved request to have the police notified, the employer must do so.

All incidents of violence, regardless of degree should be reported and documented using the Violence Incident Reporting Form which may be found in Appendix E. These reports should be completed as soon as possible following the incident and should be given to the manager. These reports should include:

- Information about the victim.
- Information about the alleged offender.
- A description of the incident or interaction in question.
- Information about witnesses and their testimony.
- Other relevant information (e.g. events leading up to incident, suggested course of action).

The effectiveness of any workplace violence prevention program depends in part on how quickly and efficiently reports of violence are handled. When necessary and if there is imminent danger, managers and staff should refer to the Emergency Response Plan for their department for evacuation or lockdown procedures. If the department does not have an emergency response plan, one should be developed. Managing an incident of workplace violence may include the following:

- Providing emergency intervention to protect potential victims.
- Notifying the police, fire or ambulance services.
- Providing emergency first-aid to victims.
- Evacuating staff or facility lockdown.
- Containing the scene.
- Securing witnesses.
- Preserving evidence until the police arrive.
- Coordinating professional counseling for victims.
- Notifying family members of victims.
- Briefing staff and senior management.
- Business resumption planning.
- Coordinating ongoing victim support.

## 1.5 Investigating Workplace Violence

As soon as possible after an incident of workplace violence, an investigation must be initiated by the manager. In many cases, it may be appropriate for the manager to refer the incident to Strategic Human Resource Management units for investigation or follow up. It is essential however that the person investigating the violent incident be properly trained to handle the incidents that are reported to them. In more serious cases, a qualified and experienced investigator may be required, such as the police. All information related to the incident must be documented as this information may be used to support any legal action that may be taken. It may also be useful in evaluating existing controls and may result in the identification of previously unidentified risks. Ensure that all findings and outcomes are appropriately communicated to all staff involved; however, the individual's right to privacy must be respected.

## 1.6 Establishing an Emergency Response Plan

It is necessary to have a specific plan, which clearly outlines how to respond to a serious incident in progress. In establishing the Emergency Response Plan, Departments may need to consult with Building Security and/or local law enforcement agencies. Consider the following steps when developing your plan:

- Determine how to secure the workplace.
- Establish internal emergency numbers and/or code words to alert co-workers that urgent help is required.
- Assign responsibilities for decision making and action to staff with the appropriate skills and authority. Appoint alternates in case a key person is unavailable.
- Provide clear guidelines to follow in various situations.
- Provide necessary training to respond to and diffuse potentially violent situations.
- Outline supervisor's responsibilities.
- Identify scenarios where you would call for emergency services.
- Identify who is responsible for contacting emergency services such as:
  - The police
  - Emergency response personnel
  - Victim support services
- Identify scenarios where you would "lock down" the workplace.
- Develop a detailed evacuation plan.
- Practice emergency drills.
- Develop a system to account for the safety of all staff; and
- Set up procedures to:
  - Provide first aid
  - Communicate with the police
  - Complete reports
  - Establish procedures for the communication of information related to the incident

## 1.7 Supports Available

Following a violent incident, it is essential that the victim(s), affected employees, and in some cases, the victim's family obtain immediate assistance. Affected employees may require emotional support (critical incident stress management, counseling), workplace accommodation, and/or medical treatment.

Some available supports and resources include:

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides all employees in the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Service with an opportunity to obtain assistance for personal problems that are either affecting, or have the potential to affect, work performance. Problems may be marital, family, financial, emotional or those associated with substance abuse, domestic abuse, or gambling.

Further information, as well as contact information, 24 hour crisis phone numbers and a list of resources and related services is available via the EAP's website.

[www.psc.gov.nl.ca/psc/EAP/](http://www.psc.gov.nl.ca/psc/EAP/)

You may also contact by telephone: (709) 729-5810

### ***Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Units***

The Strategic Human Resource management (SHRM) Units provide departmental and employee support.

**Resource Sector SHRM Unit:** Tel (709) 729-0386

The Resource Sector includes:

- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
- Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development
- Department of Environment and Conservation

**Social Sector SHRM Unit:** Tel (709) 729-5750

The Social Sector includes:

- Department of Education
- Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment
- Labour Relations Agency
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Municipal Affairs
- Department of Government Services
- Government Purchasing Agency
- Fire and Emergency Services

**Executive Council SHRM Unit:** Tel (709) 729-4767

The Executive Council Sector includes:

- Public Service Secretariat
- Department of Finance
- Public Service Commission
- Department of Business
- Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
- Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Intergovernmental Affairs
- Cabinet Secretariat
- Government House
- Women's Policy Office
- Rural Secretariat

**Transportation and Works SHRM Unit:** Tel (709) 729-3292

**Justice SHRM Unit :** Tel (709) 729-4847

**Department of Child, Youth and Family Services SHRM Unit:**  
Tel (709) 729-0016

## 1.8 Providing Workplace Violence Training and Education

Education and training are a necessary part of any violence prevention program. The content and type of training will depend on the results of the risk assessment and may vary between departments. In all cases, employees should be made aware of the workplace violence prevention program during orientation. Training should be provided for safe work practices and procedures that are job specific.

Training is essential when striving for a violence-free work place as it raises awareness and educates employees. With increased awareness and knowledge, employees will know what to do if involved in violence in the work place and can contribute to preventing it from occurring. If the employees cannot be trained all at one time, the priority should go to training for employees who are considered to face a higher risk of work place violence.

Every employee needs to understand:

- Their rights and responsibilities under the OH&S Act and the Government of NL Workplace Violence Prevention Program.
- Risk factors in the workplace.
- Procedures to control the risk of workplace violence.
- Appropriate responses to incidents, including how to get help.
- Procedures for reporting and documenting incidents or potential incidents.
- The follow up and support services available in the event of an incident of workplace violence.

Training should be specific to the risk of each individual employee or occupational group and may consider the following:

- Warning signs that may precede a violent situation.
- How to prepare a profile of a potentially violent client.
- Ways of preventing or diffusing violent situations or aggressive behaviour including:
  - Anger management
  - Mediation
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Conflict resolution
  - Behaviour management
  - Assertiveness training
- Stress management.
- Crisis intervention.

Whenever information sessions are held or training is provided, the employer should document the content of the session and a sign in sheet should be completed by those attending the session.

Ideally, if training is provided on a topic of high risk it may be appropriate to confirm employees understanding of the training by having them complete a short quiz which highlights the most important aspects of the training. This will not only confirm that the training was adequate but will also demonstrate due diligence.

## 1.9 Program Evaluation

An annual review of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program should be done by the supervisor and members of the OH&S committee to evaluate how well the program is working and to identify any necessary changes. Prevention measures must be updated as necessary. The review may take place more often if there is a change that impacts the effectiveness of the controls. For example, if a client services counter was installed to act as a barrier but an incident occurs where a customer climbs over the counter, the prevention measures (or controls) need to be reviewed and modified.

Program evaluation should include:

- Listing all incidents of violence which occurred in the past year.
- Listing corrective actions taken following violent incidents.
- Citing specific changes to the violence prevention practices or procedures.
- Revisiting the hazard assessment:
  - Re-do the employee survey and compare the results to any prior surveys.

## Appendix A: Definitions

**Workplace Violence** is defined by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety as any willful act or incident in which a person's health, safety and well-being are challenged either explicitly or implicitly in circumstances relating to their work.

Violence in the workplace may take many forms including physical, verbal and sexual. Workplace violence also includes types of abusive behaviour including verbal or written threats, verbal abuse, bullying, and cyber bullying or cyber violence.

Workplace violence may occur only once, it may involve various tactics of subtle manipulation or it may occur frequently while escalating over a period of months or years.

Workplace violence can occur at or outside the workplace. It may occur at off-site business-related functions, such as conferences; or in clients' homes. It can also include violence that occurs away from work, but resulting from work. For example, a social worker who receives a threatening call or e-mail from a client at his or her home is a victim of workplace violence.

Workplace violence can be the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of physical force to cause injury to a worker, and includes threatening statements or behaviour which gives a worker reason to believe that he or she is at a risk of injury.

There are several forms that workplace violence can take:

**Violence committed by a client/customer/stranger** usually involves either a random act committed by an outsider or stranger or being victimized by someone receiving a service. An example of this would be an employee being threatened over the phone by a client complaining about the loss of benefits.

**Physical violence** is the most visible form of violence and is characterized by the inflicting of injury or injuries. It may include but is not limited to such acts as grabbing, striking, punching, pinching, shoving, slapping, hitting, hair pulling, biting, arm twisting, and kicking.

**Stalking** behaviour is characterized by following, watching or maintaining surveillance of a co-worker, client, or contractor. It can also consist of repeated, unwanted contact via telephone calls, hang-ups, letters and faxes or over the internet through emails and can involve acts of intimidation or other threatening behaviour.

**Threatening behaviour** includes, but is not limited to shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects.

**Verbal abuse** refers to offensive behaviour through the use of vindictive, harsh or humiliating language. It can include but is not limited to swearing, shouting, constant and/or public criticism, condescending language and inappropriate comments. It may occur in private without a witness.

**Verbal or written threats** may include any expression of intent to inflict harm, and may include:

- **Direct threats**, which are clear and explicit communications which distinctly indicate that the potential offender intends to do harm, for example, “I am going to make you pay for what you did to me.”
- **Conditional threats** involve a condition, for example, “If you don’t get off my back, you will regret it.”
- **Veiled threats** usually involve body language, verbal comments or behaviours that leave little doubt in the mind of the victim that the perpetrator intends harm, for example, “Do you think anyone would care if someone beat you up?”

## Appendix B: Sample Risk Assessment Questionnaire

Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace or Tasks Covered by this Assessment:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

YES	NO	Question
		When you are open to the public, are there times when only one employee is present?
		Do your employees handle cash?
		Do your employees deal with the public?
		Do your employees exercise control over others (law enforcement)?
		Do your employees inspect other people's business or property?
		Do your employees exercise security functions?
		Do your employees work in community based settings?
		Do your employees deal with or handle firearms or similar weapons?
		Has this workplace experienced incidents of violence in the past?
		Have similar workplaces in other organizations experienced violence?

In addition to the factors listed in the table, the employer should consider the following factors that may increase the potential for violence:

- Late hours of the night or early hours of the morning
- Time of year (Christmas)
- Being located next to buildings or businesses that are high risk for violent crimes (bars, banks)
- Being located in areas isolated from other buildings or structures

If there is the potential for violence at this workplace, describe the violence by answering the following:

What activity or feature of the workplace may trigger the violence?

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Describe the potential type of violence (assault, robbery, verbal abuse).

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Describe how often the predictors of violence occur (for example, how often is there cash in the workplace? This could be daily, weekly, occasionally).

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State who is at risk from this violence (use job titles, not names)

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## Appendix C: Sample Inspection Form

This is a sample form only and will likely need to be modified to meet the individual needs of the department.

YES	NO	Parking Lot
		Are the entrances and exits well marked?
		Is there sufficient lighting?
YES	NO	Building Perimeter
		Is your workplace near any buildings or businesses that are at risk of violent crimes ( bars, banks)?
		Is your building located in a high crime area?
		Are there signs of vandalism?
		Are you isolated from other buildings?
		Is the exterior of the building adequately lit?
		Is the building entrance adequately lit?
		Is the entrance to the building easily seen from the street?
		Are there any overgrown shrubs or trees which can obstruct your view or provide a hiding place?
YES	NO	Access Control
#		How many public entrances are there to your building?
		Is your building connected to any other buildings?
		<i>If yes, is access controlled to your building?</i>
		Do you use coded cards to access your building?
YES	NO	Security System
		Do you have a security system at your location?
		Are there security guards located in your building?
		Are there signs posted indicating that there is a security system in place?
		Are security cameras or mirrors placed in locations that would deter potential offenders?

YES	NO	Reception
		Is your reception area easily identifiable and accessible?
		Can the staff at the front desk clearly see visitors?
		Is the reception area staffed at all times?
		Do you have a policy or practice for receiving, escorting and identifying visitors?
YES	NO	Lighting
		Is there adequate lighting? Are there any lights out? <i>If yes, where?</i>
		Can you access main light control switches?
YES	NO	Stairwells and Exits
		Are exit doors marked?
		Are there places at the bottom of the stairwell where someone could hide? <i>If yes, where?</i>
		Is the lighting adequate?
		Can lights be turned off in the stairwell?
		Is there more than one route?
		Do stairwell doors lock behind you?
YES	NO	Elevators
		Do you have a full view of whether the elevator is occupied before entering?
		Is there an emergency phone or emergency call button in each elevator?
YES	NO	Washrooms
		Is public access to staff washrooms controlled?
		Can the lights in the washrooms be turned off?
YES	NO	Interview Rooms
		Do you have a separate interview/meeting room? <i>If yes, can others clearly see in?</i>
		Is there an alarm system in this room?
		Is the furniture arranged to allow emergency exit?
YES	NO	Offices
		Has the furniture been arranged to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow a quick exit from the office?</li> <li>• Maintain a safe distance between the employee and the client?</li> </ul>
		Are there objects in sight that can be used as weapons?
YES	NO	Emergency Assistance
		Are emergency numbers posted?

## Appendix D: Sample Risk /Hazard Assessment Report Form

Rating Table		
F. Frequency of Exposure	P. Probability of Injury	S. Severity of Injury
1. Few exposed to the risk or hazard infrequently 2. Few exposed to the risk or hazard frequently 3. Many exposed to the risk or hazard infrequently 4. Many exposed to the risk or hazard frequently	1. Extremely remote: unlikely to occur 2. Remote: could occur at some point 3. Reasonably probable: will occur eventually 4. Probable: likely to occur soon	1. Negligible: first aid 2. Marginal: minor injury, illness or damage 3. Critical: serious injury, illness or damage 4. Catastrophic: deaths, widespread illness or damage

Division/Location \_\_\_\_\_

Hazard Rating **3 - 5 Low Risk**    **6 - 9 Medium Risk**    **10 – 12 High Risk**

Describe Risk/Hazard	Hazard Rating				Controls Presently in Place	Required Action
	F	P	S	Total		
Action Plan/Comments/Assignment of Responsibilities					Follow Up	
					Who?	When?

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Sample Violent Incident Reporting Form

Violent Incident Reporting Form
Date of Report _____
Date of Incident _____
Time of Incident _____
Employee
Name _____
Work Address _____
Job/Position _____
Department _____
What were you doing at the time of the incident? _____ _____
Offender(s)
Name _____
Address _____
Description _____
Relationship to offender (if any) ____ Client    ____ Other    ____ Stranger
Other details _____ _____

Witness(es)
Name _____
Address _____
Name _____
Address _____
Details of incident
Type of incident (physical injury, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, verbal threat, property damage) _____ _____ _____
Location of incident _____ _____
Other relevant information
Possible contributing factors _____ _____ _____
Relevant events preceding incident _____ _____
Suggested preventative/remedial actions _____ _____

Employee  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Manager  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Key Resources Used to Prepare these Guidelines

Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2009.

Guide to Violence Prevention in the Workplace. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. 2009.

1<sup>st</sup> Edition May 2010  
Revised March 2011