

## Violence and Harassment

Workplace violence and harassment is a common risk for many companies. Not only can it occur on location, but it may occur offsite, including at functions/events, online, at home, in parking lots, through phone calls, and at any other public area. It is important for workers to know where the highest risk areas can be found in the workplace, which can be identified through a risk assessment. Through the development, implementation, and training of a policy and reporting procedures a company can begin to monitor the effectiveness of control measures to reduce or eliminate the risk. Violence and harassment are not limited to one type of action, rather there is a wide span of acts that can be threatening to a worker's health, safety, or mental well-being.

What is the Difference?	
Hazard	Definition
<b>Violence</b>	Any act displaying threatening statements or behaviour that gives a person reasonable cause to believe that physical force will be used against a person, or an attempted or actual act of physical force against a person.
<b>Harassment</b>	Objectionable conduct or any unwanted physical or verbal behavior which may offend anyone in your workplace. Harassment is a form of discrimination that humiliates or creates psychological or health risk, or affects your overall well-being. It may persist over time or can occur from a serious one-time event.

## What's the Danger?

Some types of violence and harassment include:



- **Threatening Behaviour** – this can include bullying, gestures, intimidation, destroying public or personal property, vandalism, shaking fists, pushing, and sabotage.
- **Verbal Abuse/Threats** – this can include belittling others, any tone which can be considered intent to cause harm, rumours, unwelcome remarks or jokes, swearing, arguments, and psychological trauma.
- **Written Threats** – this can include threats through notes, emails, texts, and letters.
- **Physical Attacks** – this can include pranks, physical assaults, anger-related incidents, pushing, sexual assaults, and murder.
- **Environmental** – this can include posting of derogatory or sexual content.

While acts of violence and harassment can occur in many ways, it is important to identify risks to eliminate or reduce the potential of an occurrence through preparation and assessment. Whether the situation is deemed a high or low risk, no act of violence or harassment is to be tolerated in the workplace. It is important to understand different types of risks and situations to be proactive prior to an incident rather than reactive in protecting yourself and others. A good place to start is to assess violence and harassment risks, take action to communicate situations potentially putting yourself or others at risk including working with customers, in parking lots, in isolated areas, working alone, etc. Next, implement control measures to minimize risks which may include developing a working alone process with check-ins, reporting methods, upgrading parking lot lighting, building locks, adding security systems, pairing up for high-risk tasks, and developing high-risk task procedures. Assessing each situation can minimize the chance of an occurrence and if an incident was to happen, training in how to correctly handle specific situations can reduce the risk of injury or losses.



# SAFETY TALKS

Violence and Harassment

## Safety Tips

- ✓ Perform a risk assessment to determine the likelihood and severity of violence and harassment within the workplace to determine the potential risk.
- ✓ Develop in consultation with the worker representative or committee members both a harassment and violence policy.
- ✓ Inform all workers of violence and harassment hazards that they may potentially encounter or be affected by.
- ✓ Implement reporting procedures and train all workers on incident reporting procedures. Reporting incidents will allow for corrective and disciplinary actions to be implemented creating a safer working environment.
- ✓ Ensure violence and harassment policies are posted or easily accessible and referenceable to all employees. (i.e., bulletin board, safety manual, intranet, etc.)
- ✓ Report to your immediate supervisor if you feel harassed or a violent incident has occurred. Share concerns and issues at the time of occurrence so they can be addressed immediately.
- ✓ Implement disciplinary action plans to document and resolve any occurrences and implement corrective actions and control measures.

## Demonstrate

Review workplace violence and harassment policies with employees and show them where policies are located within the workplace.

Review Safe Work Procedures that may include potentially violent or harassing situations (dealing with irate customers, handling money, etc.) with applicable employees.

## Discussion

What are the reporting procedures including how to file an incident report, how the incident will be investigated, how both parties will be informed of the results of the investigation, and the control measures to be implemented?

What are some areas in the work place where we may be susceptible to a potentially violent or harassing situation?

If a situation arises and you are working alone, what is the procedure for handling the situation?

### DID YOU KNOW?

The names of those involved must remain confidential unless it is necessary to investigate the complaint or take corrective action



# SAFETY TALKS

## Violence and Harassment

### Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation

Part 2 - General Duties, General Safety Duties

Part 10 - Harassment

Part 11 - Violence in the Workplace

### Workers Involved in this Safety Talk

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Signature

Name	Signature

### Notes

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