WorkSafe VICTORIA

A guide for employers

Preventing and responding to work-related violence

March 2015

Contents

1. Introduction

Work-related violence involves incidents in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This definition covers a broad range of actions and behaviours that can create a risk to the health and safety of employees. It includes behaviour often described as acting out, challenging behaviour and behaviours of concern.

Work-related violence can cause physical and/or psychological injuries, and sometimes be fatal. Employees can be exposed to work-related violence from a range of sources, including clients, customers, patients, people in custody and members of the public.

Work-related violence can happen in any industry but often occurs in the health, aged care, disability, youth services, education, law enforcement, retail, hospitality, security, cash-handling, finance and banking industries.

Examples of work-related violence include:

- biting, spitting, scratching, hitting, kicking
- pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing
- throwing objects
- verbal threats
- threatening someone with a weapon, armed robbery
- sexual assault.

This guide will help employers understand their duties and provides advice about how to identify hazards and risks related to work-related violence, choose appropriate control measures and respond to incidents. The information will be useful for employees also.

Industry guidance

Other WorkSafe Victoria publications that include guidance on work-related violence:

Prevention and management of aggression in health services: A handbook for workplaces

Real estate – Property inspection safety

Working safely in community services

Security personnel OHS – Static guarding and patrol work

Armed hold-ups and cash handling – Transferring cash

Cash-in-transit – A guide to managing OHS in the cash-in-transit industry

Working alone

2. OHS Laws

Occupational health and safety (OHS) laws are designed to ensure the health and safety of employees and others at the workplace. This guide provides information on how employers can implement measures to eliminate or reduce work-related violence, so far as is reasonably practicable. It also provides information on how to respond to incidents, including what systems to put in place and how to investigate an incident. This information will help employers comply with their duties under the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (the OHS Act). It can also be used by health and safety representatives (HSRs).

2.1 Employer duties

An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for their employees (employees include independent contractors engaged by an employer and any employees of the independent contractor). This includes providing and maintaining systems of work that are, so far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health and consulting with health and safety representatives (HSRs) and their employees about health and safety issues that may directly affect them. Consultation about work-related violence must occur when:

- identifying or assessing hazards or risks in the workplace

- making decisions about measures to be taken to prevent and manage work-related violence risks

- making decisions about information and training on work related violence

- proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of employees.

Employers must also provide information, instruction, training or supervision to their employees to enable them to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health.

2.2 Employee duties

Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety in the workplace, and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions (including omissions). Employees must also cooperate with their employer with respect to any action taken to comply with the OHS Act.

3. Risk management

Managing the risks of work-related violence is a planned, systematic process. It involves:

- **identifying hazards and assessing risks** to determine:
  - what could harm employees
  - how likely it is that harm may occur – eg not very likely, very likely
  - how serious the harm could be – eg minor, serious, fatal.
- **controlling risks**, which focuses on determining the most effective risk control measures for any given circumstance
- **reviewing and improving the effectiveness of control measures,** to ensure prevention measures are working as planned and, when necessary, improved.

Employers are required to consult with employees and HSRs about health and safety matters that could directly affect them.

Drawing on the experience, knowledge and ideas of employees is more likely to result in the identification of all hazards and the selection of effective risk control measures.

Consultation needs to involve:

- sharing information about anything that could affect workplace health and safety – information must be timely and in a form that can be understood by employees, including in other languages where appropriate
- giving employees a reasonable opportunity to express their views – employees should be encouraged to play a part in the problem-solving process
- taking those views into account – employees should help to shape decisions, not hear about them after they are made.

3.1 Identifying hazards and assessing risks

Work-related violence hazards generally arise as a result of an interaction of the:

- work environment
- work tasks and how they are carried out
- way work is designed and managed.

Typical hazards that give rise to work-related violence include:

- handling cash, drugs or valuables
- working alone, working in isolation, working in the community (home visits, outreach work), working at night
- providing services to distressed, angry or incarcerated people
- enforcement activities (eg police work, security).

When identifying work-related violence hazards and assessing the risk of violence at work it is important to recognise that it is known to be under-reported, particularly in occupations where incidents occur on a regular basis.

Factors that can deter employees from reporting include:

- reporting is time-consuming and complicated
- once it's over, employees just want to forget about it
- it is just 'part of the job' so nothing can be done about it
- thinking that nothing will happen if a report is made
- employees believe they will be blamed for the incident
- incidents are so common that only serious ones are reported.

HSRs and employees likely to be directly affected by work-related violence must be consulted when hazards are identified. To help identify if work-related violence is a hazard:

- review hazard and incident reports
- talk with HSRs, health and safety committees, employees, customers and clients
- walk-through and inspect the workplace
- review workers' compensation claims
- refer to industry standards and guidelines
- examine local crime statistics.

Risk management

To determine the likelihood that someone will be harmed by work-related violence, ask:

- how often is the task done? Does this make harm more or less likely to occur?

- has it happened before, either in this workplace or somewhere else? If it has happened, how often does it happen?

- what are the consequences? Will it cause minor or serious injury, or death?

Use the risk control measure selection tool at Appendix B to identify work-related violence hazards and risk factors present at the workplace.

3.2 Controlling the risks

There are many ways to control the risk of work-related violence and some measures are more effective than others. Risk control measures should be selected on the basis of what is most reliable and provides employees with the highest level of protection. An employer should first consider if the risk can be eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. If elimination is not reasonably practicable, the risk should be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

The most effective control measures eliminate the hazard and associated risk – eg eliminate cash handling in a public car park by introducing an electronic payment system. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the hazard, the risk should be minimised by implementing a range of control measures.

A number of control measures should be used together to reduce the risk of violence in instances where a single control is likely to be ineffective. Measures may need to be implemented across the whole organisation, as well as in specific work areas (eg using engineering controls such as anti-jump barriers in banks, CCTV and security measures, plus administrative controls, such as cash handling procedures). Integrate control measures into the way work is done.

Use the risk control measures selection tool at Appendix B to select measures to control the hazards and risk factors. The risk control measures in the tool are listed below.

Physical work environment and security risk control measures

The physical environment can affect the likelihood of violent incidents occurring and the ease with which people can respond to those incidents. The following control measures are the most reliable and are likely to provide the highest protection for employees. Multiple measures should be used.

- the building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose

- where possible, employees are separated from the public – eg with protective barriers or screens

- access to the premises and vulnerable areas is appropriately controlled

- no public access to the premises when people work alone or at night

- employees can see who is coming into the premises and restrict access when necessary

- communication and alarm systems are in place, regularly maintained and tested

- cash, valuables and drugs are stored securely

- cash-handling procedures are developed and implemented – eg electronic funds transfer only, locked drop safes, carry small amounts of cash, vary banking times, 'limited cash held' signs displayed

- where possible, limit the amount of cash, valuables and drugs held on the premises

- workplace uses safe glass – eg laminated, toughened or perspex (in picture frame and mirrors also)

- no access to dangerous implements or objects that could be thrown or used to injure someone

- internal and external lighting assists visibility

- employees have a safe place to retreat to (and to escort others to)

- furniture and partitions are arranged so movement is not restricted and there is good visibility of all service areas

- appropriate signage to direct clients and visitors

- security measures are used – eg CCTV, anti-jump screens, timer safes.

For more information on cash handling see WorkSafe publications:

- *Armed hold-ups and cash handling – Transferring cash*

- *Cash-in-transit – A guide to managing OHS in the cash-in-transit industry*

Risk management

Work systems risk control measures

Work systems and **procedures** are administrative controls and should be part of the overall work-related violence prevention strategy. Work systems and procedures, some of which are listed below, are insufficient on their own to reduce the risk of violence and should be used with physical work environment and security control measures.

- procedures for working in isolation and in uncontrolled environments
- policy stating appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence (see example at Appendix A)
- responsible service of alcohol policy and practices are used
- procedures for opening and closing the business
- employees are monitored when working in the community or away from the workplace – eg a supervisor checks in regularly throughout the shift
- there is a system to map and record areas of concern for safe access and egress
- regular handover of information occurs – eg with employees, other agencies, carers and service providers
- process to assess client compatibility and suitability
- work practices are evaluated to see if they contribute to aggression
- behaviours and their triggers are identified, and strategies to address them are implemented
- identification system is in place – eg employees and authorised visitors are clearly identified
- understanding client condition/disability/triggers/care and behaviour management plans
- behaviour and treatment programs are reviewed after incidents or changes in behaviour
- where client is known to have a history of aggression, a management plan is in place that has been developed in consultation with appropriately qualified people
- policy on the ongoing treatment of clients known to be aggressive or abusive, such as treatment contracts.

Training

Use training to support the overall approach to work-related violence prevention. It should not be viewed as the main way to control the risk of work-related violence.

Training can be provided in the following areas:

- violence prevention measures (part of the induction training package before starting work)
- workplace policy and procedures, including emergency response
- de-escalating aggression – eg identify signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encourage reasoning, listen carefully, acknowledge concerns
- situational risk assessment – eg when visiting homes or working off-site
- positive behaviour strategies and managing behaviours of concern
- communication skills.

3.3 Reviewing risk control measures

Reviews assist employers to check risk control measures are working and may also identify possible improvements to their effectiveness through changes to the physical environment, new work procedures, and/or additional training.

A review of risk control measures can include an examination of the physical environment, work functions and tasks.

A review of risk control measures should occur:

- at a regular time – eg annually
- when employee or HSR feedback indicates risk control measures are ineffective or not as effective as they should be
- when an HSR or health and safety committee requests a review
- when there have been significant changes in the work environment or work tasks
- after an incident.

4. Responding to work-related violence

Responses to work-related violence will vary depending on the nature and severity of the incident. Systems should be in place that document what to do at the time of, and immediately after, an incident.

4.1 Managing incidents

A response system should address immediate safety issues, medical treatment, internal reporting and notifications required by external agencies such as police, fire or ambulance. Any incident management policies and procedures must be developed in consultation with HSRs and employees who may be directly affected by work-related violence.

These policies and procedures should include:

- emergency and evacuation plans
- reporting procedures and incident investigation
- guidelines on when to call the police
- guidelines on when to call ambulance services
- sanctions and/or actions to be taken against aggressors – eg referral for clinical review
- testing and maintenance of communication and duress equipment
- regular emergency drills
- employee supervision and monitoring.

Incident response policies and procedures should be supported by training to ensure that employees are familiar with them.

Encourage reporting

Reporting can be encouraged by:

- acting on reports as soon as possible
- consistent and effective response to reports
- line supervisors acting appropriately when a report is made
- regularly providing information to HSRs, employees and the health and safety committee on incidents and actions taken after incidents.

4.2 During an incident

During an incident a range of actions may be taken, where appropriate, including:

- set off duress alarm/s
- call the police
- implement internal emergency response process
- implement external emergency response process
- seek support from other staff
- ask the aggressor to leave, using calm verbal and nonverbal communication
- retreat to a safe location.

Physical assault, robbery, sexual assault and threats to harm someone should be referred to the police. When a matter has been referred to police, an incident investigation should still occur to assess whether risk control measures are effective and whether the response procedures worked the way they were supposed to.

4.3 Immediately after an incident

The following actions should be taken immediately after an incident to minimise injury to employees, where appropriate:

- ensure everyone is safe
- provide first aid or medical attention where necessary
- provide individual support (this includes practical, emotional and social support)
- report what happened, who was affected, and who was involved (as per workplace reporting procedures)
- call the police.

4.4 Incident investigation

All contributing factors should be identified when investigating an incident. The investigation will help determine how to prevent an incident reoccurring and how to respond to future incidents. Investigators should be impartial and have appropriate knowledge and experience on work health and safety issues.

Investigation principles

– Investigate as soon as possible after an incident

Collect evidence when it is still available, when the people involved can remember events and the order in which they happened.

– Collect information

Find out what happened, where it happened (eg the physical location and environment) and any other relevant detail. Do this by conducting interviews and reviewing written reports, client histories, training records, police reports, workplace plans and before-and-after photographs.

– Look for causes

Find out possible explanations for the incident, how it happened, whether response systems worked or failed in any way. Consider all aspects of the incident – the environment, equipment, people, responses.

– Review risk control measures

Ask whether the risk control measures worked as intended and consider, if necessary, how they could provide better protection to employees and clients/visitors. Identify and implement new control measures where necessary.

> The main reason for conducting an investigation is to prevent future incidents. The investigation should lead to improved prevention measures and response processes.

Outcomes

The results of an investigation should be documented and communicated to all relevant parties, such as HSRs, the health and safety committee and affected employees. The investigation report should outline what happened, what has been done, and what will be done and when.

5. Further information

WorkSafe publications

- *Armed hold-ups and cash handling – Transferring cash*

- *Cash-in-transit – A guide to managing OHS in the cash-in-transit industry*

- *Prevention and management of aggression in health services: A handbook for workplaces*

- *Real estate – Property inspection safety*

- *Security personnel OHS – Static guarding and patrol work*

- *Working alone*

- *Working safely in community services*

Standards

- AS/ NZS 4421:2011 Guard and patrol security services

- AS 3745-2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities

Appendix A – Violence prevention policy

Any violence prevention policy must be developed in consultation with HSRs and employees and should be displayed in a prominent place and include:

- **Purpose statement**
  - This workplace policy was developed with the intent of providing a safe and healthy workplace where employees are not subjected to aggression and/or violence.
  - The employer is committed to supporting employees who are exposed to, or have witnessed, aggression and violence.

- **Objectives**
  - Aggression and violence are not acceptable and will not be tolerated at this workplace.
  - Appropriate action will be taken if aggression or violence occurs.
  - Reporting incidents is very important. Incidents will be investigated to identify all causes and work out how to prevent it from happening again.

- **Responsibilities**
  - Outline the roles and responsibilities of relevant people – eg senior managers, employees, emergency response coordinator, security.

- **Risk management**
  - This policy is supported by the hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control of work-related violence.

- **References and related documents**
  - Reference to all relevant documents and sources used in the development of this policy.

- **Endorsement**
  - The policy is endorsed by the board, chief executive officer, and work health and safety committee.

- **Approval and review date**
  - The date this policy was approved and the date it will be reviewed – eg 12 months after approval.

Appendix B – Work-related violence risk control measures selection tool.

Hazard	Risk factors	Measures to control risk – measures are listed in order of highest reliability; measures may be used in combination to provide a higher level of protection to employees.
Handling cash, drugs and/or valuables.	Business is located in a high crime area; few employees on site; working alone; number of ways to exit the site; restricted observation by passers-by; lack of: visibility from outside; visibility of alarms and security devices. Those risks are increased by … Easy access to escape routes; armed offender/s; frequency of incidents; lack of security measures; minimal protection for employees.	• building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose • where possible, employees are separated from the public (eg with protective barriers/screens) • access to the premises and vulnerable areas is appropriately controlled • no public access to the premises when people work alone or at night • employees can see who is coming into the premises and can restrict access when necessary • workplace only uses safe glass eg laminated, toughened, perspex (including picture frames, mirrors etc) • service areas have good visibility for employees • safe room/place is provided (for employees and others to retreat to) • furniture and partitions are arranged so movement is not restricted and there is good visibility of all service areas • security measures are used (eg CCTV/anti-jump screens, drop/timer safes) • communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) • cash, valuables and drugs are stored securely. • where possible, limit amount of cash, valuables and drugs held on the premises • no access to dangerous implements and/or objects that could be thrown or used to injure employees • internal and external lighting assists visibility clear signage allows the public/ clients to easily find their way • identification system is in place (workers and authorised visitors are clearly identified) • cash handling procedures – eg electronic funds transactions only, locked drop safes, carrying small amounts of cash, varying time that banking is done, signs state limited cash held workplace policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence • employees are educated about violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) • employees are trained in workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) • employees are trained in de-escalating aggression (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) • employees receive communication skills training • employees receive regular support and supervision.
Working alone or in an isolated or remote area; working off-site, and working in the community. Note – remote and isolated work refers to situations where employees may be exposed to risks because the nature or location of their work means they are unable to call for assistance in an emergency.	Lack of information; working in a high crime area; limited visibility from outside, lack of security measures Those risks are increased by … Armed offender/s; frequency of incidents (ie more incidents).	• building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose • where possible, employees are separated from the public (eg with protective barriers/screens) • no public access to the premises when people work alone or at night • internal and external lighting assists visibility • communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) • operational procedures and back-up are in place for when employees are alone or isolated • employees are monitored when working in the community or away from the workplace (eg supervisor checks in regularly throughout the shift) • employees are rotated into alternate duties to reduce exposure. • employees are educated about violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) • employees are trained in workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) • understanding client condition/ disability/triggers/care and behaviour management plans • employees are trained in de-escalating aggressive behaviour (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) • employees are trained in situational risk assessment (for visiting homes or working off-site) • employees receive communication skills training • employees receive regular support and supervision.

Hazard	Risk factors	Measures to control risk – measures are listed in order of highest reliability; measures may be used in combination to provide a higher level of protection to employees.
Working in unpredictable environments.	Lack of information; working in a high crime area. Those risks are increased by … Lack of security measures; lack of supervision; lack of monitoring systems; armed offender/s; frequency of incidents (ie more incidents).	▪ procedures and back-up are in place for employees working alone or in isolation ▪ employees receive regular support and supervision ▪ communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) ▪ employees are inducted on violence prevention measures before starting work ▪ regular handover and information exchange occurs (with employees, other agencies, carers and service providers) ▪ employees are trained in workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) ▪ workplace policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence ▪ employees are trained in situational risk assessment (for visiting homes or working off site) ▪ employees are monitored when working in unpredictable environments (eg supervisor checks in regularly during the shift) ▪ employees are trained in de-escalating aggression (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) ▪ employees receive communication skills training
Working at night or outside business hours.	Lack of security measures and alarms; limited visibility from outside. Those risks are increased by … Lack of security measures; easy access to escape routes; lack of supervision; lack of monitoring systems; armed offender/s; frequency of incidents (ie more incidents).	▪ building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose ▪ workplace policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence ▪ where possible, employees are separated from the public (eg with protective barriers/screens) ▪ responsible serving of alcohol policy and practices are used ▪ there is no public access to the premises when people work at night ▪ operational procedures for opening and closing the business ▪ internal and external lighting assists visibility ▪ skill level, training and experience of employees is appropriate for duties allocated to them ▪ service areas have good visibility for employees ▪ back-up is in place for employees working alone or in isolation ▪ there is a safe room/place to retreat for employee and client/visitor safety ▪ employees are educated on violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) ▪ communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) ▪ employees are trained on workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) ▪ furniture and partitions are arranged so movement is not restricted and there is good visibility of all service areas ▪ employees are trained in de-escalating aggressive behaviour (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) ▪ cash handling procedures – eg electronic funds transactions only, locked drop safes, carrying small amounts of cash, varying time that banking is done, signs state limited cash held. ▪ employees receive communication skills training ▪ employees receive regular support and supervision.

Hazard	Risk factors	Measures to control risk – measures are listed in order of highest reliability; measures may be used in combination to provide a higher level of protection to employees.	
Providing care/ services to people who may be distressed, afraid, ill, angry, or incarcerated.	Waiting; overcrowding; communication difficulties; certain behavioural and/ or psychiatric conditions; untreated pain; lack of information; no client compatibility assessment. Those risks are increased by … Person/client being intoxicated or affected by drugs; unwelcome and coercive treatment; frequency of incidents (more incidents).	- building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose - process in place for client compatibility and suitability assessment - client intake assessments include screening for aggression - regular handover and information exchange with employees, other agencies, carers and service providers - workplace policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence - workplace only uses safe glass eg laminated, toughened, perspex (including picture frames, mirrors etc) - no access to dangerous implements and/or objects that could be thrown or used to injure employees - structured and planned activities for clients - there is a safe room/place to retreat for employee and client/visitor safety - communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) - furniture and partitions are arranged so movement is not restricted and there is good visibility of all service areas - employees are trained in positive behaviour strategies and managing behaviours of concern - behaviours and what triggers them are identified – straegies to avoid/ address behaviours and triggers are implemented.	- behaviour and treatment programs are reviewed after incidents and/ or changes in behaviour - where client is known to have history of aggression, a management plan is in place that has been developed in consultation with suitably qualified people - policy on the ongoing treatment of clients known to be aggressive or abusive (may include treatment contracts) - employees are trained in de-escalating aggressive behaviour (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) - ratio of employees to clients is adequate for the level of care needed, taking into account the range of activities undertaken (such as peak periods, transfers, meal times, night work, sleep-overs, emergency responses, acute care/crisis, respite) - where possible, employees are permanent or regular employees who are known to the clients and workplace - employees are educated about violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) - employees are trained on workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) - employees receive communication skills training - employees receive regular support and supervision.
Service methods cause frustration, resentment, or misunderstanding.	Waiting; anxiety; overcrowding; communication difficulties; certain behavioural and/or psychiatric conditions. Those risks are increased by … Person/client being intoxicated or affected by drugs; unwelcome and coercive treatment; frequency of incidents (more incidents).	- building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose - waiting rooms and reception areas are pleasant - internal and external lighting assists visibility - service areas have good visibility for employees - signage directs and assists clients and visitors to find their way - there is a safe room/place to retreat for employee and client/visitor safety - communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) - furniture and partitions are arranged so movement is not restricted and there is good visibility of all service areas - workplace policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence.	- work practices are evaluated to see if they contribute to aggression - skill level, training and experience of employees is appropriate for duties allocated to them - employees are rotated into alternate duties to reduce exposure - employees are educated about violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) - employees are trained on workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) - employees are trained in de-escalating aggressive behaviour (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) - employees receive communication skills training - employees receive regular support and supervision.

Hazard	Risk factors	Measures to control risk – measures are listed in order of highest reliability; measures may be used in combination to provide a higher level of protection to employees.
Providing care or services to people who have unreasonable expectations of what an organisation and/or employee can provide them.	Waiting; anxiety; overcrowding; communication difficulties; certain behavioural and/or psychiatric conditions. Those risks are increased by … Prolonged and untreated pain; unwelcome and coercive treatment; frequency of incidents (more incidents).	■ building is secure, maintained and fit for purpose ■ facility has safe glass only – eg laminated, toughened, perspex (including picture frames, mirrors etc) ■ no access to dangerous implements and/or objects that could be thrown or used to injure employees ■ communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) ■ furniture and partitions are arranged so movement is not restricted and there is good visibility of all service areas ■ signage directs and assists clients and visitors to find their way ■ waiting rooms and reception areas are pleasant ■ internal and external lighting assists visibility ■ service areas have good visibility for employees ■ there is a safe room/place to retreat for employee and client/visitor safety ■ workplace policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect employees and others from violence ■ work practices are evaluated to see if they contribute to aggression. ■ ratio of employees to clients is adequate for the level of care needed and takes into account the range of activities undertaken (such as peak periods, transfers, meal times, night work, sleep-overs, emergency responses, acute care/crisis, respite) ■ where possible, employees are permanent or regular employees who are known to the clients and workplace ■ employees are rotated into alternate duties to reduce exposure ■ procedures and back-up are in place for employees working alone or in isolation ■ employees are educated about violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) ■ employees are trained on workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) ■ employees are trained in de-escalating aggressive behaviour (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) ■ employees are trained in positive behaviour strategies and managing behaviours of concern ■ employees are trained in situational risk assessment (for visiting homes or working off-site) ■ employees receive communication skills training ■ employees receive regular support and supervision.
Enforcement activities (eg police work, security).	Working in unpredictable environments. Those risks are increased by … Lack of supervision; lack of monitoring systems.	■ communication and alarm systems are in place (regularly maintained and tested) ■ operational procedures for working in isolation and uncontrolled environments ■ employees are monitored when working in the community or away from the workplace (eg supervisor checks in regularly throughout the shift) ■ procedures and back-up are in place for employees working alone or in isolation ■ system to map and record areas/places of concern ■ employees receive regular support and supervision. ■ employees are rotated into alternate duties to reduce exposure ■ employees are educated about violence prevention measures before starting work (this could be in a company induction) ■ employees are trained on workplace policy and procedures (including emergency response) ■ employees are trained in de-escalating aggressive behaviour (signs of aggression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, encouraging reasoning, listening carefully, acknowledging concerns) ■ employees are trained in situational risk assessment (for visiting homes or working off-site) ■ employees receive communication skills training.

WorkSafe Victoria

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