

COMMUNICATION TIPS

Knowing what, when and how to say things, can help to defuse a potentially volatile situation or otherwise keep things calm. Instruction in tactical communications should be considered for anyone who routinely handles terminations, layoffs and discipline. Robbery prevention training should be considered for persons who handle money. Robbery prevention training is available from Peel Regional Police, Crime Prevention Services.

WHEN DEALING WITH POTENTIALLY VIOLENT PERSONS

DO

- ✓ Focus your attention
- ✓ Remain calm
- ✓ Speak slowly
- ✓ Speak simply
- ✓ Listen carefully
- ✓ Remain open-minded
- ✓ Use silence as a calming tool

DO NOT

- ✗ Confront
- ✗ Antagonize
- ✗ Criticize
- ✗ Challenge
- ✗ Threaten
- ✗ Belittle

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Use calm body language.
- Arrange yourself so that your exit is not blocked.
- Position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front.
- Give the person (and yourself) space.
- Get on the other person's physical level.

DEALING WITH TERMINATION

- Protect the dignity domino -- keep to the facts, no personal comments.
- Make the termination complete.
- Do NOT negotiate.
- Keep the discussion future based.
- Be direct.
- Choose the time, place and players.

NOTES



Workplace Violence & Harassment

Workplace violence and harassment are serious and potentially costly issues that can affect the safety of every employee and business owner regardless of sector or occupation. In recognition of this fact the Ontario government passed Bill 168 which requires employers to prepare policies with respect to workplace violence and workplace harassment, and to develop and maintain programs to implement their policies. This fact sheet will provide an overview of workplace violence and harassment from the perspective of Bill 168.

Workplace VIOLENCE means:

- (a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker; or,
- (c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

ASSAILANTS

Assailants can be grouped into three broad categories:

- **TYPE I** – represented by 60% of the assailants who enter the affected workplace to commit a robbery or other criminal act.
- **TYPE II** – represented by 30% of the assailants who are a current or former:
 - employee / supervisor / manager
 - client / patient / customer / passenger
 - criminal suspect / inmate or prisoner.
- **TYPE III** – represented by 10% of the assailants who commit assault and are a current or former:
 - employee, supervisor or manager
 - spouse / lover
 - relative / friend
 - some other person who has a dispute with an employee.

ASSESSING THE RISK FACTORS

A key element of Bill 168 is a requirement for employers to proactively assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from:

- the nature of the workplace,
- the type of work, or the conditions of work, and,
- include measures and procedures to control the risks in the workplace violence program.

RESPONSE

A proper risk assessment can be developed by evaluating the history of violence in your workplace and similar workplaces. Sources of this information include professional associations, regional safety councils, the insurance industry and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

Workplace HARASSMENT means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCLUDES

- Arguments
- Physical Assaults (Pushing)
- Pranks
- Property Damage
- Robbery
- Rumours
- Swearing
- Sexual Assault
- Theft
- Verbal Abuse

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT, PLEASE CONTACT:

PEEL REGIONAL POLICE
Crime Prevention Services
 7750 Hurontario Street
 Brampton, Ontario
 L6V 3W6

Tel. 905-453-2121 ext. 4021
 Fax 905-456-6106

You may also want to examine our Internet site at:

www.peelpolice.ca

THE RISK OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IS GENERALLY GREATER:

OCCUPATION

- Handling cash
- Protecting or securing valuables
- Transporting people & goods
- Mobile workplaces (such as vehicles)
- Public or community contact
- Working with unstable or volatile people
- Working alone or with just a few people
- Working late at night or very early mornings

WORKPLACE

- Education
- Financial Institutions
- Health Care
- Hospitality
- Police, Security & Corrections
- Retail
- Social Services
- Transportation

MEASURES TO CONTROL THE RISK

A variety of strategies can be employed to manage the risk of workplace violence. These include:

- Screening & Hiring Practices
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Training
- Environmental Design / Physical Security
- Communication Tips.

- Conflict Resolution
- Harassment
- Stress Management Techniques
- Crisis Intervention
- Tactical Communications / Verbal Judo
- Self-Defense Training.

In addition, all employees should receive training in the following areas:

- Warning signs that may precede a violent situation.
- Ways of preventing or defusing volatile situations.

SCREENING & HIRING PRACTICES

Don't hire a known problem! Effective screening includes obtaining a thorough work history, criminal record and credit check and obtaining references from sources you develop — not just those supplied.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Employee assistance programs can effectively provide treatment for emotional, marital, substance abuse and financial problems. Information about these programs should be made readily available to every employee. Supervisors and managers should encourage employees to utilize this program.

TRAINING

Education and training are an indispensable part of any violence prevention program. While the exact content and type of training necessary will depend upon the results of your risk assessment, the following types of training should be considered:

- developing clear border definition
- developing clearly marked transitional zones between public, semi-public and private space
- increasing the perception of surveillance, particularly at driveway entrances and entrances to the property, and,
- limiting / controlling access points.

CPTED audits are available by contacting Peel Regional Police, Crime Prevention Services.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT POLICIES

Bill 168 requires all companies, regardless of the number of employees, to have detailed policies with respect to the risks associated with violence and harassment in the workplace. Employee conduct policies should include:

- a zero tolerance policy for drugs, violence and harassment in the workplace,
- specific rules to deal with violations including a penalty section, and,
- a provision to acknowledge the code of conduct through a signed receipt and acceptance letter to be filed in the employee's personnel records.

MANAGING VIOLENT INCIDENTS

Bill 168 establishes a requirement for employers to set out how they will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints. Violent incidents should be managed by taking the following actions:

- **EVALUATE:**
 - the level of risk posed by the offender, when a report of a serious threat is made
 - the situation and, when warranted, notify law enforcement and potential victims, when a threat or violent incident has taken place.

- **RECORD:**
 - all threats and incidents of violence on an internal tracking system.

KEY ELEMENTS OF BILL 168 AT A GLANCE

- **REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYERS** Proactively assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from:

- the nature of the workplace,
- the type of work, or the conditions of work, and,
- include measures and procedures to control the risks in the workplace violence program.

Prepare policies with respect to workplace violence and workplace harassment.

Develop and maintain programs to implement their policies.

Provide information and instruction to workers on the contents of workplace violence and harassment programs. Include measures and procedures for:

- workers to report incidents of workplace violence / harassment, and,
- summon immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur.

Set out how the employer will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints.

Take every reasonable precaution to protect a worker who is at risk of physical injury in circumstances where the employers are aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence may occur in the workplace.

Add personal information about a person with a history of violent behaviour, if there is a risk of workplace violence and:

- the worker can be expected to encounter that person in the course of work, and,
- the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury.

(NOTE – No more personal information shall be disclosed than is reasonably necessary to protect the worker from physical injury.)

Notify the workplace joint health and safety committee etc., if a worker is disabled or needs medical attention due to workplace violence.

• **WORKERS**

Extends the right to refuse work to a worker who has reason to believe that workplace violence is likely to endanger him/herself. The limited right to refuse of certain workers will continue. Reprisals by the employer will continue to be prohibited.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT (AT RISK) PERSONS

- Chronically disgruntled
- History of violence
- Disdain for authority
- Externalizes blame (never owns up)
- Loner or socially isolated individual with few personal outlets
- Unwarranted sense of entitlement
- Increase in personal stress
- Changes in mood
- Negative personality characteristics

BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS

- Threatening / intimidating behaviour
- Prone to changes in mood / behaviour
- Disruptive behaviour (frequency & intensity) to the work environment
- Drug / alcohol abuse

WARNING SIGNS THAT MAY PRECEDE A VIOLENT SITUATION

• **PHYSICAL SIGNS**

- Red / White Faced
- Sweating
- Pacing
- Restless / Repetitive Movements
- Trembling / Shaking
- Change in Voice

• **USE CAUTION – IF YOU NOTICE THESE SIGNS**

- Loud Talking
- Shallow, Rapid Breathing
- Scowling, Sneering, Abusive Language
- Glaring or Avoiding Eye Contact
- Violating Your Personal Space

• **WARNING SIGNS MAY INCLUDE:**

- Crying, Sulking, Temper Tantrum
- Excessive Absenteeism / Tardiness
- Increased Operating Errors

