

Nov. 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women



Nov. 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Created by the United Nations in 1999, the day is designed to raise awareness of this issue around the world. (The month of November is also Domestic or Family Violence Prevention Month in Canada.)

Why is such a day/month needed? Because of statistics such as these:

- Up to seven in 10 women in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.
- In Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the US, 40-70% of female murder victims were killed by their partners, according to the World Health Organization.
- Indigenous women in Canada are five times more likely than other women of the same age to die as the result of violence.

Safety professionals should care about this issue because violence against women 'domestic or otherwise' can impact and even spill over into the workplace.

In fact, the OHS laws and OHS regulators in several Canadian jurisdictions recognize that violence against women, particularly domestic violence, as a workplace health and safety issue.

For example, Ontario changed its OHS laws to add a domestic violence provision to its workplace violence and harassment requirements. This change was made in response to the 2005 murder of nurse Lori Dupont by her ex-boyfriend at the Ontario hospital where they both worked.

Other jurisdictions, such as BC and Manitoba, have released resources and toolkits for employers on domestic violence in the workplace.

The OHS Insider has various resources you can use to address domestic violence

in your workplace, including:

- Five strategies for addressing domestic violence in the workplace
- A video on talking to an employee who may be experiencing domestic violence.