

Train Supervisors & Workers on the Red Flags for Workplace Violence



Workplace violence may involve a client, a current employee, a criminal, an employee's estranged spouse or a disgruntled former employee. And across Canada, employers have a duty to take steps to address such violence. As part of this duty, employers should train all employees on what they should do to protect themselves and others from workplace violence.

Workplace violence training should cover the warning signs that someone may be about to get violent. If your supervisors and workers are aware of these red flags, they may be able to diffuse the situation before violence occurs or take other appropriate steps.

The US Department of Labor breaks down the warning signs of workplace violence into three levels, although any one or combination of warning signs at the three levels may be indicative of a potentially violent situation.

The **level one** or early warning signs include that the person is:

- Intimidating or bullying;
- Discourteous or disrespectful;
- Uncooperative; and/or
- Verbally abusive.

The **level two** signs, which reflect an escalation of the situation, include that the person:

- Argues with customers, vendors, co-workers and management;
- Refuses to obey company policies and procedures;
- Sabotages equipment and steals property for revenge;
- Verbalizes wishes to hurt co-workers and/or management;
- Sends threatening note(s) to co-worker(s) and/or management; and/or
- Sees himself as victimized by management (i.e., me against them).

Lastly, the **level three** signs, which reflect a further escalation, include the person displaying intense anger, resulting in:

- Suicidal threats;
- Physical fights;
- Destruction of property;
- Display of extreme rage; and/or
- Utilization of weapons to harm others.

For more on workplace violence, see these OHS Insider resources:

- 11 dos & don'ts for dealing with a workplace violence incident
- How to establish an effective threat assessment team
- A workplace violence threat assessment checklist.
- Train workers on how to respond to an active shooter
- 5 strategies for addressing domestic violence in the workplace.

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Want access to all the Canadian safety compliance resources that the OHS Insider has to offer on workplace violence and other OHS topics, such as confined spaces, PPE and WHMIS 2015' Sign up for a free trial membership now! [/box]