



Guidelines for Drafting and Implementing A Workplace Violence Policy & Sample Model Policy

**Prepared by the Equality, Equity and Diversity Committee
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Table of Contents

Guidelines for Drafting and Implementing a Workplace Violence Policy

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 1. | History | Page 1 |
| 2. | Application to Legal Employers | Page 1 |
| 3. | Legal Requirements Regarding Workplace Violence | Page 2 |
| 3.1 | Assessing the Workplace | Page 3 |
| 3.2 | Policy and Procedures | Page 3 |
| 3.3 | Workplace Training | Page 4 |
| 3.4 | Response Plan | Page 4 |
| 4. | Further Information | Page 4 |
| 5. | Appendix A – Sample Model Policy on Workplace Violence | Page 5 |
| | Appendix 1 - Sample Risk Assessment Questionnaire. | Page 11 |
| | Appendix 2 - Sample Incident Report Form | Page 14 |
| | Appendix 3 - Tips for Preventing and Managing Incidents of Violence or Harassment | Page 16 |

Guidelines for Drafting and Implementing a Workplace Violence Policy

The province of Alberta is concerned about minimizing the danger of violence in the workplace. Violence in a workplace can result in injury, emotional upset, lower productivity and morale, and lost work time. Although there may be a perception that workplace violence occurs mainly outside the office environment, this is not the case. Statistics from the provincial government show that the industry sector most affected by workplace violence, with 64% of all incidents, is the Public Administration, Business and Education sector.¹ Therefore this is a relevant issue for all workplaces.

To combat workplace violence the province of Alberta for the first time will legally require employers to address workplace violence by implementing training, policies and procedures. These requirements come under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and will come in to effect April 30, 2004. The Law Society of Alberta has prepared this document to provide legal employers with background information on the new requirements and a model policy that conforms to the requirements.²

1. History

In December 2002, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, RSA 2000, c. O-2 (“*OHS Act*”) was amended to include an occupational health and safety code. The purpose of the amendment was to replace eleven of Alberta’s Regulations that contained rules for occupational health and safety in Alberta. In combination the new *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* (“*OHS Regulation*”) and the *Occupational Health and Safety Code* (“*OHS Code*”) accomplish this goal. The *OHS Regulation* governs administration and policy issues and took effect on March 31, 2003. The *OHS Code* contains the detailed technical requirements and was released in November 2003. Employers have a phase-in period to comply with the *OHS Code* until it comes into effect April 30, 2004.

Workplace Violence is specifically addressed in Part 27 of the *OHS Code*. The requirements include an assessment of the workplace for potential violence, training on workplace violence, and a response plan for workplace violence. Contravention of the *OHS Code* or *OHS Act* carries a maximum fine of \$500, 000 and/or a six-month imprisonment for a first offence.

2. Application to Legal Employers

The *OHS Act*, *OHS Regulation* and *OHS Code* apply to all employers and occupations regulated by the province of Alberta.³ The definition of employer in the *OHS Act* is as follows⁴:

¹ Occupational Health and Safety Code Explanation Guide (“*OHS Code Explanation Guide*”), November 2003, at 27-9, online: http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/law/ohs_regcode_down.asp#eg.

² The mandate of the Equality, Equity and Diversity Committee is to help the profession identify, understand and address equality, diversity and equity issues. The committee consists of benchers of the law society, designates from both law schools in the province and representatives from the Canadian Bar Association. As part of its mandate, the Committee has developed guidelines and sample policies in key areas, such as interviewing practices, parental leave and gender inclusive communications. These policies are available on the Law Society of Alberta website at <http://www.lawsocietyalberta.com>. The Committee thanks summer student Rosalia Nastasi for her assistance in drafting this policy.

³ *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. O-2, s. 1(k), (s), (bb). [*OHS Act*]

- 1 (k) “employer” means
- (i) a person who is self-employed in an occupation,
 - (ii) a person who employs one or more workers,
 - (iii) a person designated by an employer as the employer’s representative, or
 - (iv) a director or officer of a corporation who oversees the occupational health and safety of the workers employed by the corporation;

The only exceptions are for farming and ranching operations or for work in a private dwelling by an occupant, owner or servant.⁵ These requirements therefore are applicable to all law firms and legal workplaces.

Section 2 of the *OHS Act* requires employers to ensure the health and safety of its workers as far as is reasonably practicable and to make their workers aware of their responsibilities and duties under the *OHS Act*, *OHS Regulation*, and *OHS Code*.⁶ These responsibilities would fall on a law firm’s partners or managing partner, depending on the organization of the law firm. Worker is defined broadly in the *OHS Act* as “a person engaged in an occupation”, and therefore is inclusive of all those in a legal workplace including partners, associates, articling and summer students, support staff, and contract staff.⁷

3. Legal Requirements Regarding Workplace Violence

Part 27 of the *OHS Code* addresses violence in the workplace. Violence under the *OHS Code* means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury.⁸ Employers must direct their attention to four aspects of workplace violence: **assessing their workplace, providing a policy and related procedures, training in the workplace, and a response plan for incidents.**⁹

To carry out these requirements employers should identify a person or group to manage and maintain the workplace violence policy. The individual or group would be responsible for monitoring the policy, identifying necessary changes and recommending and implementing modifications. Employers should also identify an investigator who will be responsible for investigating incidents of workplace violence. The investigator may be external to the organization. The investigator should be: aware of human rights, viewed by

⁴ *OHS Act*, s. 1(k).

⁵ *OHS Act*, s. 1(s).

⁶ *OHS Act*, s. 2(1)(a) & (b).

⁷ *OHS Act*, s. 1 (bb).

⁸ Occupational Health and Safety Code, s.1. [*OHS Code*] Although the legislation does not address violence outside the workplace, such as domestic violence, it too can cause employee injury, emotional upset, lower productivity and lost work time. Employers may have other programs or policies that can assist employees with violence such as Employee Assistance Plans. The Lawyer Assist program may also be available for lawyers and their families. The *OHS Code* is available online at: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/OHSC-1.pdf>.

⁹ *OHS Code Explanation Guide*, Part 27.

all in the firm as impartial, and be able to carry out an investigation in a prompt, fair, and confidential manner.¹⁰

3.1. Assessing the Workplace

Employers are required to assess their workplace for existing or potential violence.¹¹ They must prepare a report with the results of their assessment and a plan to address potential areas of concern.¹² In carrying out the assessment employers should consider the nature of their work, the types of employees and clients that they work with, their work processes, and their physical environment. The employer should involve workers in this process.¹³ The report and plan must be in writing and available to workers.¹⁴

3.2. Policy and Procedures

Employers must develop a policy and procedures respecting potential workplace violence.¹⁵ It is important that the policy is clear, supportive and encourages the reporting of incidents. A sample model policy follows this document.

The policy should include the following points:

- the definition of violence from the *OHS Code*
- the employer's support for a violence-free workplace
- a statement that any act of violence is unacceptable
- the purpose of the policy
- a commitment to investigate and follow-up on reported incidents

The policy procedures should include the following points:¹⁶

- a right to assistance for any person subjected to violence
- steps prior to formal reporting
- formal reporting
- no prejudicial treatment for making a complaint
- investigation
- disposition of a complaint
- confidentiality
- evaluation of the procedures
- complaint resolution alternatives

¹⁰ The *OHS Code Explanation Guide* points employers to the Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin "Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace" for information on policy and procedures, including an investigation. The Safety bulletin can be found online at: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/vah001.pdf>.

¹¹ *OHS Code*, s. 7(1).

¹² *OHS Code*, ss. 7(2), 389.

¹³ *OHS Code*, s. 8 (1)(2).

¹⁴ Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Alta. Reg. 62/2003, s. 8. [*OHS Reg.*]

¹⁵ *OHS Code*, s. 390.

¹⁶ *OHS Code Explanation Guide*, Part 27 provides more detail on each of the policy and procedure points.

3.3. Workplace Training

Employers are responsible for ensuring that their policies and procedures concerning workplace violence are understood. Training should include the following components:

- an explanation of the policy and procedures;
- a definition of workplace violence;
- how workplace violence can be prevented or minimized;
- the employer's expectations for behavior in the workplace;
- how to respond to incidents of violence;
- how to obtain assistance; and
- how the reporting, investigating and documenting of workplace incidents will be done.

3.4. Response Plan

If there is an occurrence of workplace violence, including an incident that has the *potential* of causing serious injury to a worker, the employer must respond by carrying out a number of steps.¹⁷ These steps include:

- conducting an investigation,
- preparing a report that includes actions to prevent a recurrence,
- keeping the report on file for two years,
- ensuring the report is available for inspection by an Occupational Health and Safety Officer and workers affected by the incident.

Victims of workplace violence often require support and reassurance. If a worker is exposed to or experiences an incident of workplace violence they should be debriefed. One of the purposes of the debriefing should be to ensure the worker understands they are not to blame for the aggressive behaviors directed at them. Employers are required to ensure that workers are advised to consult a health professional of the worker's choice for treatment or referral.¹⁸

4. Further Information

The Alberta Government has comprehensive information about the new requirements on their Occupational Health and Safety website at: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/>. In particular the Safety Bulletin entitled "Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace" provides detailed information to plan for and implement the new requirements under the *OHS Code*.

¹⁷ *OHS Code*, s. 392(1), *OHS Act*, ss. 18 (3)-(6), 19, *OHS Reg.* s. 8.

¹⁸ *OHS Code* s. 392(2). Employers may wish to check whether their benefit plans cover such treatment.

Appendix A – Sample Model Policy on Workplace Violence

The following model policy is meant for legal workplaces. It fulfills the requirements set out in the *OHS Act*, *OHS Regulation*, and *OHS Code* for policy and procedures related to violence in the workplace.¹ Legal workplaces are reminded that the *OHS Code* requires them to assess their particular workplace situation and adjust the following policy accordingly.

1. Introduction

[Name of firm] believes in the prevention of violence and promotes a violence-free workplace in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals. Any act of violence committed by or against any member of our workplace or member of the public, is unacceptable conduct that will not be tolerated. This policy applies to all activities that occur while on firm premises or while engaging in firm business, activities, or social events.

Acts of violence can take the form of physical contact. Acts of violence may occur as a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents. Abuse in any form erodes the mutual trust and confidence that are essential to [Name of Firm]'s operational effectiveness. Acts of violence destroy individual dignity, lower morale, engender fear, and break down work unit cohesiveness.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that:

- a) individuals are aware of and understand that acts of workplace violence are considered a serious offence for which necessary action will be imposed;
- b) those subjected to acts of workplace violence are encouraged to access any assistance they may require in order to pursue a complaint; and
- c) individuals are advised of available recourse if they are subjected to, or become aware of, situations involving workplace violence.

3. Firm Commitment

[Name of firm] is committed to:

- a) investigating reported incidents of workplace violence in an objective and timely manner;
- b) taking necessary action to respond to those incidents; and
- c) providing support for complainants.

¹ Please refer to the Law Society of Alberta's Guidelines on Workplace Violence document for more details and citations to the relevant legislation. The document can be found at <http://www.lawsocietyalberta.com>.

4. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, firm member includes partners, associates, articling students, summer students, support staff, and contract employees

For the purposes of this policy “workplace violence” means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury, whether work related or at a work site.

Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- a) threatening behavior such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects;
- b) verbal or written threats that express an intent to inflict harm;
- c) physical attacks;
- d) any other act that would arouse fear in a reasonable person in the circumstances.

5. Prohibited Conduct

No employee or any other individual affiliated with this organization shall subject any other person to workplace violence or allow or create conditions that support workplace violence.

A member of the firm that subjects another firm member, client, or business associate of the firm to workplace violence may be subject to disciplinary action commensurate to the incident, up to and including dismissal.²

6. Management Responsibilities

For the purposes of this policy, as a supervisor or manager, you are responsible to:

- a) act respectfully towards other individuals while at work and participating in any work-related activity;
 - b) develop workplace arrangements that minimize the risk of workplace violence;
 - c) promote a non-violent workplace;
 - d) ensure that this policy is explained to all employees that you supervise or manage;
 - e) identify training needs for employees;
 - f) ensure that employees understand who to contact regarding concerns about the policy or when reporting an incident;
 - g) ensure your own immediate physical safety if an incident of workplace violence occurs, then report criminal behavior to the appropriate law enforcement agency;
- and

² Those who are members of the Law Society of Alberta have additional obligations under the Professional Code of Conduct in Chapter 1, Rules 8 and 9, not to harass, discriminate, or sexually harass a colleague, staff member, client or any other person.

h) ensure the security and safety of all parties involved during an investigation of an incident of workplace violence.

7. Firm Member Responsibilities

For the purposes of this policy, as a firm member, you are responsible:

- a) to act respectfully towards other individuals while at work and participating in any work-related activity;
- b) to ensure your own immediate physical safety in the event of workplace violence, then to report the incident to the police or a supervisor or manager as the situation warrants; and
- c) to co-operate with any efforts to investigate and resolve matters arising under this policy.

8. Complaint Procedure

1. Prior to filing a formal report of the incident a person subjected to workplace violence (the Complainant) should let their objections to the behaviour be known to the alleged offender (the Respondent), directly or with the assistance of a third party.
2. A Complainant may ask for support from _____ (a trained HR person or manager) to communicate their objections to the incident and/or to prepare and submit a formal complaint if they choose.
3. The Complainant should carefully record details of the incident including the date and time of the incident, the nature of the violence, and names of people who may have witnessed the incident. This document is the Complainant's personal record and property.
4. The Complainant may choose to file a formal complaint that documents their concerns to _____ (ex: HR manager).

9. Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality is required to properly investigate an incident and to offer appropriate support to all parties involved. Any individual who becomes aware of an incident of violence should not disclose the details of the incident to any third party without prior consultation with the Complainant. Gossiping about an incident seriously undermines the privacy of all parties involved and will not be tolerated. Those with questions or concerns about an incident should speak to _____(a trained HR person or manager).

10. Non-Retaliation

All persons involved in the processing of a complaint will ensure that the Complainant is neither penalized nor subjected to any prejudicial treatment as a result of making the

complaint. Disciplinary action will be taken against any person who takes any reprisal against a person who reports workplace violence.

11. Investigation

1. Upon receipt of a formal complaint of workplace violence _____ (ex: HR manager) will determine whether an investigation will be pursued, and will

- a) advise the Respondent in writing of the investigation and nature and specifics of the complaint;
- b) advise the Complainant of the investigation; and
- c) assign the investigation to an internal or external person to investigate.

2. The investigator will

- a) advise all parties to the investigation that they may have representation;³
- b) conduct the investigation in accordance with the principles of natural justice; and
- c) explore all allegations by interviewing the Complainant, the Respondent, and others who may have knowledge of the incident(s) or circumstances that led to the complaint, or are responsible for the workplace.

3. The investigator may make a finding of

- a) sufficient evidence to support a finding of violation of this policy,
- b) insufficient evidence to support a finding of violation of this policy, or
- c) no violation of this policy.

4. The investigator must prepare a written report of the investigation's finding, and forward that report to _____ (ex: person from HR or Management) within thirty (30) working days from the Respondent being advised of the complaint.

5. _____ (ex: person from HR or Management) should make a decision whether to dismiss or act upon the report from the investigator within thirty (30) working days of receiving the report and advise the Complainant and Respondent in writing of the outcome.

12. Corrective Action and Discipline

1. If _____ (ex: person from HR or Management) decides to act on the report from the investigator the following conditions should be considered when determining corrective action:

- a) the impact of the incident on the Complainant;
- b) the nature of the incident;
- c) the degree of aggressiveness and physical contact;

³ The employer should seriously consider coverage of this cost to show its commitment to the policy.

- d) the period of time and frequency of the incidents;
- e) the vulnerability of the Complainant.⁴

2. The following corrective actions may be considered depending on the particular incident and the factors in the previous paragraph:

- a) apology;
- b) training;
- c) referral to an assistance program;
- d) reassignment or relocation;
- e) report to a professional body;
- f) suspension;
- g) discharge; and / or
- h) legal action.

13. Record Keeping

The documents corresponding to the investigation will be kept on file in a secured location, separate from the Complainant and Respondent's personal files, for two years from the date of the incident to be readily available for inspection by anyone directly affected by the incident, or an Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

The investigation report should be kept in a secured location for longer than two years when it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances. Examples of reasonable circumstances include: to wait for the expiration of a limitation period, for the program manager to evaluate the workplace violence policy, and to monitor persons of ongoing concern.

14. False Accusations

A person who submits a complaint in good faith, even where the complaint cannot be proven, has not violated the policy.

If an investigation results in a finding that the Complainant falsely accused the Respondent of workplace violence knowingly or in a malicious manner, the Complainant will be subject to appropriate sanctions, including the possibility of termination. Such action is considered a violation of the policy, and the investigation results and any sanctions will be recorded in the firm's personnel records relating to the Complainant.

15. Complaint Resolution Alternatives

An individual affected by workplace violence has the right to pursue their concern through alternative forums such as mediation, or other forms of dispute resolution.

⁴ Examples include a power imbalance between the parties or where the complainant has a disability.

Nothing in this policy prevents an individual from pursuing other remedies to an incident of workplace violence such as a criminal or civil action, a complaint to the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, or a complaint to the Law Society of Alberta.

16. Assistance

A firm member with questions, concerns or a complaint regarding workplace violence may contact _____ for help and advice [ex. person from HR or management] . This information will be kept confidential except in the case of an imminent physical threat in the workplace.

A firm member may also contact the Law Society of Alberta's Equity Ombudsperson, Jeanne Byron, for confidential advice on workplace violence at 1-888-429-3939.

17. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it conforms with any changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Code and Regulations and that it continues to address the needs of the firm regarding workplace violence. The evaluation should therefore include a needs assessment, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation. Benchmark data should be compiled to monitor the success of the policy.

18. Tips and Tools

The following three documents have been adapted from the Safety Bulletin entitled "Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace" from the Government of Alberta's Workplace Health and Safety website. Employers are encouraged to look at this website for further comprehensive information on dealing with violence in the workplace. Their website address is: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/>.

Risk Assessment Questionnaire – Appendix 1

A risk assessment questionnaire is an effective tool for the planning and monitoring of a workplace violence program.

Sample Incident Report Form – Appendix 2

For the complainant to record a complaint.

Tips for Preventing and Managing Incidents of Violence or Harassment – Appendix 3

Covers the following areas: Dealing with a potentially violent person; Tips for non-verbal behavior and communication; Responding to a physical attack; Working off-site; Terminating a potentially abusive interaction.

Appendix 1

Sample Risk Assessment Questionnaire - Adapted from the Government of Alberta's Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin "Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace"

1. a) Have you ever experienced verbal abuse while a member of this organization?
 Yes No

b) If yes, did you report the incident(s)?
 Yes No

c) If yes, did you report the incident(s)?
 Verbally In Writing
_____ Other (please specify)

d) If no, why?

e) What was your relationship with the person involved in the incident?

Co-worker Client Member of the public
 Supervisor _____ Other (please specify)

f) Where did the incident occur?

g) When did the incident occur?

2. a) Have you experienced a threat of physical violence while a member of this organization?

Yes No

b) If yes, did you report the incident(s)?
 Yes No

c) If yes, did you report the incident(s)?
 Verbally In Writing
_____ Other (please specify)

d) If no, why?

e) What was your relationship with the person involved in the incident?

Co-worker Client Member of the public
 Supervisor _____ Other (please specify)

f) Where did the incident occur?

g) When did the incident occur?

3. a) Have you experienced a physical assault or attack while a member of this organization?

Yes No

b) If yes, did you report the incident(s)?

Yes No

c) If yes, did you report the incident(s)?

Verbally In Writing
_____ Other (please specify)

d) If no, why?

e) What was your relationship with the person involved in the incident?

Co-worker Client Member of the public
 Supervisor _____ Other (please specify)

f) Where did the incident occur?

g) When did the incident occur?

4. Did you miss any time from work as a result of the incident?

Yes No

If yes, please indicate the length of absence from work.

_____ days/weeks/months

5. Do you:

a) Work alone or with a small number of co-workers?

Yes No

b) Work late at night or early in the morning?

Yes No

6. Are you concerned about your safety while at work?

Yes No

If yes, what is the source of your concern?

7. Do you believe that such a possibility is:

High Risk Medium Risk Low Risk

The completion of this section is voluntary. Information gathered from this section will only be used for statistical analysis and to identify trends in workplace violence. Complete individual confidentiality will be maintained.

Male Female

Length of service 1 year
 1 – 3 years
 3 –5 years
 5 – 10 years
 more than 10 years

Appendix 2

Sample Incident Report Form - Adapted from the Government of Alberta's Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin "Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace"

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Complainant Information | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Last Name | First Name | Phone Number |
| Date/Month/Year of Incident _____ | | |
| Time of Day: _____ | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Respondent Information | |
| Name, if known: _____ | |
| Relationship: ___ Co-worker ___ Client ___ Supervisor ___ Member of the Public | |
| _____ Other (Please specify) | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Names of Witnesses and/or those providing assistance. | |
| _____ | |
| ___ Co-worker ___ Client ___ Supervisor | |
| ___ Member of the Public _____ Other (Please specify) | |
| _____ | |
| ___ Co-worker ___ Client ___ Supervisor | |
| ___ Member of the Public _____ Other (Please specify) | |

Description

Give a thorough description of the incident (what happened, where it occurred, what led up to the incident, who else was present, what action was taken at the time, what impact the incident had on you).

Appendix 3

Tips for Preventing and Managing Incidents of Violence or Harassment – Adapted from the Government of Alberta’s Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin “Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace”.

Although no incident of workplace violence is deserved, there are steps that you can take to reduce such incidents in your workplace. The following practical suggestions are from a guide entitled “Violence in the Workplace” from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (1999).

Dealing with a potentially violent person

1. Tips for verbal communication:

- Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.
- Do not glare or stare, which may be perceived as a challenge.
- Remain calm and try to calm the other person. Do not allow the other person’s anger to become your anger.
- Remain conscious of how you are delivering your words.
- Speak slowly, quietly and confidently.
- Speak simply.
- Avoid communicating a lot of technical and complicated information when emotions are high.
- Listen carefully. Do not interrupt or offer unsolicited advice or criticism.
- Encourage the person to talk. Do not tell the person to relax or calm down.
- Remain open-minded and objective.
- Use silence as a calming tool.
- Acknowledge the person’s feelings. Indicate that you can see he or she is upset.

2. Tips for non-verbal behavior and communication:

- Use calm body language – relaxed posture with hands unclenched, attentive expression.
- Arrange yourself so that your exit is not blocked.
- Position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person.
- Give the person enough physical space... this varies by culture, but normally 1 –2 metres is considered an adequate distance.
- Get on the other person’s physical level. If they are seated try kneeling or bending over, rather than standing over them. Do not pose a challenging stance such as:
 - Standing directly opposite someone
 - Putting your hands on your hips
 - Pointing your finger
 - Waving your arms
 - Crossing your arms
- Do not make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening.
- Do not fight. Walk or run away. Get assistance from security or police.

Responding to a physical attack

If you are attacked:

- Make a scene, yell or scream as loudly as possible. Try shouting words like STOP, FIRE, or HELP.
- If you are being pulled along or dragged, fall to the ground and roll.
- Blow a whistle, activate your personal security alarm or push the security alarm.
- Give bystanders specific instructions to help you. Single someone out and send them for help. For example, "You in the yellow shirt, call the police."
- If someone grabs your purse, briefcase or other belongings, do not resist. Throw the item to the ground several feet away from the thief and run in the opposite direction, yelling "help" or "fire".
- Do not chase a thief.
- Run to the nearest safe place, a safe office or an open store.
- Call security or the police immediately after the incident.
- If the attack does not warrant calling the police, inform your supervisors or the authorities at your workplace.
- File an incident report.

Be Prepared

- Take a self-defense course.
- Try to imagine yourself responding successfully to different types of attacks. Practice your responses.

Working Off-Site

If you work away from a traditional office setting you must exercise extra caution. In many cases you have less or no ability to control your work environment. You may require special training to avoid violence by using conflict resolution and mediation tactics. Nevertheless, the following specific preventative tactics or procedures will minimize or prevent risks associated with working off-site:

- Have access to a cellular telephone or similar means of communication.
- Use an established check-in procedure that allows you to manage typical situations you may encounter off-site.
- Prepare a daily work plan so that you and others know where and when you are expected somewhere.
- Arrange to meet in a safe environment.
- Be alert and make mental notes of your surroundings when you arrive at a new or different setting.
- Use the "buddy system", especially when you feel your personal safety may be threatened.

- Determine under which circumstances unaccompanied visiting would involve unacceptable risk.
- Exercise your right to refuse to work in clearly hazardous situations.
- Disclose any feelings of discomfort or apprehension about an impending appointment to your supervisor.
- Do not enter any situation or location where you feel threatened or unsafe.
- Carry hand-held alarms, noise devices or other effective alarm devices.

When you are in unfamiliar premises:

- Check for escape routes and position yourself near an escape route.
- Mentally rehearse what you will do if an individual becomes aggressive or hostile. Decide what your best preventive tactic will be.
- Take control of the seating arrangements. If possible, seat yourself near the door.
- Maintain a “reactionary gap” between you and the person – out of reach of the average person’s kicking distance. Increase the gap by sitting at a table. Be aware of the person’s proximity at all times.
- Be well prepared for an appointment. Review the available information about the individual(s) you are meeting.
- Terminate the appointment in a non-confrontational manner if the individual appears to be:
 - Intoxicated
 - Under the influence of drugs
 - Emotionally disturbed and threatening or out of control

Do not allow yourself to be backed into a corner. Leave a clear path to the exit.

Do not venture too far into the premises e.g. remain near an exit.

Do not turn your back on the person or enter a room first.

Terminating a Potentially Violent Interaction

- Interrupt the conversation firmly but politely.
- Tell the person that you:
 - Do not like the tone of the conversation
 - Will not accept such treatment
 - Will end the conversation if necessary.
- Tell the person that you will ask them to leave the building, or that you will leave (if working off-site).
- If the behavior persists, end the conversation.
- Ask the person to leave the building or leave yourself.
- If the person does not agree to leave, remove yourself from the scene and inform your manager or supervisor immediately.
- Do not return to the person if you believe they pose a physical threat.
- Advise other staff and have them leave the immediate area.
- Call security or your local police.
- File an incident report.