

Violence in the Workplace

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE



The workplace should be a safe environment—
but Canadian workers are experiencing
increasing levels of violence at work.

The potential for violence in the workplace is an unfortunate reality and continues to pose significant health and safety risks for Canadian workers.

National Survey

Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada

71.4 % experienced at least one form of harassment and violence or sexual harassment and violence, in the two years prior to completing the survey.

65 % experienced at least one behaviour or practice of harassment or violence at work in the past two years.

43.9 % experienced at least one behaviour or practice of sexual harassment and violence in the past two years while at work.

Women, disabled, indigenous, trans, nonbinary, and gender-diverse workers experienced higher rates of harassment and violence.

National Survey

Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada

Third parties (customers, clients, patient) and co-workers were the two most-reported perpetrators.

70% who experienced harassment and violence had to miss work because of the negative effects.

88% were “transferred, suspended, fired, or lost a shift” due to the harassment and violence.

1 in 4 said that reporting made the situation worse.

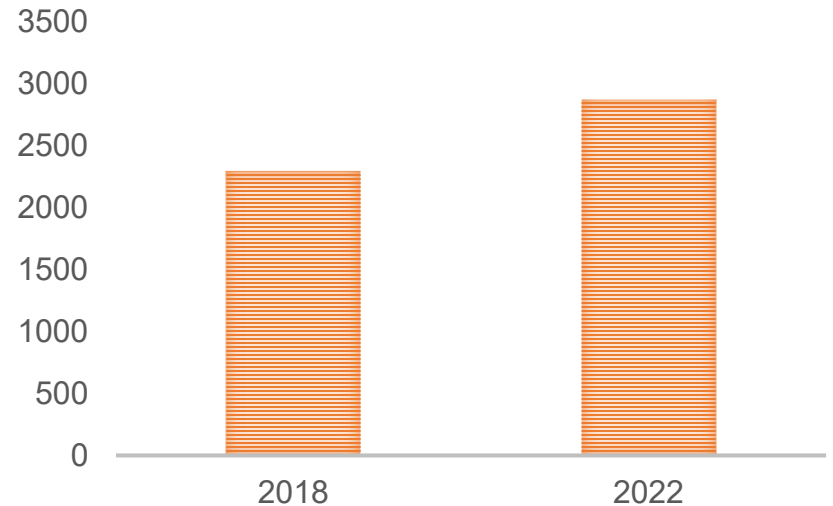
WorkSafeBC Statistics

Workplace claims related to violence **increased** by

↑ 25%

in the past five years.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE CLAIMS





Violence in the workplace is a health and safety hazard.



Impact

- Negative, lasting impact on physical and psychological health.
- Fear, anxiety, distrust and insecurity erode mental health and sense of safety.
- Reduced motivation, morale and engagement
- Reduced retention and recruitment
- More physical, mental disability claims
- Legal liability
- Decreased productivity and performance resulting in reduced profitability

Workplace violence is:

Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site.



Ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide.



Can affect and involve employees, clients, customers and visitors.

- Not limited to incidents that occur in a traditional workplace.
- Work-related incidents can occur at off-site business-related functions (conferences, trade shows) and at work-related social events
- Can occur in clients' homes, or away from work but resulting from work (a threatening telephone call to your home from a client).



Types of Workplace Violence

A man in a dark suit is leaning over a desk, shouting with his mouth wide open and hands raised in a threatening gesture. A woman with long dark hair is sitting at the desk, looking down with her hands covering her face, appearing distressed or fearful. The background shows an office environment with a window and a potted plant.

Threatening behaviour—such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects.

Verbal or written threats—any expression of an intent to inflict harm.

Verbal abuse—swearing, insults or condescending language.

Physical attacks—hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking.

Workplace Violence Warning Signs

Stress

History of violence

Intimidation and
threats

Changes in mood or
behavior

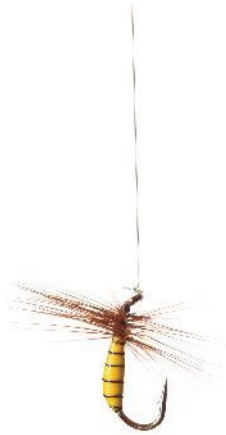
Unprovoked
outbursts

Withdrawal and
isolation

Substance abuse

Recognizing Potential Violence

- Workplace violence can start as **small incidents** that involve negative remarks or inappropriate behaviors that may escalate to violence.
- It is easier to prevent violence by addressing the small incidents rather than trying to control a major crisis.
- Pay special attention if there is a **change in a person's behavior** pattern and if the frequency and intensity of the behaviors are disruptive to the work environment.



Confronting the Problem

“Don’t bite the hook.”

- Pema Chodron

De-escalation Strategies

- Remain calm, composed, and assertive
- Use non-threatening body language
- Listen actively & be attentive
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- Stay focused on the issue at hand
- Offer options for resolution



De-escalation Strategies

- Maintain boundaries
- Isolate the person/situation - if this can be done safely
- Allow the person to save face - if possible
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't challenge, threaten or invade personal space
- Don't get into a power struggle
- Seek assistance when necessary

“You can disagree without being disagreeable.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg



Employer Responsibility

- Employees who experience violence in the course of their work are covered under the *Workers Compensation Act*.
- Employers must provide a workplace as safe from the threat of violence as possible. If there is a risk of violence in a workplace, the employer must set up and instruct workers on procedures to eliminate or minimize the risks.

(WorkSafeBC)

Violence Risk Reduction

A workplace violence prevention program should be part of a company's overall health and safety program.



Should be developed and implemented in co-operation with the JHSC or worker health and safety representative.



The nature and extent of the program should be based on the results of the risk assessment.

(WorkSafeBC)

Violence Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be performed in any workplace in which a risk of injury to workers from violence may be present.

(OHS Regulation Part 4: General Conditions

Sections 4.28 to 4.31)

Violence Risk Assessment

JHSC or worker health and safety representative (where one exists), including both workers and management should be involved.

Consider the location, nature, and circumstances of the employer's business or industry.

Must take into consideration the number and nature of previous incidents of violence at the workplace.

Violence Prevention Program





Everyone Plays a Part in Creating a Violence-Free Workplace

Employers, managers, and employees **all** play a role: modeling and ensuring civil and respectful behavior to reduce or eliminate workplace violence.

A Culture of Civility and Respect

A culture of civility and respect promotes positive relationships, effective communication, and conflict resolution.

Helps prevent misunderstandings, tensions, and conflicts from escalating into violent situations.

Employees who feel valued and supported less likely to experience stress and burnout, which can increase the risk of violence.

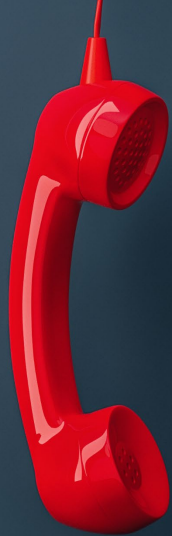
Building the Culture

- Lead by example
- Establish clear standards of behaviour
- Address conflicts promptly
- Promote diversity and inclusion
- Encourage feedback and input
- Provide training and support
- Equal accountability



By taking these actions, leaders can help to create a safe and healthy work environment, where all employees feel valued, respected, and supported, and the risk of workplace violence is minimized.





Phone: 1-604-276-3100

Toll-free: 1-888-621-SAFE

WorkSafeBC Prevention Services

Call 24/7:

- Report a fatality, serious incident, or major chemical release
- Report unsafe work conditions (see also [refusing unsafe work](#))
- Report any other urgent health and safety concern



MIS
MAKE IT SAFE

THANK YOU

Workplace Mental Health Questions?

Dr. Steven Conway

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Safety and Health Week



Together

we can create

**safe workplaces
and
communities**



A photograph of two men shaking hands. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and a white work glove. The man on the right is wearing a light-colored striped shirt, a yellow safety vest, and glasses. The background is a blurred industrial or construction site. The text 'MIS' is overlaid in the center in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

MIS

AGM & TOWN HALL

May 25



AGM & TOWN HALL

May 25



SAFETY PINNACLE AWARDS

JUN 08

SAVE THE DATE



JOIN US NEXT YEAR

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APRIL 18 • 2024

