

**Prevention of Violence   
in the Workplace   
Program**

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BCMSA Prevention of Violence   
in the Workplace Program

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# REFERENCES

WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation Section 4.27 - 4.31

# PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to provide policies, procedures and information to help maintain a safe workplace and to help in the prevention and management of workplace violence.

# SCOPE

This program applies to all [Organization] workplaces, employees, volunteers and contractors.

# POLICY

[Organization] recognizes violence in the workplace as an occupational hazard and is committed to providing a safe work environment where the risk of violence is eliminated or minimized. Any behaviour that threatens the safety of [Organization] workers will not be tolerated.

# DEFINITIONS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Improper Activity or Behavior | Includes:   1. the attempted or actual exercise by a worker towards another worker of any physical force so as to cause injury, and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives the worker reasonable cause to believe he or she is at risk of injury, and 2. horseplay, practical jokes, unnecessary running or jumping or similar conduct.   Note: Improper (worker) behavior is not covered in the scope of this program. The definition has been included here in order to distinguish between improper activity and workplace violence. |
| Workplace Violence | Means the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker, and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury. |

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## Employer

It is the employer’s responsibility to ensure that a program is developed and implemented that identifies sources of workplace violence, provides training to employees, and develops and implements procedures to minimize the risk of workplace violence towards employees.

## Managers / Supervisors

It is the responsibility of Managers / Supervisors to ensure that:

* Violence in the workplace risk assessments are conducted and documented.
* Implement violence prevention plans for their work area(s).
* Workers:
  + Are trained in violence recognition and are aware of the hazards due to workplace violence.
  + Are aware of and understand the policies, procedures and work arrangements that are in place to prevent violence.
  + Know how to report violent incidents.
  + Are aware of the resources available to help them if they are the victims of a violent incident.
  + Employees are made aware of the hazards in their area and are informed about the appropriate action to take for protection from violent acts or threats of violence.
  + Violent incidents are reported and investigated.
  + The effectiveness of corrective actions is evaluated.

## Workers

It is the responsibility of all [Organization] employees to:

* Provide input into risk assessments.
* Participate in education and training activities on violence prevention.
* Follow workplace procedures for violence prevention.
* Report violent incidents.
* Cooperate in the investigation of violent incidents.

## Joint Health & Safety Committees

It is the responsibility of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee(s) to:

* Assist in conducting violence risk assessments.
* Make recommendations to management on possible solutions and corrective actions as a result of the assessments and investigations.

# PROGRAM DETAILS

## Reporting Violent Incidents

[Organization] defines violence as "any physical force causing injury and any incident that results in the worker's belief that he or she is at risk".

Verbal abuse or harassment may not be violent, however, it becomes violent if it includes threats and the worker has reasonable cause to believe that he/she, or his/her family, is at risk of injury because of those threats.

Whenever a worker has cause to believe that he or she has been threatened and is at risk, the worker must report the incident in writing to his/her Manager/Supervisor.

## Violence Prevention Process

There are five steps in the violence prevention process:

1. **Violence Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**
   1. Identify hazards through risk assessment and review of historical incident reports.
   2. Rate the severity of the risk as low, moderate or high using the risk assessment forms in **Appendix A (Instructions) and Appendix B (Forms).**
2. **Identify Solutions** - Identify possible solutions that will eliminate or minimize the risk and choose the most appropriate one.
3. **Implementation** - Implement the solutions.
4. **Instruction of Workers** - Instruct workers on the procedures or work arrangements that have been implemented.
5. **Document the process**.

**Note:** The JOHS Committee must be involved in this process.

1. **Violence Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**

Each [Organization] department must conduct a risk assessment to determine the risk of violence to staff. Typical examples of risk may include, but are not limited to:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Working alone in a reception area * Dealing with irate or hostile  members of the public * Telephone threats * Traveling to various worksites * Working alone | * Dealing with intoxicated  members of the public * Risk of assault * Bomb threats * Handling cash * Enforcing bylaws * Traffic control |

Supervisors working with other trained workers, including members of the JOHS Committee and affected employees, will perform hazard identifications and risk assessments on the risks of potential violence identified by the employees.

Instructions for the hazard identification and risk assessments are included in **Appendix A – Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment** (forms are included in **Appendix B – Risk Assessment Worksheet for Violence**).

**Note**: The supervisor may elect not to be involved in the actual assessment but must ensure the process is completed.

Using the history of violent incidents in the workplace and the information obtained from other workplaces as provided in **Appendix C - Statistical Report on Workplace Violence in Municipal, Regional and Provincial Governments**:

1. Identify hazards that present the possibility of violence
2. Determine the level of risk to workers
3. Determine the potential solutions that can be put in place
4. **Identify Solutions**

Identify possible solutions to eliminate or minimize the risk. When it is not possible to eliminate the risk of violence, the risk must be minimized. This is done through the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and work environment arrangements.

A list of violence control measures can be found in **Appen****dix D – Examples of Violence Control Measures**. When minimizing the risk it is important to follow a hierarchy of solutions, as per the following:

1. **Eliminate**

First, try to eliminatethe task that comprises the risk.

1. **Substitute**

If elimination is not possible, attempt to substitute either a different procedure or changes to the procedure in order to minimize the risk. For example, a typical substitution might be to hire security guards to accompany a worker transporting cash after hours. For building inspections, a substitution might require developing a procedure to reduce confrontational face-to-face interactions by the use of telephone or mail procedures.

1. **Engineering Controls**

If it is not possible to substitute, try to implement engineering controls. These include technological changes as well as guards, barriers, changes to counter heights, etc.

1. **Administrative Controls**

If engineering controls cannot solve the problem, the next possible solution is administrative controls. Administrative controls include changes to the way the staff are scheduled and located.

1. **Personal Protective Equipment**

Finally, look at personal protective equipment. This is not practical or possible in most cases however an example would be the use of Kevlar vests for police officers.

1. **Implementation**

When the most appropriate solution has been identified, it must be implemented. The violence hazard, the risk of injury, and the appropriate corrective action are documented. (The form in **Appendix E – Procedures for Preventing Violence in the Workplace** can be used for this purpose).

The proposed policy, procedure and work arrangement should be reviewed with the JOHS Committee.

1. **Instruction of Workers**

It is very important for managers and supervisors to ensure that all workers are aware of the risk of violence in the workplace**.** The results of violence hazard identification and risk assessments must be shared with all affected workers.

In particular, knowledge about the existence of potentially violent clients must be shared with all workers who may be affected. Any client with a history of violence must be identified for staff who may come in contact with that individual. It is important to remember that it is very difficult for staff to identify potentially violent clients in the absence of a photograph or detailed description. Whenever possible, detailed descriptions of potentially violent clients will be developed and circulated to staff.

1. **Document the Process**

## Response to Violence

The [Organization] has a zero tolerance for violence against workers. If a worker is involved in a violent incident, the first step is to inform the client that the behavior is not acceptable. Workers should follow effective defusing techniques and violence prevention techniques. An example of typical violence recognition and response is included in **Appendix F – Recognizing and Responding to Potential Violence**. All workers are encouraged to call the police whenever they feel a situation is threatening to escalate to violence.

**Post Incident Follow-up**

Supervisors must ensure that there is counseling for affected workers. This includes referral to medical services, as well as referral to the Employee Assistance program.

Supervisors, along with a member of the JOHS Committee, will complete an incident investigation to determine the causes of the incident and to make recommendations to prevent recurrences.

Any incident of violence must be the subject of supervisor/crew talks. All workers must have an opportunity to review the violent incident. The JOHS Committee will solicit input from workers regarding any concerns that have not been addressed by the violence prevention recommendations.

# 

# TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

## Goal

All workers at risk of workplace violence will be trained in the policies, procedures, work arrangements and violence response necessary to eliminate or minimize the risk of violence.

## Performance Objectives

* How to recognize potential violence
* Preventive measures that are in place at the workplace
* Appropriate responses to potentially violent situations
* How to get assistance in the event of a violent incident
* How to report violent incidents
* The support systems in place in case of violent incidents, and how to access them

## Summary of Training

* Policy and regulatory requirements
* Definitions used in the program
* How to recognize potentially violent situations
* Responsibilities of the organization
* Responsibilities of managers
* Responsibilities of supervisors
* Responsibilities of JHS Committee and workers
* Risk assessments
* How to report violent incidents
* Typical control procedures
* Counseling process for victims of violence

# PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

The violence prevention procedures must be reviewed whenever a report of an incident of violence is investigated.

The violence prevention program must be reviewed whenever there is a change in the situation at the workplace that might result in an increased risk of violence to workers.

Risk assessments must be reviewed whenever there is a significant change in job procedures or duties that would affect the risk of violence.

# DOCUMENTATION

The documentation for this program includes:

* Investigation reports into incidents of violence
* Violence hazard identifications and risk assessments
* Examples of correspondence with potentially violent clients **(Appendix G1 – Sample Warning Letter for Harassing/Abusive Calls & Appendix G2 – Sample Warning Letter for Threatening Office Clients)**
* Training records of affected workers
* Violence prevention policies, procedures, and work arrangements

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A – Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

The following instructions and worksheets are designed to help determine whether or not a risk of violence to workers exists within [Organization]. The worksheets guide the user through the assessment process:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Identify the risk
3. Assess the risk as to its severity
4. Determine the best method for correcting or minimizing the risk. Appendix C gives a list of typical methods that may be helpful when looking at solutions
5. Determine the priority for potential risks and possible corrective actions
6. Document the proposed corrective action using the form in Appendix E.

## How to Complete the Risk Assessment Worksheet

1. At the top of the form identify the worker or workers whose risk of violence is being assessed.

Use your knowledge of the workplace, incidents from other municipal workplaces, hazards related to the location of the workplace and the circumstances of your workplace to identify specific risks of the task or procedure or job position being examined.

2. For each of the hazards and examples listed in Column A and Column B, on the worksheet, list the threat of violence that would occur in your workplace in Column C.

Ask the question: "Has violence happened in my workplace as a result of this hazard?"

Look at first aid records, and violence reports. Talk to workers about their experiences. Ask about the number and severity of the incidents. Consider the results from questionnaires.

3. Ask the question: "Has violence happened in similar work environments as a result of the hazard?"

Review the information provided as a result of the survey conducted as part of this project. The statistical information on percentage of total injuries due to violence is located at Appendix C.

4. Ask the question: "Does the location of your workplace and this hazard cause a risk of injury?"

Is there something about your location that increases the risk of violence? Consider the access to the building and parking, clients of adjoining buildings or offices, street people, location of liquor stores and bars, isolation at night, lack of street lighting, and police reports of violence in the area.

5. Finally, ask the question: "Do the circumstances of your workplace and this hazard cause a risk of injury?"

Consider the organization in terms of isolation of front line workers, staff scheduling, requirements to work alone and procedures to check on others. Consider the age and gender of workers. Consider the types of clients. Consider the layout of the workplace in terms of sight lines between workers and the ability to monitor interview rooms. Consider décor, furniture, barriers and fences, lighting, glass partitions, and hiding places for assailants.

6. Once you have identified the risk of threat or injury, turn to the Violence Rating Score Sheet and establish the scores under each of the headings for Consequence, Exposure and Likelihood. Remember that likelihood includes the incident and its consequence.

7. Multiply the scores from columns D, E and F (D x E x F) to determine a risk score. Enter the risk score in Column G. The risk scores for corrective action are listed at the bottom of the worksheet.

Evaluation

Based on the outcome of the risk assessment and the risk score for each identified hazard, priorities can be set for dealing with the hazards.

Solutions

Brainstorm solutions, beginning with the issues with the highest risk score. Determine the practicability of the solution. Solutions should be addressed in this order:

* Eliminate - Begin by trying to eliminate the task
* Substitute - If the task cannot be eliminated, try to substitute a different way of doing it
* Engineering controls - Changing the physical environment to protect the worker
* Administrative controls - Changing work organization
* Personal protective equipment - To be used as a last resort. For example: bullet proof vest for police officers

Some examples of violence control measures are provided in Appendix C.

Now evaluate each of the solutions based on cost, effectiveness, and negative impacts to other programs.

## Appendix B - Risk Assessment Worksheet for Violence

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Completed by: |  | | Date: |  |
| Individual or group of workers affected: | |  | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| Nature of threat or violence | Threat or violence resulting from: | Probable violence that could happen in this, or similar workplaces due to location or circumstances | Consequence | Exposure | Likelihood | Risk Score |
| Rebellion against authority | Supervisory duties, traffic control, bylaw enforcement, parking control, incarceration |  |  |  |  |  |
| Against the organization | Bomb threats, phone threats, security breaches |  |  |  |  |  |
| Against a representative of the organization | Reception and counter interaction, meter reading, building inspection, service representatives |  |  |  |  |  |
| Against individuals | Alcohol and drugs, harassment, stalking, travel |  |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunistic | Working at night, walking to parking, access to washrooms, working alone, robbery, working with cash |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Instructions and Score Sheet:

1. Complete this worksheet for each situation where a worker or group of workers may be at risk of violence.
2. Review the types of threats from column (A) and the examples in column (B).
3. In column (C) list the type of violence that could occur.
4. Turning to Appendix C, list the score for the probable violence under column (D) Consequence, column (E) Exposure, and column (F) Likelihood.
5. Multiply the numbers in column (D), (E), and (F) and put the resulting number in column (G) under Risk Score.
6. For Risk Scores lower than 1 the risk is acceptable. Between 1 and 100, the score indicates potential problems that must be examined. Between 100 and 250, the score indicates problems that must be corrected. Scores higher than 250 indicate a problem that must be dealt with immediately.
7. Examples of solutions to problems are available in Appendix D.

## Risk Assessment Worksheet for Violence – Sample

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Completed by: |  | | Date: |  |
| Individual or group of workers affected: | | Building Inspector | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| Nature of threat or violence | Threat or violence resulting from: | Probable violence that could happen in this, or similar workplaces due to location or circumstances | Consequence | Exposure | Likelihood | Risk Score |
| Rebellion against authority | Supervisory duties, traffic control, bylaw enforcement, parking control, incarceration | Argument escalating to shouting as a result of failure to issue building permit | 2 | 2 | 6 | 24 |
| Against the organization | Bomb threats, phone threats, security breaches |  |  |  |  |  |
| Against a representative of the organization | Reception and counter interaction, meter reading, building inspection, service representatives | Assault at a construction building site as a result of a stop work order | 10 | 6 | 1 | 60 |
| Against individuals | Alcohol and drugs, harassment, stalking, travel |  |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunistic | Working at night, walking to parking, access to washrooms, working alone, robbery, working with cash |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Instructions and Score Sheet:

1. Complete this worksheet for each situation where a worker or group of workers may be at risk of violence.
2. Review the types of threats from column (A) and the examples in column (B).
3. In column (C) list the type of violence that could occur.
4. Turning to Appendix C, list the score for the probable violence under column (D) Consequence, column (E) Exposure, and column (F) Likelihood.
5. Multiply the numbers in column (D), (E), and (F) and put the resulting number in column (G) under Risk Score.
6. For Risk Scores lower than 1 the risk is acceptable. Between 1 and 100, the score indicates potential problems that must be examined. Between 100 and 250, the score indicates problems that must be corrected. Scores higher than 250 indicate a problem that must be dealt with immediately.
7. Examples of solutions to problems are available in Appendix D.

Violence Rating Score

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CONSEQUENCES | |
| Degree of Severity of Consequences: | Rating |
| Catastrophic: numerous fatalities | 100 |
| Several fatalities | 75 |
| Fatality | 50 |
| Extremely serious injury or occupational disease (permanent disability) | 30 |
| Disabling injuries, reversible tissue damage, post traumatic stress | 10 |
| Minor cuts, bruises, irritations, minor damage, feeling of intimidation | 2 |
| EXPOSURE | |
| The hazard event occurs: | Rating |
| Continuously (or many times daily) | 10 |
| Frequently (approximately once daily) | 6 |
| Usually (from once per week to once per month) | 3 |
| Occasionally(from once per month to once per year) | 2 |
| Rarely (it has been known to happen) | 1 |
| Very rarely (not known to have occurred but considered remotely possible) | 0.5 |
| LIKELIHOOD | |
| The likelihood of violence or threat of violence, including the consequences: | Rating |
| Is the most likely and expected result if no changes are made | 10 |
| Is quite possible, would not be unusual, has an even 50/50 chance | 6 |
| Would be an unusual sequence or coincidence | 3 |
| Would be a remotely possible coincidence, it has been known to happen | 1 |
| Extremely remote but conceivably possible, has never happened after many years of exposure | 0.5 |
| Practically impossible sequence or coincidence, a "one in a million" chance, has  never happened in spite of exposure over many years | 0.1 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RISK SCORE RESULTS | |
| Consequences x Exposure x Likelihood = | Risk Score |
| High – must be corrected immediately | >250 |
| Medium – must be corrected | 101 - 250 |
| Low – Indicator – situation must be examined and may have to be corrected | 1 - 100 |
| Risk Acceptable – no change required | <1 |

Total Risk Chart

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LOW | | | MEDIUM | | | | | HIGH | | | |
| 20 | 50 | 90 | 125 | 150 | 175 | 200 | 225 | 250 | 350 | 450 | 750 |

## 

## Appendix C - Statistical Report on Workplace Violence in Municipal, Regional and Provincial Governments

Purpose

This survey provides examples of recurring incidents and common themes with respect to violence in the workplace in government agencies in British Columbia.

Background

The survey defined violence as:

“the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker, and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury.”

Violence in the workplace can range from threatening verbal statements to physical force. Any municipal worker has the potential of being exposed to a risk of violence in the workplace. Often the incident will not be recognized as a violence in the workplace issue and will go without being reported or investigated.

Survey Results

Of the 63 municipal and government organizations surveyed 40 reported at least one incident of violence in the work place in the last three years. The violent incidents ranged from verbal harassment and threatening statements to robbery and physical attacks.

There have been a total of 231 reported incidents of violence in the workplace in the last three years within the survey group.

The following occupations exhibited a higher frequency of violent incidents. All occupations have recorded incidents of violence in at least two municipalities. Sources of information include first aid reports, past injury reports, checklists and questionnaires completed by workers.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Front line office workers with public contact * Planning Office * Cashiers * Switch Board Operators * Library Clerks * Social Workers * By-law Enforcement Officers * Animal Control Officers * Traffic Control Persons * Law Enforcement Officers * Jail Guards * Security Workers | * Field Workers * Staff Park and Recreation * Parking Control Officer * Meter Readers * Regulatory Officers * Building Inspectors * Fire Service * Public Works * Maintenance Workers * Transit Workers * Liquid Waste Personnel |

## Appendix D - Examples of Violence Control Measures

Elimination:

* Utilize professional services for high-risk tasks such as transportation of cash
* Restrict the access of violent clients
* Move parked vehicles to closest entrance/exit door if working late
* If staff discover a break-in prior to entering the building they are not to enter
* Do not interview clients in the office alone after office hours
* Do not stop a client from leaving the office during or after a violent incident

Substitution:

* Interview clients with the door open
* Arrange seating so physical barriers or the client do not impede workers’ exit
* Ensure receptionist is not left alone in the administration area
* Hire security guards to accompany workers who transport cash after hours
* Reduce confrontational interactions by using telephones or mail

Engineering Controls:

* Raise counters
* Make counters wider
* Ensure all non-public access doors are locked, including the "smoking door"
* Place gates to restrict public access into the office
* Use signage to inform clients where public access is restricted
* Install panic buttons or office alarm systems
* Remove any implements on the counter that could be used as a weapon
* Pre-program your phone to local 911
* Install good outside lighting
* Ensure windows are not obscured
* Trim hedges/trees to eliminate hiding places

Administrative Controls:

* Check security of wash rooms prior to end of workday
* Establish a code word and emergency response in the case of a difficult client
* Ensure all staff is alerted to a client or family with a history of violence or threats
* Serve clients as quickly as possible and acknowledge those who have been waiting
* Do not take threatening clients into the office
* Do not sit with your back to the main office door
* If you encounter someone unfamiliar at the workplace, ask them to identify themselves
* If you encounter someone unfamiliar after hours, do not challenge them. Leave immediately
* Work in pairs when dealing with a difficult client
* Do not send a visitor into the office area or lunchroom unescorted or unannounced
* Establish the procedure to follow if someone sees a member of the public with a weapon
* Train traffic control persons in how to diffuse hostility
* Establish two person patrols when hazardous situations may be encountered
* Examine gender specific concerns for after hours work
* Establish a call in system for park attendants or persons working in parks

## Appendix E - Procedures for Preventing Violence in the Workplace

**Hazard Identified:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Level of Risk:**  High Medium Low

Corrective Actions:

(List the actions that will be taken to prevent violence in the workplace. (See Appendix D for examples of typical violence control procedures)

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| --- |
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Approved By\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F - Recognizing and Responding to Potential Violence

There are two basic types of potential violence that all workers who deal with the public must be prepared for:

1. Threats From A Distance

Most bomb threats are made by telephone. Although history has shown us that most bomb threats are made by callers who want to cause disruption to the workplace by creating an atmosphere of general anxiety or panic, all such calls must be taken seriously.

Threats of personal physical harm by telephone or letter, from an individual, whether known or unknown to the victim must also be taken seriously.

Responses to Threats Of Violence From a Distance

If you receive a bomb threat by phone try to remain calm. Write down the exact wording of any threat. Try to get as much information from the caller as possible. Prepare a written report of the incident and submit it to your supervisor.

If you receive a personal threat of violence by phone try to identify the caller. If possible, suggest to the caller that speaking with your supervisor is the proper way of handling this call. If possible have someone listen in on an extension phone. Inform your supervisor of the situation immediately. Call the local police. Complete a written detailed report of the event as soon as possible.

If you receive a personal threat of violence by letter inform your supervisor as soon as possible. Avoid unnecessarily handling the correspondence as it may be subject to fingerprint analysis. Prepare a written report of the incidence and forward it to your supervisor. It will be used as a basis for the police investigation.

2. Threats in Person

Potential violence can be as the result of an escalation of an interpersonal incident. Abusive statements may be derogatory or bullying, or psychologically or emotionally disturbing. They become violent if they include a threat or behavior, which gives you reasonable cause to believe that you are at risk of injury.

Watch for tension in the posture. Watch for a red face, or white lips. Clenched hands, or hands made into fists are also warning signs of potential violence. Watch for the individual who raises their voice.

Listen for statements that would alert you to the fact that the individual is no longer connected to the environment. These are sometimes called “final straw” statements such as “I don't know what I will do now”. Listen for language that alerts you to the fact that the individual is trying to make you part of the problem.

Response to Threats of Violence in Person

The best way to prevent personal violence is to acquire skills in defusing hostile situations. Preventive measures for reducing the risk of violence include arranging work areas so there are sight lines between workers. Establish a physical barrier such as a desk between yourself and the client. Your desk or other furniture should not block you in.

Remove any potentially dangerous items from the countertop, desktop, or outside work areas that could be used as a weapon or thrown. If you are working from a pickup truck, be aware of potential weapons in your truck box and make sure they are secured so they cannot be easily grabbed. If you are directing traffic establish a safe getaway path. If you are involved with an irate motorist, use your radio to let others know of your situation while you escape.

If an individual becomes violent and your safety is at risk, leave the area immediately if there is a safe way out. Obtain assistance from your supervisor or any other nearby staff. Have someone call the police. Do not try to apprehend, or restrain the individual. Do not hesitate to shout for help. In some cases shouting “Fire” may get a better response.

## Appendix G1 - Sample Warning Letter for Harassing/Abusive Calls

Send by Registered Mail

Date

Name

Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On [date/s] you called the [Organization]at[location]and spoke to one of our staff. The language that you used, your tone of voice and some of your statements were [intimidating / threatening] to our staff.

We have a policy of zero tolerance of violence, and we do not condone nor allow this type of behavior towards our staff. If in the future you [intimidate / threaten] our staff again we will refuse to continue to conduct business with you over the phone. Instead, we will conduct our business with you only by letter or by fax.

We hope that it will not be necessary to take such drastic steps.I hope this warning is sufficient to resolve this issue.

Sincerely

Signature and title

## 

## Appendix G2 - Sample Warning Letter for Threatening Office Clients

Date:

Name:

Address:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

Re: Zero Tolerance for Violence

On [insert date] you attended our office to request service. We were unable to provide you the service that you were requesting, and you [verbally threatened / made threatening gestures / intimidated] one of our staff members.

We have a policy of zero tolerance of violence of any kind towards our staff. We therefore must advise you that if you are threatening or abusive to our staff again in the future you will no longer be permitted to attend our office for service. If we are forced to implement these measures, you will have to contact this office either in writing or by telephone when you require service or information. Further, if you were to attend our office in spite of this restriction you would be asked to leave immediately, and if necessary the [Insert name of Police or Security Service] would be called.

I wish to emphasize that our main interest is in establishing a positive relationship with you, and I hope that we can count on your cooperation in reaching this goal.

Yours truly,

Signature and title