

JUNE Safety Talk

Topic: Workplace Violence/Harrassment/Bullying

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in a workplace setting. A workplace may be any location either permanent or temporary where an employee performs work-related duties.

Violence can include any threatening statement or behavior which gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury.



Preventative controls to decrease the risk of workplace violence may include:

- Physical barriers such as deep counters
- Alarm systems, panic buttons, and radios
- Convex mirrors, elevated vantage points
- Bright and effective lighting
- Furniture arranged to prevent entrapment
- Cash-handling controls
- Video surveillance and closed circuit TV
- Training in identifying hazardous situations and appropriate responses in emergencies

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

Harassment occurs when someone engages in unwanted conduct that has the purpose of violating an individual's dignity on the grounds of race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, belief or religion. It can create a hostile, offensive or humiliating environment for the employee in question. This is wide spectrum, and covers all types of harassment.

Harrassment actions can be:

- Physical conduct
- Verbal conduct
- Non-verbal conduct

While the conduct must be unwanted by the recipient, it does not necessarily mean that the harasser has a motive or an intention to harass. It is still harassment even if the harasser does not know there is harm caused by their actions.



WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying has been defined as "bossy like" militant behavior that may capitalize on a potential imbalance of power. In the workplace this could be displayed in a variety of ways. Bullying behavior can include teasing, insulting someone (particularly about their weight or height, race, sexuality, religion or other personal traits), shoving, hitting, excluding someone, or gossiping about someone.

Bullying can cause a victim to feel upset, afraid, ashamed, embarrassed, and anxious about going to work. Bullying behavior is frequently repeated unless there is intervention.



Workers must report all workplace incidents of violence, harassment or bullying to their Supervisor immediately after the event has occurred. It is essential to ensure an investigation report is completed and proper corrective actions are taken. Employers are required to conduct risk assessments, establish policies and procedures, and train their workers in prevention of workplace violence, harassment or bullying.