

Workplace Violence and Harassment Domestic Violence

<i>What the law says</i>	<i>What should the employer do?</i>
<p>The employer must take reasonable precautions to protect workers when the employer is, or ought to be, aware, that domestic (or relationship) violence may occur in the workplace, and that there is a likelihood that workers could be physically harmed. [OHSA s. 32.0.4]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Ensure that procedures are in place to summon immediate help (for all violence incidents) ☑ Inform workers that they can report their concerns to the employer if they fear domestic violence may enter the workplace ☑ Be prepared to investigate and deal with these concerns on an individual basis ☑ Determine whether existing procedures for workplace violence are adequate to deal with domestic violence situations, if not, develop a safety plan for the targeted worker

Signs - What to look for

- Concerns are reported by the targeted worker, co-workers or another person.
- Threatening phone calls, e-mails or visits from the abuser to the workplace.
- Physical signs of violent activity (bruises, cuts) are evident and upon investigation are deemed to be relationship related.

Note: The targeted employee may not wish to co-operate with the employer.

In this case, the employer may still be required to take steps to protect the worker and other workers in the workplace, keeping in mind the privacy and sensitivity of the issue.

Examples of Potential Domestic Violence

An employee has recently separated from her spouse because of violence in the relationship. She has confided in her co-workers that he has threatened to beat her and take the children from her. Other workers have seen him on frequent occasions, parked in the company parking lot.

An employee is involved in a relationship and his partner's ex-husband approaches him as he leaves the workplace. The ex-husband is yelling and shaking his fist. When the employee tries to leave, the ex-husband tells him that "this is a warning, the next time I'll break your legs so you won't be able to walk away".

The employer should ensure that workers know how and to whom to report incidents of domestic violence. It may also be necessary for the employer to involve other organizations such as police or social workers.

www.ihsa.ca

21 Voyager Court South, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 5M7 Canada
Phone 1-800-263-5024 ■ Fax 416-674-8866