

Occupational Health and Safety in CPPCC Clinics

Violence in the Workplace

Background

- Violence in the workplace is an issue that affects the safety and security of employees, residents and visitors at your organization.
- Workplace violence claims a high personal cost due to the emotional trauma and physical injury experienced by victims, their families and co-workers.
- It can also lead to increased absenteeism, higher sick leave costs, lost productivity, high employee turn-over, higher insurance premiums and increased WCB premiums

What is Workplace Violence

Workplace violence incidents usually fall into one of four categories:

- Type I (External): Committed by a perpetrator who has no connection or relationship to the workplace.
- Type II (Resident or Customer or Visitor): The perpetrator, who is a resident, customer, or visitor, becomes violent towards a worker or another resident.
- Type III (Worker-to-Worker): The perpetrator is an employee or past employee of the workplace and becomes violent toward another worker,
- Type IV (Domestic Violence): The perpetrator usually has a personal / domestic relationship with an employee, e.g., domestic violence in the workplace.

Definition of Violence

Violence is defined as:

1. Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviours that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury
2. Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee

NS Regulatory Environment

- Violence in the Workplace Regulations came into effect on June 9, 2007. www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsviolence.htm
- Require designated employers (including pharmacy) to do a violence risk assessment and establish and implement a workplace violence prevention plan where a significant risk of violence is identified.
- Workplaces where the primary business is health services, including those services provided at a healthcare workplace, were required to implement the provisions as stipulated in the workplace violence regulations by April 1, 2008
- Department of Labour and Advanced Education reference guide <http://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety/docs/WorkplaceViolence-ReferenceGuide.pdf>
- Aware NS (NS Health and Community Services Safety Association) produce a very useful tool kit to guide employers on how to conduct a violence risk assessment and put in place appropriate policy and procedures. <https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/>

NS Regulatory Environment

- Incidents involving violence or threats of violence that occur in the workplace — such as assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, stalking, robbery, and uttering threats — may fall within the scope of the Criminal Code.
- The Criminal Code also establishes a duty for all persons “directing the work of others” to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of workers and the public. For more information, see "Bill C-45 " incorporated as part of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Workplace Violence in Health Care

- Within the health sector incidents of workplace violence may be attributed to a patient becoming violent towards a worker. Factors that contribute to violence in healthcare settings include but are not limited to:
 - Worsened medical situation (e.g. progressive dementia, higher level of need for care on admission, etc.)
 - **Behavioral** disturbances (e.g. denial of requests, increasing distress, anxiety)
 - Effects of medication or lack of medication
 - Care transitions (e.g. move of care from hospital to residential care)
 - Language or cultural barriers
 - Anniversary or a significant event
 - Physiological needs (e.g. fatigue, hunger)
 - Reaction to caregiver
 - Time of day or week

Workplace Violence in Health Care

Within the global context of workplace violence there are changes recognized regarding workplace violence including:

- Shift from physical violence to psychological violence (e.g. mistreatment, bullying, harassment).
- Shift from a one-off event to repeated events of violence directed at a worker.

Thus, Employer workplace violence prevention plans need to be reviewed and updated as part of a continuous improvement strategy of moving from reacting to workplace violence to predicting and better predicting workplace violence

Aware NS Workplace Violence Prevention Resource – 6 Step Guide

Step 1 Program Review and Perception Survey

<https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/step-1-program-review-and-perception-survey/>

(a) **Current Program Review** *comprehensive assessment of safety culture and compliance*

(b) **Employment Perception Assessment** *tool to gather employee feedback around violence/safety*

• Step 2 Risk Assessment

- This must be done by leadership in conjunction with joint occupational health and safety committee
- Must be conducted at least every 5 years and when there is a change that could result in change in risk levels

• <https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/step-2-leadership-and-risk-assessment/>

• NSH has a specific workplace violence assessment for community based clinics (must be used when NSH staff work there)

• [https://pharmacyassociationns-my.sharepoint.com/personal/abodnar_pans_ns_ca/Documents/Pans/Training%20and%20Development/CPCC%20Violence%20in%20the%20Workplace%20Materials/NSH%20Violence%20Risk%20Assessment%20Template%20\(VRA\).pdf](https://pharmacyassociationns-my.sharepoint.com/personal/abodnar_pans_ns_ca/Documents/Pans/Training%20and%20Development/CPCC%20Violence%20in%20the%20Workplace%20Materials/NSH%20Violence%20Risk%20Assessment%20Template%20(VRA).pdf)

Step 2 Risk Assessment

- Risk of Violence is linked to the following:
 - Physical Aspects (lighting, surveillance cameras, office layout)
 - Sector of Work and activities performed (health care/ dispensing of medications increase risks)
 - Conditions of Work (hours, working alone, community etc)
- Assessment
 - Identify each type of risk (hazard)
 - Determine Net Probability (what is the risk of this happening after with existing controls in place) (1-5, rare – certain)
 - Determine Severity (1-5; insignificant - catastrophic)
 - Probability x Severity = risk level

Step 2 Risk Assessment

- Low Risks (those that score 1-8) not significant and can be addressed through regular health and safety measures
- Medium Risks (those that score 9-15) – are significant and should be included in violence prevention program
- High Risks (those that score 16-25) are significant and unacceptable risks and immediate action is required.

Aware NS Workplace Violence Prevention Resource – 6 Part Guide

Step 3 Policies and Procedures

<https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/step-3/>

Provides overall violence in the workplace policy plus resources to help develop policies specific to the risks identified.

- Step 4 Reporting, Investigating and Documenting
- <https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/step-4/>

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- Step 5 Education and Awareness
- <https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/step-5-workplace-violence-prevention/>

- Step 6 Workplace bullying and domestic violence
- Although workplace bullying and domestic violence are not specified under the Violence in the Workplace Regulations, they are considered risk factors for potential workplace violence and is recommended they be included in your workplace violence prevention plan.
- <https://awarens.ca/workplace-violence-prevention/step-6/>