



Workplace violence is:

Any threat, disruptive behaviors, intimidation, physical aggression, or act of violence in the workplace including homicide. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers, and visitors. **Acts of violence** and other injuries are currently **the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries** in the United States.

Homicide in the workplace is currently the fourth leading cause of death on the job. According to OSHA, over 2 million people report being victims of workplace violence every year.

Contributing Factors

Different factors contribute to whether someone may experience violence at work. People who work where money is exchanged are at a higher risk factor for workplace violence. Other career fields such as EMS, police officers, healthcare workers, customer service representatives, and delivery drivers are more likely to experience violence while on the job. Factors such as time of day worked, geographical area of work, working alone or in small groups, also have an impact on whether someone is more likely to experience workplace violence.

Employer Responsibility

Employers are ultimately responsible for keeping their employees safe. A zero-tolerance policy is one of the best preventable measures an employer can take, especially for workplace violence between employees. Any threat or aggression needs to be

immediately reported and addressed. Any concerns from employees or a customer needs to be taken seriously and corrected immediately. Depending on the type of work being done, other controls can be implemented by the employer to keep employees safe.

Summary

Individuals need to be diligent in protecting themselves as well. Report any suspicious activities whether it be the public or another employee when dealing with situations that can lead to violence on the job. When faced with workplace violence dealing with another coworker, do not become confrontational with them. Leave the area when you can do so safely and report the situation immediately to a supervisor. If your immediate supervisor does not take the report seriously, go to a higher level of supervision to correct the issue. Workplace violence almost never comes out of nowhere and when smaller issues are reported and addressed it keeps the entire workplace safer as well as yourself.

The following references provide guidance for evaluating and controlling violence in the workplace.

- DOSH Workplace Violence [pamphlet](#).
- Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace ([WorkSafeBC](#)).
- [Preventing Workplace Violence in Healthcare](#). OSHA. The strategies and tools presented in this section are intended to complement *OSHA's Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers*. The *Guidelines* describe the five components of an effective workplace violence prevention program, with extensive examples.
- [Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service](#)

[Workers](#) (EPUB | MOBI). OSHA Publication 3148, (2016).

- [Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late-Night Retail Establishments](#). OSHA Publication 3153, (2009).
- [Workplace Violence](#). OSHA Fact Sheet, (2002). Also available in [Spanish](#). Provides basic information about vulnerable occupations, employer/employee roles in prevention and protection, and recommendations for response to violent incidents.
- [Hospitals](#). OSHA eTool. Focuses on some of the hazards and controls found in the hospital setting and describes standard requirements as well as recommended safe work practices for employee safety and health.