

Violence Policy Statement – Guidelines for Development

INTRODUCTION

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 requires the development and implementation of a violence policy statement for workplaces where violent situations can potentially occur. **Pharmacies** are identified in *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* as one of these workplaces.

CONTENTS OF THE POLICY STATEMENT

The legislation requires that the following sections are included in the statement.

1. Employer Commitment

The employer must demonstrate their commitment to their employees' health by involving them in the development of the policy statement. This policy statement must be done in consultation with the local occupational health committee (OHC) or the workers if no committee exists.

Sample Wording: *"The management of ABC Pharmacy recognizes the potential for violent acts or threats directed against its staff by outsiders. Every effort has been made to identify possible sources of violence and implement procedures to eliminate or minimize risks. Management will consider any further measures required by the OHC or the workers."*

2. Identification of Risk

The policy statement must identify which work areas are at greatest risk for violent incidents that may occur. A risk assessment helps to identify work areas and jobs that could be affected by violence. A risk assessment considers the location, nature and circumstances of the work done in the pharmacy, as well as the frequency and nature of previous incidents of violence at the workplace over at least the last year.

Sample wording: *"This policy applies to all cashiers, stock persons, store managers, pharmacy technicians and pharmacists employed by ABC Pharmacy. Several procedures have been developed in consultation with the staff to inform and train workers about the risks of violence. These procedures include the following: Preventing robberies, What to do after a robbery, Dealing with shoplifters, Making deposits, Opening/Closing the store, and Parking at work."*

3. Informing Workers

The employer has a duty to inform workers and provide information about the clients/customers who have a history of violent behavior and could potentially come into contact with workers. The Violence Policy Statement must include a procedure outlining how the employer will do this.

Sample wording: *"Phil Pusher, Manager ABC Pharmacy is responsible for informing and training staff about identifying risks, clients with a history of violent behavior, how to prevent violence, and the procedures to be followed. Each worker who has taken the training will be asked to sign a record of instruction."*

4. Actions to Minimize Risk

The policy statement must include appropriate procedures to minimize or eliminate risk. These measures could include improving lighting and visibility, installing video equipment and alarms, hiring security personnel, or providing additional staff.

Sample wording: *"Our violence prevention procedures include appropriate measures to prevent injury and investigate violent incidents. The following actions have been taken to minimize hazards..."*

5. Actions to take following a violent incident

The policy statement must include procedures to be followed by a worker who has been exposed to a violent incident, including the reporting, documenting and investigating of all violent incidents.

Sample wording: *"Our violence prevention procedures indicate that every worker who has been the victim of violence in the workplace must report the incident immediately to the Manager. The Manager must investigate the incident and complete a violence report."*

6. Recommendation to consult a physician

Each worker who has been affected by violence must be advised of his/her right to consult a doctor. If a worker does consult a doctor (or misses work) both the employer and the worker are required to report the injury to the Workers Compensation Board. The policy statement must include this. Pharmacists have access to counseling through the Member Assistance Program.

Sample wording: *“Any staff member of ABC Pharmacy who has been a victim of violence will be given the opportunity, on company time, to be examined by the worker’s physician. A worker who visits a physician or other health care specialist for treatment or counselling will not lose any pay or other benefits.”*

7. Training of Workers

The policy statement must demonstrate the employer’s commitment to provide training to current and new employees. Training requires that workers be given the correct information, have the information explained to them, and are verbally or otherwise tested to ensure they have learned the knowledge they need to correctly respond to violence in the workplace.

Sample wording: *“Workers who may be exposed to violence will be trained about how to carry out procedures such as how to prevent workplace violence prevention, how to recognize potential dangers, how to respond to incidents and obtain assistance and how to report and document incidents.”*

8. No Loss of Pay or Benefits

Workers who attend training on violence or receive assessment and counselling related to violent incidents must not lose pay or benefits.

Sample wording: *“A staff member of ABC Pharmacy who visits a physician or other health care specialist for treatment or counselling after being involved in a violent incident will not lose any pay or other benefits.”*

9. Availability of policy statement

The employer shall make readily available a copy of the policy statement for reference by workers

Sample wording: *“It is the responsibility of the Manager to ensure this policy statement is easily accessible to all staff members, and to provide a copy to all new employees.”*

Additional Information is available from Occupational Health and Safety. If you wish to receive the booklet “A Guide to Developing a Violence Policy Statement” or “A Sample Policy on Workplace Violence” please contact:

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