



Human
Resources
Professionals
Association

**HRPA Practice Standard:
Addressing Workplace Violence,
Including Domestic Violence**

Purpose of Standard

HRPA regulates its registered HR professionals in the public interest (meaning for the welfare and wellbeing of the general public and society) and holds our members, firms and students to agreed-upon standards. Like any regulatory body, professional guidance is critical in helping to supplement the [Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct](#) and to provide HRPA members, firms and students with the tools to protect the public interest by reducing/preventing risks of harm stemming from the practice of the Human Resources (HR) profession.

This practice standard should be read in conjunction with the HRPA's Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct. Members of the public should expect HRPA members, registered firms, and students to uphold the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct. HRPA's risk roster and the extensive research conducted on risks to the public (e.g., workers, workplaces, employers) stemming from the practice of HR found that there is a high prevalence of violence in the workplace, making workplace violence among the highest risks to the public. As such, HRPA looked at common risk factors and developed this practice standard to assist members and students in preventing and addressing occurrences of workplace violence, including domestic violence.

This practice standard intends to offer guidance and the HRPA's minimum expectations required of all HRPA members, firms and students in regard to dealing with workplace violence, including domestic violence. **Please note that this standard is not exhaustive, but rather focuses on the minimum expectations of HRPA members and students. Additionally, this standard does not focus on workplace harassment, and instead is focused on workplace violence. This standard also does not cover other legal obligations an HR Professional (or any other worker or workplace representative) may have under the applicable legislation, or that may exist under the Code or the *Criminal Code of Canada* in respect of workplace violence.** HRPA strongly encourages members and students to pursue additional education, resources, training and support on this topic.

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this practice standard relates to the law of the Province of Ontario and is intended for general information only. This practice standard does not constitute legal advice and is not provided for the purpose of providing legal advice or a complete statement of the law on the particular topics, a complete statement of the HR Professional's obligations on the particular topic, or in determining what

constitutes compliance with the law. Every situation is unique and involves specific legal issues. HRPA members, firms and students are advised to seek legal advice, as applicable.

Further, this practice standard is to be read in conjunction with the applicable employment standards, occupational health and safety, and human rights legislation and does not supersede or replace the legal requirements set out in the legislation.

Target user:	HRPA members, firms and students, employers, and executive leadership teams.
Risk of harm to public (e.g. workers, workplaces, employers):	<p>Violence and threats of violence in the workplace, including domestic violence, can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries and death • Harm to psychological/mental health • Absenteeism • Low workplace morale • High turnover • Low productivity • Legal and financial costs/exposure • Strain to health care system
Risk of harm to profession:	<p>Failure among HR professionals to appropriately deal with violence in the workplace harms the reputation of the profession and can have severe legal consequences.</p>
Critical connection to Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct:	<p>The following provisions of HRPA’s Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct, which all members, firms and students must comply with, apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section I. Professionalism: Rules #1 and 9. • Section II. Trustworthiness: Rules #1, 2, 4, 5, 9 and 10. • Section III. Respect: Rules #3-6. • Section VI. Best Interest of Others: Rules #1 and 4. <p><i>Note: This is not an exhaustive list of critical connections this guidance may have to the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct. Please ensure you review the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct in its entirety.</i></p>

Desired impact of guidance:	<p>This practice standard will provide HRPA members, firms and students with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the definition and scope of violence and domestic violence in the workplace • Information about workplace violence prevention • Guidance, expectations and tools for addressing workplace violence, including domestic violence • Additional resources to supplement their knowledge of violence, including domestic violence
------------------------------------	--

Table of Contents

HRPA Practice Guideline:.....	1
Addressing Violence, including Domestic Violence, in the Workplace	1
Purpose of Standard	2
Overview of Workplace Violence and Domestic Violence	5
Workplace Violence.....	5
Domestic Violence.....	6
Summary of Key Legislation	7
Standards.....	8
1) Key Legal Responsibilities.....	8
2) Workplace Policies and Programs.....	11
3) Emergency Preparedness and Procedures.....	13
4) Training and Education.....	15
Scenarios	15
Evaluation Measures.....	19
References (And Additional Resources).....	19

Overview of Workplace Violence and Domestic Violence

Everyone is entitled to a healthy and safe workplace. In Ontario, under [the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA), employers have the duty to provide a safe work environment by, in part, assessing the risks of workplace violence and developing, implementing, reviewing (at least annually) and training on workplace violence policies and programs. For federally regulated employers, [Part II of the Canada Labour Code](#) applies, along with [the relevant Regulations thereunder](#). Employers in Ontario also have a duty to address instances of workplace violence immediately.

According to [Statistics Canada](#), in 2019, for one in four victims of violent crime, the violent crimes occurred in the workplace. Workplace violence can occur in any workplace and can be perpetrated by someone who regularly comes in contact with workers (e.g., clients or contractors), by workers themselves (e.g., co-worker, supervisor or employer), or by someone with no formal connection to a workplace (e.g., a stranger or a domestic/intimate partner who brings violence to the workplace).

The range of unwanted behaviours that can occur within a workplace includes any acts in which a person is intimidated, threatened, abused or assaulted and it covers anything from threatening remarks to physical violence. It should be noted that bullying and harassment in the workplace, if left unchecked, can lead to workplace violence.

Workplace Violence

The OHSA defines workplace violence as: “(a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker, (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker, (c) a statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.” Examples of workplace violence can include hitting (or trying to hit) a worker, pushing (or trying to push) a worker, throwing objects at a worker, or threatening violence against another person or groups of people. It is enough if a person applies, attempts to apply, or threatens to apply physical force against a worker. It is not the

case that the individual doing so much also appreciate that their actions could cause physical harm.

When violence or threats of violence from a worker's family member or intimate partner (otherwise known as domestic violence) occurs at work or could expose any worker to risk of injury, whether it is a relationship between two co-workers or between a worker and a person with no formal connection to a workplace, it is considered workplace violence.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence in Canada is found to be the most rapidly growing type of workplace violence. **It should not be seen as solely a personal matter that workplaces have no duty to address.**

As stated by the [Public Services Health & Safety Association](#), domestic violence is:

“a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom he/she[/they] has or has had an intimate relationship. It may include physical violence, sexual, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and use of electronic devices to harass and control. Anyone can be a victim [survivor] of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, economic status or educational background. The abuser may be a current or former spouse or intimate partner, relative or friend.”

In this standard, the word “survivor” will be used instead of “victim” of violence. Survivor in this sense is meant to describe an individual who is currently or has previously experienced domestic violence or workplace violence. Using the word “victim” can have negative connotations, and make it seem as though individuals subject to the violence are powerless or weak. Using the term of survivor is meant to connote strength and resiliency in the face of violence.

Domestic violence becomes workplace violence when it occurs at work or in the workplace. The safety of the worker, survivor and their co-workers and clients can all be impacted by domestic violence.

Signs of domestic violence in the workplace include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated phone calls, emails, and/or social media messages to the survivor at work

- Stalking
- Unexpected person showing up at the workplace and asking personal questions to co-workers about the survivor (e.g. where they are, who they are with, when they will be back)
- Threatening co-workers (for example, if the co-workers don't tell the individual where the survivor is)
- Verbal abuse
- Jealous and controlling behaviours
- Destroyed property/belongings of survivor
- Physical harm and evidence of physical harm (e.g. bruising, cuts)
- Workplace absenteeism and last-minute cancellations
- Survivor acting differently than usual – including being more withdrawn, isolated, apologizing for their partner's behaviour, appearing flustered when phone calls come in, spending more time at work or school than usual, etc.

Summary of Key Legislation Related to Violence

Legislation	Purpose of Legislation
Ontario's <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect workers from hazards in the workplace, including hazards of workplace violence • Lays out general rights and duties for employers, supervisors and workers regarding occupational health and safety, including workplace violence, in the workplace • General duties of employers and supervisors include taking every reasonable precaution to protect workers from violence and harassment in the workplace and providing information, instruction and supervision to workers in order to protect their health and safety, and on the contents of the employer's workplace harassment and violence policy(ies) and program(s) in particular • Requires employers to assess risks of workplace violence that may arise due to the nature of the workplace, type of work, and/or the conditions of work, and develop policies and procedures to control identified risks that are likely to expose workers to workplace violence and harassment accordingly • Requires workers to report any contravention of the Act or regulations, including any instances of workplace violence or harassment • Includes provisions on workplace sexual harassment and domestic violence

<p>Canada's <i>Criminal Code</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes duty for all persons “who undertake, or had the authority, to direct how another person does work or performs a task” to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm to that person, or another, arising from that work or task • Covers incidents involving violence or threats that occur in the workplace such as assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, stalking, robbery, and uttering threats
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997</i> (injury- physical and/or psychological from workplace harassment and/or violence may be compensable under this act) • <i>Compensation for Victims of Crime Act</i> (compensation for survivors of workplace violence may be eligible under this act) • <i>Victims’ Bill of Rights, 1995</i> (addresses the treatment of survivors of violence, civil proceedings and the Victims’ Justice Fund)

**Note: Workplaces that are federally regulated should consult federal legislation, regulations (including, but not limited to the Canada Labour Code and Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations) and publications for information and support in meeting their obligations.*

Standards

The following standards are the HRPA’s minimum expectations with which HR professionals are expected to comply. As noted above, this practice standard primarily references Ontario-based legislation. It is meant to supplement the applicable legislation and does not replace or supersede the HR professionals’ legal obligations under the applicable legislation and regulations. For federally-regulated employers, it is important to ensure you are following all other relevant legislation in the applicable jurisdiction(s).

1) Key Legal Responsibilities

Employers have legal responsibilities to maintain a safe working environment. The below guidance focuses on some of those key legal responsibilities for provincially-regulated employers in Ontario, primarily focusing on key OHS requirements. **Please note that this list is not exhaustive and all relevant legislation and regulations must be followed at all times.** With respect to legal responsibilities, as an HRPA member, firm or student, you are, at a minimum, expected to, as applicable to your role, and to the best of your abilities in light of what is within your control:

- a) Never participate in, condone, or encourage violent behaviour towards others or threaten violence against others.
- b) Inform workers and the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative (as applicable) of any known actual or potential workplace health and safety dangers in order to protect workers. The amount of detail and information disclosed should be tailored to the specific worker(s) (depending on the worker's role and the type and conditions of the work performed) and the nature of the risk(s).
- c) If you are aware of a person in the workplace with a history of violent behaviour, provide worker(s) with this information **if** the worker could encounter the violent person in the course of their work **and** the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury. Information about the person with the history of violence ought to be provided, including personal information, but only to the extent necessary in the circumstances and only as long as the information is necessary to protect the worker(s) from physical injury. Privacy should be respected as much as possible, avoiding sharing irrelevant or unnecessary information.
 - o For example, it may be appropriate to disclose the identity of the person with violent history, and their triggers for potential aggression.
 - o When disclosing personal information, consider other laws that speak to the violent person's right to privacy and the legal release of personal or medical information, including the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*.
 - o If conflicted about how much information to share, including whether personal medical information should be shared, you should seek legal advice.
- d) If you are aware, or ought to be aware, that domestic violence could occur in the workplace, take every reasonable precaution to protect workers from injuries. There are many ways this can be done, as detailed throughout this document.
- e) Recognize that even if a worker does not want their employer or supervisor to take any action if they are experiencing workplace violence (including from domestic violence), the employer must still comply with its obligations and take reasonable and appropriate action in the circumstances to protect the worker and other workers, in order to maintain a safe workplace.

- f)** Ensure your employer is regularly (e.g., at least annually) conducting risk assessments to identify risks of workplace violence that could occur due to the nature of the workplace, type of work, or conditions of work. Notify the workplace's joint health and safety committee (JHSC) or health and safety representative, as applicable, of the assessment results. If there is no JHSC or health and safety representative, the employer must advise all workers of the results and, where the assessment is in writing, provide or make available copies of the risk assessment to worker(s) when requested. When working on risk assessments, it is recommended that:
- Internal factors, such as organizational culture, activities, and organizational structure, are considered, as well as external factors, including location, clients, family violence, etc.
 - Prior incidents of workplace violence are reviewed, by looking at incident reports, first aid records, and any health and safety committee records
 - Employees are asked about their experiences and if they have any concerns for themselves or others in the workplace related to violence (e.g., through surveys or focus groups)
 - Other workplaces of similar nature are consulted to help determine risks
 - Advice from local security experts is sought
 - Articles or publications about risks of violence in the workplace are consulted
- g)** Develop clear measures and procedures to manage the identified risks or potential risks as part of risk assessments and as part of a workplace violence program.
- h)** Ensure the employer has developed a policy on workplace violence, as required by the OHS Act, that is reviewed at least annually – no matter the size of the workplace. For workplaces with six or more workers, the policy must be in writing and available in a conspicuous place in the workplace. *See next section (#2) for more details on expectations for workplace policies and programs.*
- i)** Notify the police or any relevant emergency responders for immediate help when incidents of workplace violence, including domestic violence in the workplace, happens. If a person has been killed or critically injured in the workplace, employers must immediately notify the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills

Development, and, if applicable, the JHSC or health and safety representative, and union, if applicable.

- j) Report incidents of violence or domestic violence in the workplace that you become aware of to the proper workplace representatives and authorities. If children or vulnerable populations are involved, you have additional reporting obligations.

2) Workplace Policies and Programs

Workplace policies and programs are crucial to help educate, prevent, and address workplace violence, including domestic violence. As applicable to their roles, and otherwise to the best of their abilities in light of what is within their control, HRPAs members, firms and students are expected to:

- a) Ensure or encourage your employer's workplace policy (and/or program, which can be combined with the policy) complies with the OHSA and includes the following elements below. Note that HRPAs members, firms and students are expected to comply with these policies themselves, at all times:

Organizational Commitments
✓ A commitment to protecting all workers from all forms of workplace violence.
✓ A zero-tolerance policy for violent behaviour(s) in the workplace and a statement about who the policy/program applies to (e.g., all workers, clients, independent contractors, volunteers, anyone visiting the workplace, etc.).
✓ A commitment to always investigate and address any incidents or complaints of workplace violence, fairly and in an efficient manner. Steps should be outlined about the investigation protocols, including how and when investigations will occur. All HRPAs members, firms and students are also expected to follow HRPA's Practice Standard on Conducting Workplace Investigations . See the relevant practice standard for further details on how investigations should be handled.
✓ Training and re-training (as appropriate) on workplace health and safety measures, policies and practices.
Definitions and Context Setting
✓ Definitions, signs, symptoms and consequences of workplace violence, including domestic violence in the workplace.

✓ The fact that anyone can be impacted by or experience workplace violence, and a recognition that this can be heightened especially for those who identify as women.
✓ How violence in the workplace can result from racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, etc.
Procedures and Protocols
✓ Specific, detailed workplace procedures for handling complaints or incidents of violence and domestic violence in the workplace – including how, when, and to whom incidents of workplace violence or threats of violence should be reported, when to involve emergency services (such as 911), how to safeguard the workplace, what to do during an emergency violent situation, de-escalation techniques, the type of information that will be collected upon reports of violence, etc.
✓ How survivors of violence in the workplace or domestic violence can safely report it to their employer, and how the employer will help the survivor (including through personal safety planning, accommodations, etc.).
✓ Protocols around assessing risks of violence in the workplace, and what will be done with these assessments to promote a safe work environment.
✓ Protocols for notifying workers of a person with a history of violence, where appropriate.
✓ How often the workplace violence policy and program will be reviewed, which should be at least annually, and what happens if it is determined that current measures or procedures are inadequate.
✓ How incidents of workplace violence will be recorded and how those records will be maintained and secured.
✓ Workplace training and education requirements to maintain a safe workplace.
Individual Accountabilities
✓ The roles that everyone plays in the workplace to maintain safety, noting that everyone plays a part in workplace health and safety. Specific roles and responsibilities for supervisors and/or management, joint health and safety committees, and health and safety representatives (as applicable) should also be clear, including when reporting to the police, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, etc. is required.
✓ Accountability measures for perpetrators of violence in the workplace, including for perpetrators that are also employees at the workplace. Consequences of being violent in the workplace should be clearly stated.
✓ Treating everyone in the workplace with respect, empathy and understanding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Subject to the employer’s privacy and confidentiality requirements and obligations, expectations around how workers should treat co-workers who are known survivors of violence or domestic violence, using trauma-informed approaches (e.g., not blaming the survivor, spending time with them, providing resources and support, avoiding giving unsolicited advice, avoiding expressing frustration, etc.).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A sign-off of the policy with a date from the highest management level.
<p>Legal Accountabilities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Confidentiality, privacy, and disclosure of information protocols are in place, in compliance with applicable laws.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An assurance that there will be no reprisals against anyone who reports incidents of violence or domestic violence in the workplace in good faith, or those that participate in a workplace investigation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The legal rights of workers to refuse work due to workplace violence, with some exceptions (e.g., those working in policing, firefighting, correctional institutions, and certain health care settings, in certain circumstances).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any applicable laws that will be followed and applied regarding workplace violence, including legal reporting obligations when children or vulnerable populations may be the survivors of violence.
<p>Survivor Supports</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any policies, as applicable, that will be available to workers experiencing domestic violence or violence. This includes providing paid time off, extended leaves of absence and workplace relocation for survivors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Supports (internal and external) available to survivors of violence in the workplace or domestic violence. This may include an Employee Assistance Program, a peer helper program, local services available such as women’s shelters, anonymous crisis support lines in your community, etc.

3) Emergency Preparedness and Procedures

Being prepared and having clear procedures that workers are aware of is important to prevent and address violence in the workplace, including domestic violence. As applicable to their roles, and otherwise to the best of their abilities from what is within their control, HRPA members, firms and students are expected to:

- a)** Ensure compliance with all legislative requirements and established policies and procedures for dealing with violence or potential violence in the workplace, including domestic violence. This should include:
- Strategies for dealing with the perpetrator or potential perpetrator when they are in the workplace
 - Readily accessible policies, training and resources related to workplace violence for all workers
 - Having a designated staff member or team (including the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if applicable) trained to respond appropriately to disclosures, reports, or incidents of violence or domestic violence, and provide required notifications to the appropriate third parties, if any
 - How the workplace will be kept secure (e.g. protocols for locking doors, alarms, adequate lighting – including in parking lots, electronic surveillance, installing physical barriers, having limited entrances to the workplace, putting workers closer to exits than a client or visitor to the workplace, keeping cash held in the workplace to a minimum, hiring security, keeping all valuables safely and securely stored, etc.)
 - Practicing empathy, kindness, and respect for survivors or potential survivors of violence or domestic violence in the workplace
 - Appropriately communicating with survivors or potential survivors of violence in the workplace, using a trauma-informed approach (e.g. not providing unsolicited advice, not forcing them to do anything, etc.)
 - How appropriate records will be maintained of incidents of violence in the workplace, and kept secure
- b)** Develop or help your employer develop (as applicable), personalized and context-specific safety, security and/or accommodation plans for survivors of violence or domestic violence in the workplace in collaboration with the survivor. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:
- Sharing details of the perpetrator (e.g. photos of them, height, weight) and their vehicle information with workplace and security representatives
 - Installing panic buttons and/or providing portable panic buttons
 - Creating code words to indicate a potentially dangerous situation that only applicable workers are aware of
 - Implementing a “buddy system” when entering/leaving the workplace

- Referring survivor to relevant community organizations/services for help
- Maintaining emergency contact numbers
- Screening survivor's calls and emails to reduce harassment
- Relocating the survivor to another worksite or station, as needed, on a temporary or permanent basis (including away from windows or entrances)
- Calling the police when witnessing criminal activity of the perpetrator
- Subject to the applicable employment standards legislation, if the perpetrator of violence works with the survivor, separating them in the workplace, scheduling them to work at different times, etc. whether pending the outcome of the workplace investigation or based on the outcome of the investigation
- Any other reasonable and appropriate plans identified in collaboration with the survivor of violence.

4) Training and Education

Providing training and education that is tailored to workers can help to prevent all forms of workplace violence and appropriately address it. As applicable to their roles, and to the best of their abilities from what is within their control, HRPA members, firms and students are expected to:

- a) Implement regular (e.g., annual) training and education about violence and domestic violence in the workplace for all workers, that is developed in collaboration with experts in this area and the JHSC or health and safety representative, as applicable, and which includes and expands on all aspects of the organization's workplace violence policy/program (*See section 2. a) for a comprehensive list*).

Scenarios

Below please find some examples on how content from this standard may apply to HR practice. **Please note that these scenarios are not exhaustive or determinative and are meant for illustrative purposes only.**

Scenario 1

Background	M. works in Human Resources (HR) as a Specialist. M. noticed that a colleague, D., has large bruises on their arms. M. has also noticed that D.
-------------------	---

	<p>seems to keep getting phone calls that lead D. to be visibly flustered and upset. M. thinks that D. could be experiencing domestic violence, but M. feels it is not their place to pry or intervene in as it is a personal matter.</p> <p>Similarly, P., a remote employee at the same organization, periodically hears D. being talked to sternly and aggressively in the background during virtual video meetings on days when D. is also working remotely. D. promptly puts themselves on mute when this occurs. P. finds this odd and has some concerns, but D. never mentions anything when this happens, so P. chooses not to mention anything about it either.</p>
Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. and P. are ignoring signs of domestic violence that could transfer into the workplace and not only cause harm to D., but also to all other workers in the workplace. • D. could be at serious risk of harm from domestic violence and may benefit from workplace support.
Analysis	<p>An appropriate response to this scenario from M. and P. would be to notify their own supervisor(s), D.'s supervisor, HR or the designated workplace representative of what they've noticed. D.'s supervisor (or if appropriate, HR or M. or P. themselves) can then touch base with D. to inquire if they need any help. If D. discloses domestic violence is occurring, relevant workplace policies and procedures should be followed – including developing a personalized safety plan, as applicable.</p>
Bottom Line	<p>Domestic violence should not be treated as a private matter in which the workplace plays no role. If you are aware, or ought to be aware, that domestic violence that could happen in the workplace, you must take every reasonable precaution to protect the affected worker from injury. There are many ways this can be done, and the approach will largely depend on the situation.</p>

Scenario 2

Background	<p>It was a normal day at the workplace, until suddenly and unexpectedly, a newer employee, J., tells everyone to hide as their abusive partner just called to say they are coming to the workplace with a gun. Panic ensues, with no one really knowing what to do or how to respond to this situation.</p>
-------------------	--

Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panic ensuing and people not knowing what to do means that there may not have been adequate training and education to workers on responding to violence in the workplace, or policies/procedures may not have been clearly outlined. • There is an imminent threat to everyone’s safety in the workplace.
Analysis	<p>The organization’s workplace violence program should clearly set out procedures and expectations regarding imminent threats of danger or violence and immediately notifying emergency services (such as police, 911) and identifying the designated worker or team responsible. Immediate notification should also be given workplace security, HR, the JHSC or health and safety representative (as applicable). A physical description of J.’s partner should be provided to emergency services, and all doors should be locked. Workers at risk of physical injury should be notified and steps taken to ensure their safety in the workplace.</p> <p>After the immediate incident is concluded, HR should work with the JHSC or health and safety representative, as applicable, to collaborate and develop a personal safety plan with J. and refer them to community services available. Accommodations should also be offered as required and applicable, such as relocation, paid time off, etc.</p>
Bottom Line	<p>There should always be a detailed emergency preparedness plan and procedures for cases of workplace violence, as well as appropriate training and education on how to deal with emergencies.</p>

Scenario 3

Background	<p>K. is an employee who wears a hijab. O. has been making frequent comments to K. about how K. shouldn’t be wearing a hijab in Canada and how hijabs don’t belong here, and how wearing a hijab could cause trouble. O. says K. should watch their back, especially if K. leaves the workplace after dark. Other workers have noticed and feel badly for K. but have not stepped in, thinking there is not much that could be done under their workplace violence policy as no direct threat of violence has been made.</p>
-------------------	--

<p>Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers are aware that K. is experiencing ongoing discrimination and harassment in the form of verbal abuse but have not reported it to anyone or intervened in any way, creating an unsafe workplace. • By not reporting known and observed discrimination and harassment, the workers who have witnessed the conduct (like the workers engaging in the conduct) are in breach of their legal obligations under the OHSA, and likely the organization’s workplace policies as well. • Workers are also aware that K. is being threatened, but wrongly think that because the threats are more ‘subtle’ or ‘vague’, the workplace violence policy is not triggered. • K. is experiencing discrimination and statements that could reasonably lead K. to believe that they could be subject to workplace violence and threatens their safety, which could have been prevented had the workplace acted and responded appropriately to the initial harassment.
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Everyone in the workplace, no matter their position, has a responsibility to keep the workplace safe and free from harassment, violence and discrimination. As soon as harassment, discrimination, abuse, threats, and/or violence is witnessed it should be reported and the organization’s policies/procedures should be followed to properly address it. This includes more subtle forms of threats that may not be as overt or direct.</p>
<p>Bottom Line</p>	<p>Thorough workplace violence policies and procedures should be in place, as well as regular training and education on preventing and addressing workplace violence. This includes protocols on what to do if you are a witness to discrimination, abuse, violence, or harassment of a worker and how to report such incidents. The workplaces must promptly take steps to investigate and address such incidents in order to avoid potential escalation of violence.</p>

Additional Resources

To help support further learning about preventing and addressing violence in the workplace, you are encouraged to review the following resources:

Preventing Violence in the Workplace:

- <https://www.ccohs.ca/products/publications/violence.html>

Policy and Program Development:

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/understand-law-workplace-violence-and-harassment#section-7>

Domestic Violence in the Workplace:

- <https://www.pshsa.ca/resources/addressing-domestic-violence-in-the-workplace>
- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/violence/domestic-violence/resource-toolkit>

Evaluation Measures

For any professional guidance issued by HRP, it is important to continuously assess the degree to which the guidance is impacting actual professional practice among HRP members and students. From time-to-time, HRP will assess the degree of this for this particular standard using the following evaluation measures:

- Reviewing HRP complaints data and discipline hearings to determine whether there has been a decrease or increase in the number of complaints or discipline hearings related to this topic,
- Anonymous surveying of HRP members and students to determine whether and how this professional guidance has had an impact on how they practise HR, and
- Anonymous polls and/or surveys of members of the public to assess whether there are any notable changes in this specific area that they are noticing among registered HR professionals.

This is not an exhaustive list of evaluation measures that may be used, and the evaluation measures may be updated at any time. When evaluations are complete, the HRP will transparently share the results.

References (And Resources)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2020). *Violence and harassment in the workplace: OSH answers*. Government of Canada. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence.html>

HRPA Practice Standard: Addressing Workplace Violence

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2021). *Violence and harassment in the workplace - family (domestic) violence: OSH answers*. Government of Canada. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence_domestic.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, June 6). *Risk factors - violence in the workplace*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/96-100/risk.html>
- Cotter, A. (2021, August 25). *Criminal victimization in Canada, 2019*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00014-eng.htm>
- Government of Canada. (2021). *Domestic violence in the workplace*. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/harassment-violence/domestic-violence-workplace.html>
- Government of Ontario. (2021). *Understand the law on workplace violence and harassment*. Ontario. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/understand-law-workplace-violence-and-harassment#section-7>
- Government of Ontario. (2022). *Part III.0.i: Workplace violence and workplace harassment: Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Ontario. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-occupational-health-and-safety-act/part-iii0i-workplace-violence-and-workplace-harassment>
- Government of Ontario. (2022). *Preventing workplace violence and workplace harassment*. Ontario. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/preventing-workplace-violence-and-workplace-harassment>
- Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario. (2010). *Developing workplace violence and harassment policies and programs - WSIB*. Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from https://www.wsib.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2019-01/wvps_guide.pdf
- Public Services Health and Safety Association. (2019). *Addressing domestic violence in the workplace*. Public Services Health and Safety Association. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.pshsa.ca/resources/addressing-domestic-violence-in-the-workplace>
- WorkSafe BC. (2015). *Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A Handbook for Employers Outside of B.C.* WORKSAFEBC. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/addressing-domestic-violence-in-the-workplace-a-handbook-for-employers-outside-of-bc?lang=en>