

Workplace Violence

There are currently no specific OSHA standards for workplace violence. However, under the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment that "is free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees." The courts have interpreted OSHA's general duty clause to mean that an employer has a legal obligation to provide a workplace free of conditions or activities that either the employer or industry recognizes as hazardous and that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees when there is a feasible method to abate the hazard.

An employer that has experienced acts of workplace violence, or becomes aware of threats, intimidation, or other indicators showing that the potential for violence in the workplace exists, would be on notice of the risk of workplace violence and should implement a workplace violence prevention program combined with engineering controls, administrative controls, and training.

What is workplace violence?

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers and visitors. Homicide is currently the fourth-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), of the 4,679 fatal workplace injuries that occurred in the United States in 2014, 403 were workplace homicides. However it manifests itself, workplace violence is a major concern for employers and employees nationwide.

Risk Factors

Provides information on risk factors and scope of violence in the workplace to increase awareness of workplace violence. The OSHA website provides several resources

Prevention Programs

Provides guidance for evaluating and controlling violence in the workplace. The OSHA website provides several resources for ow to establish a prevention program.

Training and Other Resources

Provides online training and other resource information. OSHA website contains links to a variety of training and reference materials, including presentations, publications, and handouts.

Enforcement

There are currently no specific OSHA standards for workplace violence. As mentioned above the General Duty Clause can be used to cite employers.

I realize that most locations have not experienced any acts of workplace violence. But that does not mean it will never happen. Be prepared by studying workplace violence and by implementing a training program. This program does not have to be huge and demand a lot of time. All employees need to be aware of workplace violence and how to recognize signs and symptoms of this behavior. Small issue can develop into large issues if not diagnosed quickly and properly.

Questions? Contact The Redstone Group at 617-763-5034 x7007 or jwilliams@redstonegrp.com