

Violence At Work

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



VIOLENCE AT WORK

It's not that common is it?

The short answer, yes it is. 2020 statistics report that abuse against retail workers doubled at the height of the first wave of the pandemic. Almost 90% surveyed said they were verbally abused, 60% threatened with physical violence and 9% assaulted and preliminary results from the 2021 survey carried out by Usdaw suggests those incidents are on the up with 14% of retail workers reporting being assaulted.

BUT IT'S NOT JUST RETAIL...

A number of other sectors are classed as high risk including:

Policing - 8.4%*

Health and Social Care - 3.9%*

Healthcare Providers - 3.3%*

***reported being assaulted on the job**



Others in public-facing roles are also at risk including those working in education, those handling cash or doing delivering. Public-facing workers have a higher potential for strangers - accounting for around 60% of all reported violent incidents.

What is classed as violence?

We know violent behaviour when we see it, but when it comes to the law, what exactly are we talking about?

The definition of workplace violence includes physical, sexual, psychological, verbal and written abuse (such as that on social media). The HSE defines work-related violence as: 'Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'

Where is it covered?

Violent behaviour in the workplace is covered by Section 2 of The Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 and requirements assessment under regulation 3 of the management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended) 1999.

Where instances of workplace violence result in specified injuries over a 7 days, where an individual is incapacitated or in the case of death, this must be reported under 'Reporting of Injuries, disease, and dangerous occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)



What are the causes?

Recent reporting links the effects of the pandemic to an increase in violent incidents and whilst this cannot be ignored as a factor, there are other common issues that can lead to workplace violence including:

Working Alone

Abnormal Working Hours

Difficult Colleagues

Organisational Change such as mergers or redundancy

Social and Economic Factors

Workplace Culture

Stress/Poor Mental Health

Influence of Drugs and Alcohol.

**21% of threats and
43% of assaults
were a result of the
influence of alcohol**



**28% of threats and
42% of assaults
were a result of the
influence of alcohol**

What can employers do?

As an employer, you are legally obliged to keep your employees safe, but where do you start?

- **Ensure you have a policy in place which covers violence at work**
- **Address clearly how workplace violence will be prevented, managed and responded to.**
- **Responses to reports of this nature should include a review stage and the provision of support to the individual**
- **Encourage the benefit of reporting across your organisation**
- **Consult with your employees on what needs to be covered**
- **Ensure a strict and robust reporting system**
- **Communicate policies clearly not just to employees but to clients, customers and service users.**

**Workplace violence is not and
never should be
'Just part of the job'**

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