

Templated Program

WPV

Workplace Violence Prevention

AWARE + NS

NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH + COMMUNITY SERVICES SAFETY ASSOCIATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.....	4
1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 What is Workplace Violence?.....	4
1.2 Types of Workplace Violence	4
1.3 Scope.....	6
1.4 Workplace Violence Legislation.....	7
1.5 Roles and Responsibilities	8
1.6 Workplace Violence Prevention Statement.....	11
SECTION 2 - RISK ASSESSMENT	12
2.0 Introduction	12
2.1 Program Review and Employee Perception Survey.....	12
2.2 Workplace Violence Risk Assessment.....	13
2.3 Conducting a Workplace Violence Risk Assessment.....	13
2.4 Application of Controls to Prevent and Manage Violence.....	14
2.5 Re-assessment.....	14
SECTION 3 - WORK PLACE VIOLENCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	15
3.0 Introduction	15
3.1 Recognition of Potential Violence or Crisis.....	15
3.2 Response to Workplace Violence	17
3.3 Policies and Procedures Update and Review.....	19
3.4 Reporting.....	20
3.5 Incident Scene Management.....	20
3.6 Documentation and Investigation of Incident	20
3.7 Debriefing.....	20
3.8 Education	21
SECTION 4 – BEST PRACTICES: BULLYING & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	22
Workplace Bullying	
4.0 Policy	22
4.1 Statement.....	22
4.2 Policy Review.....	23
4.3 Definition.....	23
4.4 Reporting of Incidents.....	24
4.5 Awareness and Education.....	25
Domestic Violence Policy	
4.6 Introduction.....	26
4.7 Policy Statement.....	26
4.8 Definition.....	26
4.9 Prevention Strategies.....	26

4.11	Awareness.....	27
4.12	Response of Incidents of Domestic Violence.....	27
4.13	Confidentiality.....	28
4.14	Anti-Discrimination.....	28
4.15	Accommodating Victims of domestic Violence.....	28
4.16	Training.....	29
APPENDIX A – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION RISK ASSESSMENT.....		30
REFERENCES		34

SECTION 1 – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

1.0 Introduction

The risk of workplace violence at *[Organization Name]* is significant. Staff members often provide care and services to residents/clients during difficult and stressful circumstances. These situations can be complex and may lead to emotionally charged environments, which pose an increased risk for violence. Violence in the workplace is an issue that affects the safety and security of employees, residents/clients and visitors at *[Organization Name]*. Workplace violence claims a high personal cost due to the emotional trauma and physical injury experienced by victims, their families and co-workers. It can also lead to increased absenteeism, higher sick leave costs, lost productivity, high employee turn-over, higher insurance premiums and increased WCB premiums.

1.1 What is Workplace Violence?

Nova Scotia's *Violence in the Workplace Regulations* define 'violence' as:

1. *Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of physical injury.*
2. *Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of an employee.*

1.2 Types of Workplace Violence

Types of violence that workers may experience at *[Organizational Name]* include hitting, grabbing, pinching, pushing, physical assault, sexual assault, stalking, criminal harassment, robbery, or threats of violence.

Workplace violence incidents usually fall into one of four categories:

- Type I (External): Committed by a perpetrator who has no connection or relationship to *[Organizational Name]*;
- Type II (Resident or Customer or Visitor): The perpetrator, who is a resident, customer, or visitor, becomes violent towards a worker or another resident/client;
- Type III (Worker-to-Worker): The perpetrator is an employee or past employee of *[Organizational Name]* and becomes violent toward another worker;
- Type IV (Domestic Violence): The perpetrator usually has a personal/domestic relationship with an employee (e.g. domestic violence in the workplace)

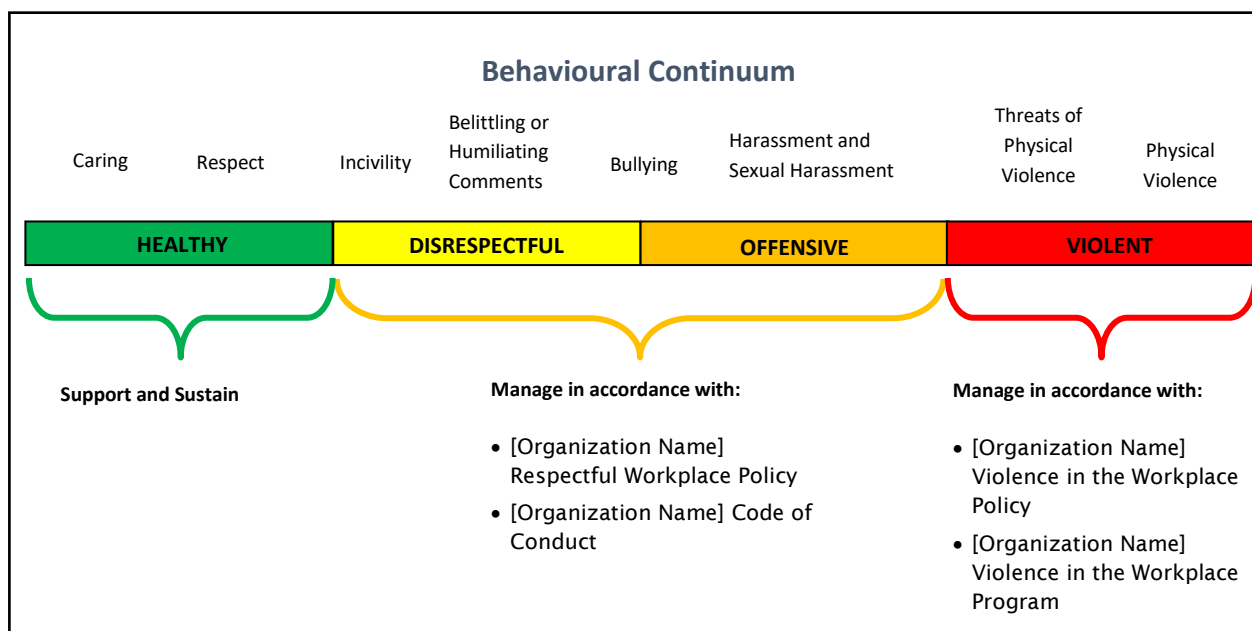
Within our sector, incidents of workplace violence may be attributed to a resident/client becoming violent towards a worker. The antecedents of the actions resulting in violence include, but are not limited to:

- Worsened medical situation (e.g. progressive dementia, higher level of need for care on admission, etc.),
- Behavioral disturbances (e.g. denial of requests, increasing distress, anxiety),
- effects of medication or lack of medication,
- Care transitions (e.g. move of care from hospital to residential care),
- Language or cultural barriers,
- Anniversary of a significant event,
- Physiological needs (e.g. fatigue, hunger),
- Reaction to caregiver, or
- Time of day or week.

In addition, within the global context of workplace violence, there are changes recognized regarding workplace violence including:

- Shift from physical violence to psychological violence (e.g. mistreatment, bullying, harassment),
- Shift from a one-off event to repeated events of violence directed at a worker.

[Organization Name] has decided to explore non-legislative descriptions of workplace violence that go beyond the definition set out in the Regulations. These descriptions link harassment, abusive behaviour, bullying and violence within a continuum between the behaviours. This view may be helpful when considering the scope and nature of violence in the workplace. Information to expand the scope of workplace violence is included in the Workplace Violence Program Review Tool.



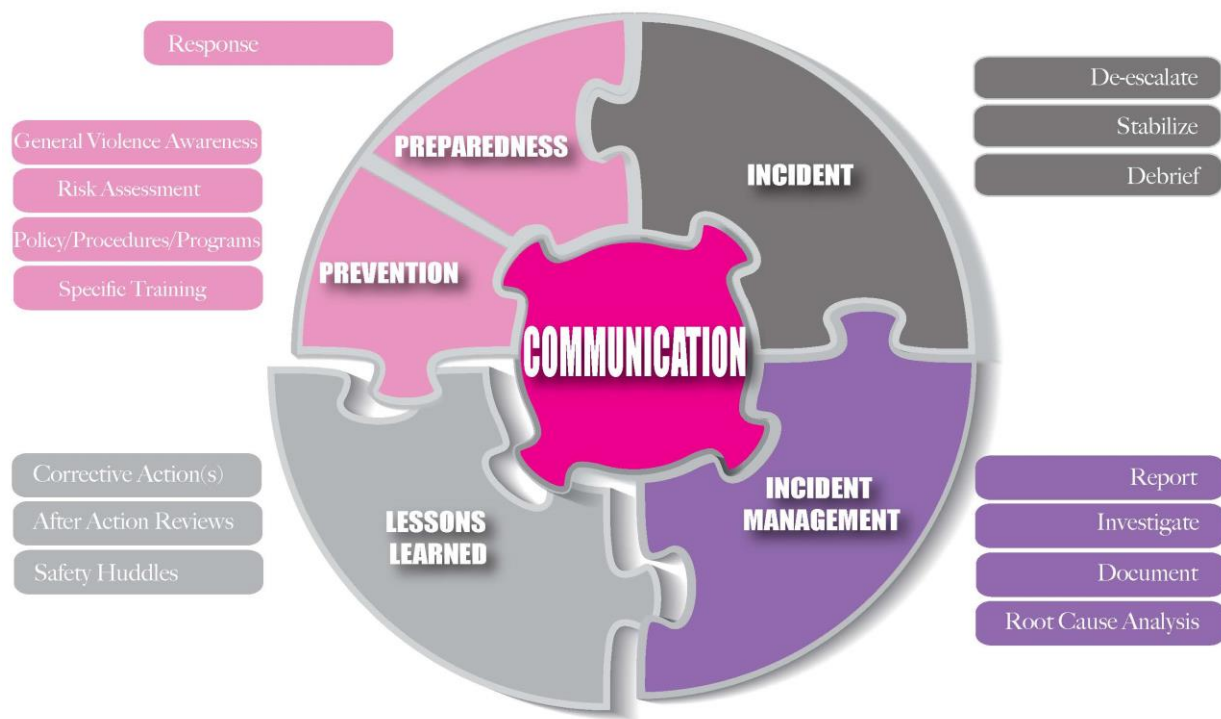
1.3 Scope

This workplace violence prevention plan applies to all [Organization Name] workplaces, which includes any place where staff is, or is likely to be engaged in work-related activities.

This plan has been developed to meet the requirements of the most current and applicable Nova Scotia legislation, standards, and leading industry practices.

The plan establishes the minimum requirements for preventing and managing workplace violence at [Organization Name]. It may be adjusted or adapted to accommodate site-specific requirements or practices and business continuity needs, as long as those minimum requirements continue to be met.

The workplace violence prevention plan includes a comprehensive framework for education and awareness training with components that comprise a dynamic cycle. Educating on these components (Prevention/Preparedness, Incident, Incident Management and Lessons Learned) will contribute to the reduction of workplace violence. Effective Communication is integral to the success of this framework.



1.4 Workplace Violence Legislation

Nova Scotia's "*Violence in the Workplace Regulations*" came into effect in 2007 and prescribe specific requirements for designated employers to do a violence risk assessment and establish and implement a workplace violence prevention plan where a significant risk of violence is identified.

The *Violence in the Workplace Regulations* are made under Section 82 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The Regulations establish legal obligations for employers for preventing and managing workplace violence. Nova Scotia legislation requires that employers take all reasonable care to provide a workplace that is safe from hazards, including violence.

In this regard, *[Organization Name]* must:

1. Establish and implement a workplace violence prevention plan for each workplace where a significant risk of violence has been identified from a violence risk assessment, or if it has been ordered by an OH&S officer.

In accordance, *[Organization Name]* will:

- a) prepare a written workplace violence prevention statement;
- b) Take and document reasonable measures to minimize and, to the extent possible, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace. Or adopt a code of practice on violence in the workplace.
- c) establish and document procedures for providing their employees with the information and training;
- d) Establish and document procedures for reporting, documenting and investigating incidents of violence which occur at *[Organization Name]*.

[Organization Name] will consult with the established JOHS Committee and will make a copy of the workplace violence prevention plan available for examination at the workplace.

2. Prepare a written workplace violence prevention statement which includes:
 - a) a statement of recognition that violence is an occupational health and safety hazard at the workplace;
 - b) a statement of recognition of the physical and emotional harm resulting from violence;
 - c) a statement of recognition that any form of violence in the workplace is unacceptable; and
 - d) a statement of commitment to minimize and, to the extent possible, eliminate the risk of violence in the workplace.

[Organization Name] will post a copy of the workplace violence prevention statement in a prominent place or places in each workplace so it can be easily accessed by employees, and must ensure that it remains posted.

3. Conduct a violence risk assessment for each workplace to determine if there is a risk of violence and prepare a written report concerning the violence risk assessment detailing the extent and nature of any risk identified by the assessment.

The violence risk assessment will consider:

- a) violence that has occurred at *[Organization Name]* in the past;
- b) violence that is known to occur in similar workplaces;
- c) the circumstances in which work takes place;
- d) the interactions that occur in the course of performing work at *[Organization Name]*; and
- e) the physical location and layout of the workplace.

[Organization Name] will consult with the established JOHS Committee and will provide the committee with a copy of the written report of the assessment.

4. Conduct a new violence risk assessment for *[Organization Name]* if:
 - a) *[Organization Name]* becomes aware of a type of violence occurring in similar workplaces that was not taken into consideration when the previous violence risk assessment was conducted;
 - b) There is a significant change in:
 - i. the circumstances in which work takes place,
 - ii. the interactions that occur in the course of performing work,
 - iii. the physical location or layout of the workplace,
 - iv. *[Organization Name]* plans to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility, or,
 - v. *[Organization Name]* is ordered to do so by an OH&S officer.
 - c) a period of 5 years has passed since the initial violence risk assessment was conducted.
5. Review and revise the workplace violence prevention plan if:
 - a) A new violence risk assessment indicates a significant change to the extent and nature of the risk of violence at *[Organization Name]*; or
 - b) A period of 5 years has passed since the initial workplace violence prevention plan was implemented.

1.5 Roles and Responsibilities

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* describes a framework for the shared responsibility for workplace safety (i.e. the Internal Responsibility System). The Act assumes that the primary responsibility for creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace should be that of each of the workplace parties to the extent of each party's authority and ability to do so.

Employer & Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities

- Support and promote *[Organization Name]*'s commitment to the prevention of violent behavior and the workplace violence prevention plan;
- Establish specific responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of the workplace violence prevention plan;
- Ensure all levels of leadership are accountable for occupational health and safety performance in their areas of responsibility;
- Monitor the workplace violence prevention plan through review of statistical information relative to workplace risk assessment, training records, and incident reports; and
- Inform and encourage all persons of the need to report workplace violence incidents or threats of violence at *[Organization Name]*, and ensure all persons are aware of how to do so.

Supervisor and/or Manager Responsibilities

- Support and promote *[Organization Name]*'s commitment to violence prevention;
- Inform staff of the nature and extent of the risk(s) from violence in their workplace and act to remedy any hazard related to violence in the workplace;
- Inform and encourage all persons of the need to report workplace violence incidents or threats of violence, and ensure all persons are aware of how to do so;
- Provide appropriate violence prevention instruction and training necessary to ensure the health and safety of all staff;
- Appropriately communicate to clients/residents and family members about their applicable code of conduct while at *[Organization Name]*, including displaying clear signage outlining the code of conduct;
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are established to eliminate or minimize workplace violence;
- Monitor and ensure compliance with safe work practices with respect to the prevention of violence in the workplace plan;
- Provide access to education and training in the prevention and management of violence;
- Investigate reported incidents of violence in conjunction with Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) members or worker representatives if no JOHSC exists;
- Ensure an up to date violence risk assessment has been completed, reviewed, and recommendations have been implemented and evaluated, as required;
- Participate, as required, in workplace inspections and investigations of incidents involving violence or threats of violence;
- Ensure staff receive training and education consistent with the recommendations of any risk assessment and/or incident investigation;
- Communicate and record all staff reported incidents in which their personal health or safety or the health and safety of other persons were at risk;
- Follow up with staff involved in a violent incident (including threats of violence) and ensure support and resources are offered as soon as possible;
- Ensure that staff use or wear any required personal protective equipment, devices, or clothing, as required; and
- Cooperate with the site Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

Staff Responsibilities

- Report all threats or incidents of violence at *[Organization Name]* in which their personal health and safety, or the health and safety of other persons were at risk, whether injured or not;
- Take reasonable care to protect their health and safety and the safety of others in the workplace;
- Follow safe work practices, procedures and safety requirements;
- Use or wear any required personal protective equipment, devices, or clothing; and
- Cooperate with the site Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

Client/Residents and Visiting Public Responsibilities

- Follow the applicable policy and procedures of *[Organization Name]*; and
- Report any violence-related health and safety concerns to the area supervisor/manager.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Responsibilities

- Monitor violence in the workplace plan through review of statistical information relative to workplace risk assessment, training records, and incident reports;
- Participate in an annual program review, and ensure violence risk assessments are conducted, as required;
- Participate, as required, in workplace inspections and investigations of incidents involving violence or threats of violence in the workplace;
- Provide expertise and assistance, as required, with workplace violence incident investigations and the development of violence prevention policies and procedures;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the workplace violence prevention plan and make recommendations, as needed;
- Assist with the development of new or revised work procedures specific to the workplace violence prevention;
- Coordinate and advise with the performance of risk assessment through analysis of client/resident and staff incidents, site and staff surveys; and
- Ensure that staff use or wear any required personal protective equipment, devices, or clothing, as required.

1.6 Workplace Violence Prevention Statement

The *[Organization Name]* workplace violence prevention statement was created, in accordance with the Regulations, to demonstrate *[Organization Name]*'s commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace that has minimized the threat of violence.

We recognize that any form of violence causing physical harm is an occupational health and safety hazard and is unacceptable in the workplace. Through staff awareness, education, and training, *[Organizational Name]* is committed to minimizing or, to the extent possible, eliminating the risk of violence.

When a new violence risk assessment indicates a significant change to the extent and nature of the risk of violence, the plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised. At a minimum of every five (5) years, the violence prevention plan shall be reviewed and, as necessary, revised.

We view acts of violence or threats of violence in the workplace as unacceptable. We are committed to working to prevent workplace violence and to responding appropriately if workplace violence does occur. This policy applies to all employees, suppliers, contractors, residents/clients and the public who are associated with *[Organizational Name]*.

Signed,

[Title]

[Date]

SECTION 2 - RISK ASSESSMENT

2.0 Introduction

The risk of violence occurring at *[Organization Name]* is linked to a number of factors including the nature of the workplace, the type of work and the conditions of the work, taking into account the circumstances of the workplace.

The *nature of the workplace* considers the physical aspects of the workplace at *[Organization Name]*, whether it is a building, construction site, vehicle or forest. This may include workplace lighting, lines of sight, depth of counters, entrances, exits and objects that could be used to hurt employees.

The *type of work* refers to the activities employees of *[Organization Name]* perform, the sector of work, and people with whom employees interact.

The *conditions of work* refer to other aspects, such as hours worked, the surrounding neighborhood and whether employees of *[Organization Name]* move from location to location, work alone or in isolation. The *circumstances* specific to *[Organization Name]* consider geographic location, layout and design of the workplace, protective measures and procedures. This includes security measures already in place and historical workplace violence incidents.

The following activities or circumstances may increase the risk of workplace violence:

- Community-based work
- Transporting people and/or goods
- Mobile workplaces
- Working with individuals with challenging/responsive behaviours
- Working alone
- Providing care
- Dispensing medications, tobacco and/or alcohol
- Handling cash, protecting or securing valuables
- Making organizational change decisions
- Having performance management responsibilities

2.1 Program Review and Employee Perception Survey

The **Workplace Violence Prevention – Program Review Tool** will be used by *[Organization Name]* to evaluate compliance with the Nova Scotia Workplace Violence Regulations and consider some optional best practice program elements to enhance our workplace violence prevention program. Through the application of the **Employee Perception Survey**, *[Organization Name]*'s safety culture will be assessed as it relates to workplace violence prevention.

The Employee Perception Survey is provided as a tool that can be completed by every employee in the workplace in order to get an idea of how our employees perceive workplace violence in our organization. The survey is a means to gauge how employees understand the potential hazard, risk of violence and the available controls that exist in the workplace to prevent injury.

2.2 Workplace Violence Risk Assessment

A workplace violence risk assessment is designed to assist *[Organization Name]* in assessing the hazard of workplace violence and to identify possible measures, procedures and controls that can be implemented to control the risk of violence in the workplace.

2.3 Conducting a Workplace Violence Risk Assessment

[Organization Name] will use the **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Template** (Appendix A) in conducting the risk assessment. The risk assessment will be completed by the JOHS Committee and submitted to the senior leadership team for final approval. Managers/delegates should consult with employees of *[Organization Name]* when conducting the workplace violence risk assessment, as employees have valuable knowledge about the hazards, risks, and appropriate controls.

The manager will then consider the JOHS Committee recommendations and finalize the **Workplace Violence Risk Assessment (VRA)** and **Workplace Violence Prevention Plan**.

A workplace violence risk assessment is to be conducted at minimum, in any of the following circumstances:

- a) every five years;
- b) if *[Organization Name]* becomes aware of a type of violence occurring in similar workplaces that was not taken into consideration when the previous workplace violence risk assessment was conducted;
- c) if an order is issued by an OH&S Officer from the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education;
- d) if there is a significant change to any of the following:
 - The circumstances in which work takes place,
 - The interactions that occur in the course of performing work,
 - The physical location or layout of the workplace, or
 - When *[Organization Name]* plans to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility.

2.4 Application of Controls to Prevent and Manage Violence

Once appropriate preventive and protective measures (i.e. controls) are identified within *[Organization Name]*'s workplace violence risk assessment, the controls must then be implemented and utilized.

- Managers/supervisors:
 - Must take action to ensure that the controls are put in place without undue delay; and
 - Are responsible to follow through and monitor to ensure that the controls are implemented and sustained.
- Employees:
 - Are responsible to implement and/or utilize the controls.

2.5 Re-Assessment

A new violence risk assessment is required of *[Organization Name]* in any of the following circumstances:

- A type of violence occurring in similar workplaces that was not taken into consideration when the previous violence risk assessment was conducted;
- Significant changes in the circumstances, interactions, location or layout of the work;
- Plans are developed to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility; or
- An order is issued by an OH&S Officer from the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Otherwise, a new risk assessment will need to be done at least every 5 years.

SECTION 3 - WORK PLACE VIOLENCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[At this point, your organization will need to modify the information to best reflect your facility and/or staff requirements. Your organization will need to determine and then include which policies and procedures are required, based on your Workplace Violence Risk Assessment. The policies and procedures are generic and may need to be modified to meet your organization's needs. All the policies and procedures listed in this document are located in Section 4.]

3.0 Introduction

[Organization Name] recognizes that employees' daily tasks place them in situations that pose significant chances of being confronted with workplace violence. Violence in the workplace can be eliminated or reduced when employees have the skills to both recognize and respond to situations of workplace violence. For this reason, *[Organization Name]* is committed to adopting and developing safe work policies and procedures that will assist employees when confronted with situations of workplace violence.

3.1 Recognition of Potential Violence or Crisis

[Organization Name] has provided the following information to assist employees to recognize the warning signs of a person in crisis, becoming aggressive and/or becoming violent. The following characterizations do not guarantee that a person will become violent or aggressive and therefore all the information provided should be considered as a guideline, only.

Signs of Potential Person in Crisis:

In healthcare settings, individuals may experience increased anxiety, frustration or stress due to varying factors such as: lack of information, fear of unknown, bad news, lack of control over a situation, previous bad experiences with healthcare, and mental or physical injury or illness.

- a) **Non-Physical/Non-Verbal Signs** – These are typical non-verbal signs of anxiety or the beginning stages of a crisis individual and a supportive approach from staff may help de-escalate the situation.
- b) Recognizing the beginning stages of a crisis situation and intervening early and appropriately will prove to be the most successful in deescalating a potential situation.
 - Flushed or pale face
 - Sweating
 - Trembling or shaking
 - Clenched jaws or fists
 - Finger tapping
 - Pacing, restlessness and/or repetitive movements
 - Repetitive movement such as rocking
 - Facial grimacing
 - Sighing
 - Shallow, rapid breathing
 - Avoiding eye contact
 - Glaring
 - Frustration
 - Mumbling under breath
 - Complaining to others in area

It is important to recognize that there are numerous signs of anxiety/frustration a crisis individual may exhibit. Every individual is different and may exhibit unique behaviors. If you work in an area where you interact with the same individuals, this provides an opportunity to learn their unique behaviors.

b) **Verbal Signs** - a potentially escalating crisis individual. If staff do not recognize the beginning stages of crisis or they are unable to support/assist the crisis individual, their behavior will continue to escalate. The following are signs of an individual who is continuing to escalate or is at a heightened crisis level:

- Confrontational/argumentative
- Loud talking, chanting or screaming
- Scowling, using abusive language
- Change in voice
- Verbal threats – all threats, especially threats of physical harm or death, are to be taken seriously, seek assistance immediately.

Questioning can be in the form of information seeking or challenging. For examples:

- Information seeking – “How do I fill this out?”, “Where do I get this form?”
- Challenging – “Who are you to make me do that?”, “What are you going to do?”

Continue a supportive approach, avoid power struggles, and set limits keeping them simple and clear. Be prepared to enforce limits, terminate interaction and if necessary request assistance from immediate team (co-workers) or activate a **Code White**.

c) **Physical** - If the individual continues to escalate in their crisis, they will proceed to the next level of physically acting out. If any individual is physically acting out you must call out for assistance from your team and initiate a **Code White** response immediately. (refer to item 1 - signs of a potentially violent person)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Exaggerated or violent gestures | • Throwing objects |
| • Destroying property | • Biting |
| • Hitting | • Kicking |
| • Punching | • Grabbing |

Signs of A Person Becoming Violent (Patient, Visitor and Co-worker)

Use caution if someone exhibits one or more of the following signs and immediately call for your team (co-workers) and/or activate a **Code White** response for your facility if emergency assistance is needed. Some signs include:

- Flushed or pale face
- Sweating
- Pacing, restless and/or repetitive movements
- Signs of extreme fatigue (dark circles under eyes)
- Trembling or shaking

- Clenched jaws or fists
- Facial grimacing
- Exaggerated or violent gestures
- Change in voice
- Loud talking or chanting
- Yelling or use of offensive language
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Scowling, sneering or use of abusive language
- Glaring or avoiding eye contact
- Violating your personal space (they get too close)
- Destroying property

Any combination of the above behaviors increases the risk for physical violence.

3.2 Response to Workplace Violence

[Organization Name] recognizes in healthcare environments, patients and clients may experience stress and anxiety associated with their illness and may direct frustration, anger or aggression toward others. These individuals, however, need to be made aware the violent behavior is not acceptable. Therefore, *[Organizations Name]* has provided the following information on how to respond to various situations of workplace violence.

General Response Procedure

When faced with a situation of workplace violence, employees will utilize verbal de-escalation techniques. This non-aggressive, behavior management approach is based on being supportive through listening and empathy. The key techniques are:

- Maintaining situational awareness and a safe physical separation — staying out of the strike zone
- Giving the person undivided attention and actively listening
- Being non-judgmental and objective
- Focusing on the facts as well as the person's feelings and needs
- Allowing silence when it is helpful
- Patiently using restatement to clarify messages and expectations

If non-verbal de-escalation and other behavior management techniques are not effective and the behavior escalates to the point where it is felt that it cannot be safely controlled with existing skills and resources and employees are encountering aggressive and/or violent behavior, employees will:

- Assess the safety of yourself and others in the area of the incident.
- Avoid being placed in a position of unnecessary physical risk.
- Remain calm and in a non-confrontational, non-threatening manner. Try to de-escalate the situation by being supportive.

- If no immediate danger exists, notify the aggressor that his/her behavior is unacceptable and unwelcome. Be specific about the exact behavior to be stopped as this ensures the aggressor knows what conduct is unacceptable.
- Based on the assessment of the situation, engage the help of Auxiliary Team (Co-workers) where possible, and if necessary, activate the panic button or a **Code White – Violent Person** response for your facility at any time.

Reporting Incidents with Immediate Physical or Psychological Harm

All employees will:

- If possible, remove themselves from the situation and locate to a safe location
- If required, seek assistance from:
 - emergency services via the 9-1-1 system
 - *[insert organization's emergency contact system]*
- Obtain first aid or medical assistance if required
- Immediately report the incident to a supervisor or manager. If the situation does not allow for immediate reporting, report the incident as soon as reasonably possible
- Use the *[insert organization's reporting form]* to document any and all information concerning the incident

Reporting Incidents with No Immediate Physical or Psychological Harm (near-miss/no harm)

All employees will:

- Make sure that the incident does not pose any further immediate danger
- Immediately report the incident to a supervisor/manager. If the situation does not allow for immediate reporting, report the incident as soon as possible
- Use the *[insert organization's reporting form]* to document any and all information concerning the incident

Specific Workplace Response Procedures

[Organization Name] has recognized not all situations of workplace violence can use a general response method and a variety of situations may constitute a more specific response. Therefore, based on the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment, *[Organizational Name]* has adopted the following specific workplace violence policies and procedures:

[Organization Name] will need to determine or develop policies and procedures that meet their needs. Organizations can insert their own existing policies and procedures or can utilize a number of common workplace violence policies and procedures located on the AWARE-NS website. www.awarens.ca/programs/workplace-violence-prevention/. These policies and procedures are generic and should be modified to reflect the organization's work practices.]

Some examples of policies and procedures:

- Driving Safety
- Obscene, Harassing or Threatening Telephone Calls
- Robbery and Mugging
- Threats and Physical Confrontations
- Traveling by Public Transit
- Walking Safety
- Working Alone – Home Visits
- Working Alone – Late Office Site
- Working Environments with Pets

Obtaining Assistance

If in the event assistance is required, the employee will:

- **Facility-Based Organizations** - Insert *Code White* response program, if applicable or other assistance response procedures
- **Community-Based Organizations** - Insert assistance response procedures

3.3 Policies and Procedures Update and Review

To ensure that workplace violence policies and procedures are up-to-date and accurate, [Organization Name] will, in conjunction with the JOHS committee, review relevant policies and procedures under the following circumstances:

- After a violent incident occurs,
- When a job change occurs,
- When new security equipment/procedures are introduced,
- When patients/clients with a violent history or new patients/clients with an unknown history are admitted,
- New construction or renovation,
- When any worker has been away for an extended period, or
- As part of refresher training.

If it is determined that a policy or procedure is no longer adequate, [Organization Name] will, in conjunction with the JOHS committee, update the policy or procedure to an acceptable standard.

Any and all updated workplace violence policy or procedures will be communicated to all required employees through the organization's already established communication process.

3.4 Reporting

It is the policy of the *[Organization Name]* that all workplace violence incidents be reported to the appropriate supervisor/manager as soon as reasonably possible. This includes all near-miss or no-harm incidents that could have resulted in such a loss.

Reporting of workplace violence incidents will follow already established reporting procedures as outlined in the *[insert name of organization's safety manual]*.

3.5 Incident Scene Management

No employee will disturb the scene of an incident unless:

- Directed by a Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advance Education OH&S Officer
- To attend to an injured or ill person
- To prevent further injury or illness to themselves or others

3.6 Documentation and Investigation of Incident

[Organization Name] will ensure that all incidents of violence in a workplace are documented and promptly investigated to determine their root cause(s) and the action(s) needed to prevent reoccurrences. This includes all near-miss and no-harm situations. The purpose of the investigation is to determine the root cause(s) of the incident so that corrective actions can be taken to prevent reoccurrences.

Documentation and investigation of workplace violence incidents will follow already established investigation and documentation procedures as outlined in the *[insert organization's investigation procedures location]*.

Notice of Action

[Organization Name] will provide written notice of the actions taken to prevent the reoccurrence of an incident of violence to all of the following:

- Any employee affected by the incident of violence;
- The organization's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee;
- Any representative selected at the workplace.

3.7 Debriefing

In the event that an employee has been exposed or affected by workplace violence, *[Organization's Name]* will:

- provide appropriate debriefing as outlined by the organizations debriefing procedures; and

- advise the affected employee to seek treatment or counselling from a health professional of the employee's choice

[The Organization should insert their debriefing policies and procedures.]

3.8 Education

[Organization's Name] recognizes that workplace violence training is essential in order to help employees eliminate or reduce the risks of encountering workplace violence. Through adequate and effective training, *[Organization's Name]* will help ensure that employees have the necessary skills to prevent, react and report workplace violence incidents if they occur.

Method of Delivery

All training methods will conform to already established training procedures outlined in the organization's safety program. This includes the selection of trainers, record keeping, and refresher training and delivery methods.

General Training

All employees will receive the following workplace violence training:

- The rights and responsibilities of employees under the Act;
- The workplace violence prevention statement;
- The measures taken by the employer to minimize or eliminate the risk of violence;
- How to recognize situations where there is potential for violence and how to respond appropriately;
- How to respond to an incident of violence, including how to obtain assistance;
- How to report, document and investigate incidents of violence.

Specific Training Components

[Organization Name] recognizes that various positions at the organization may require additional or specific workplace violence training. Managers and/or supervisors will review the employee's position and determine the appropriate level of training required based on the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment.

[Organizations may wish to utilize the Sample Training Matrix provided with this template or create their own matrix in determining specific training needs]

Training Specific for Workplace Violence Plan

[Organization Name] will provide any employee who is required to perform a function under the workplace violence prevention plan with general training on the plan, along with specific training on their particular function that they will be performing.

SECTION 4 - BEST PRACTICES: BULLYING & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Workplace Bullying Policy

4.0 Introduction

Workplace bullying is becoming more predominant in today's workplaces. This issue drastically impacts the safety of the individual recipient of the acts and the overall workplace environment. Even though the Nova Scotia Workplace Violence Regulations do not specifically address workplace bullying, it constitutes a significant risk factor for workplace violence.

For this reason, *[Organization Name]* has decided to include workplace bullying as a component to its Workplace Violence Program. It accomplishes this by developing policies and procedures that will aid employees in dealing with situations of workplace bullying.

4.1 Policy Statement

The *[Organization Name]* is committed to providing a collaborative working environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. It is further recognized that every individual has a right to work in an environment that is free from workplace bullying. Workplace bullying harms, intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates an employee and is not acceptable.

This Policy applies to all members of *[Organization Name]*, including but not limited to: employees, residents/clients/patients, volunteers, visitors, contractors, and employees of other organizations who work on or are invited onto the property. All members of *[Organization Name]* are accountable for complying with this Policy and maintaining a bullying-free environment. Work premises extend to any place where work or work-related duties or functions are performed including work by means of telephone and written or electronic communication. Activities such as excursions are considered as part of the workplace, as are conferences and training.

Procedures have been developed to ensure that workplace disputes attributed to workplace bullying in any form are dealt with quickly. These procedures supplement the *[Organization Name]* philosophy of a respectful workplace and its obligations under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act and will be applied with due care and attention to the process and the individuals involved.

Where allegations relate to discrimination on the basis of a ground prohibited by the NS Human Rights Act (i.e. age; race; colour; religion; creed; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; gender expression; physical disability or mental disability; an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease; ethnic, national or aboriginal origin; family status; marital status; source of income; political belief, affiliation or activity), will be investigated as outlined in this policy.

4.2 Policy Review

[*Organization Name*] will review the Workplace Bullying policy and procedures on an annual basis in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

4.3 Definition

Workplace bullying is a pattern of behavior where there are acts or verbal comments that are designed to mentally hurt, intimidate or isolate other employees in a negative way. It is typically not a single negative act, but a series of repeated, continuous negative acts. Bullying may be hard to recognize because the behaviours may be subtle and not obvious for any other person apart from the victim. Such behaviours may include but are not limited to:

- Social isolation or exclusion
- Sabotaging work (e.g. withholding information, communicating misinformation, undermining)
- Malicious gossip, rumors
- Verbal aggression (e.g. shouting at someone either in private or in front of others)
- Personal attacks
- Intimidation
- Disrespect
- Excessive monitoring
- Establishing work expectations that are impossible to achieve
- Cyber-bullying which can occur through email, text messaging, social networking, and websites

Bullying **should not** be confused with differing opinions between two people or the exercise of managerial authority such as:

- offering constructive feedback
- job responsibility decisions
- reasonable workloads or deadlines
- supervision
- performance reviews and disciplinary actions

Exercising management authority should not be humiliating or intimidating.

4.4 Reporting of Incidents

Approach and Inform Alleged Bully:

- Firmly tell the person that his or her behaviour is not acceptable and ask them to stop. You can ask a supervisor or union member to be with you when you approach the person.
- Keep a factual journal or diary of daily events. Record:
 - The date, time and what happened in as much detail as possible.
 - The names of witnesses.
 - The outcome of the event.
- Keep copies of any letters, memos, e-mails, faxes, etc., received from the person.

Do not retaliate - you may end up looking like the perpetrator and will most certainly cause confusion for those responsible for evaluating and responding to the situation.

Inform Supervisor/Manager

If the bullying or harassment continues report the bullying to the immediate supervisor or manager. The report should be made as soon as possible so that complete investigation can be conducted. The supervisor along with the alleged person bullying and the employee initiating the complaint, will try to remedy the situation at the supervisor or manager level. In the event the situation cannot be remedied at that level, a formal investigation will be conducted.

If the supervisor or manager is the alleged person performing the bullying, then the employee should report the incident to another supervisor or manager or the next level of management.

Employees will not suffer repercussions for complaints of bullying that are completed in good faith. Employees who report alleged bullying with any form of malicious intent may require discipline.

Confidentiality

Employee's complaints will be held in the strictest confidence as much as possible as to allow for an unbiased and fair investigation.

Investigation of Incidents

If the supervisor or manager are not able to find an acceptable solution at their level, a formal investigation will be conducted. The investigation process will be as follows:

- Receive complaint
- Interim steps – (leave of absence, contact local authorities etc)
- Appoint investigator
- Contact parties
- Threshold review

- Plan the investigation
- Inform respondent of complaint(s)
- Interview complainant
- Interview respondent
- Interview witnesses
- Review/analyze facts
- Finalize report and distribute

The Workplace Bullying Investigation Process and Investigation Plan forms will be used to assist in the investigation.

Follow-Up and Review

After the investigation has been concluded, all parties involved in the incident will receive a summary of the report and the corrective actions that will be taken.

Managers and Supervisors will review the recommendations of the incident in order to implement any necessary changes to the current policies and procedures in an effort to reduce the risk of any future incidents.

4.5 Awareness and Education

[Organization Name] will make every effort to educate and make aware to its employees the need for a workplace free of bullying. This will be accomplished through the following training and awareness initiatives:

[Organization to list its training and awareness programs and training]

Management Signature

Date

Domestic Violence Policy

4.6 Introduction

When domestic violence follows a victim to work, it becomes a workplace issue. An aggressor can present a risk to the victim or others in the workplace itself. The attitude that domestic violence is a topic that should not be discussed at work creates a barrier between the victim and those who may be in a position to provide valuable support and assistance. The workplace can play an important role between people experiencing violence of any kind, and assisting individuals to get the necessary help.

Even though the Nova Scotia Workplace Violence Regulations do not specifically address domestic violence, it constitutes a significant risk factor for workplace violence.

For this reason, *[Organization Name]* has decided to include domestic violence as a component to its Workplace Violence Prevention program. It accomplishes this by creating guidelines that will aid employees dealing directly or indirectly with domestic violence issues.

4.7 Policy Statement

[Organization Name] is committed to creating a workplace with the view that domestic violence will not be tolerated, nor excused. The purpose of this policy is to create an awareness for domestic violence and its affect at the workplace. It also will provide guidance for all employees when dealing with situations of domestic violence either directly or indirectly.

4.8 Definition

For this policy, domestic violence is defined as:

a pattern of behavior used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom he/she has or has had an intimate relationship. This pattern of behavior may include physical violence, sexual, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and using electronic devices to harass and control. Domestic violence is also known as intimate partner abuse, family violence, or partner violence.

4.9 Prevention Strategies

[Organization Name] believes that early preventative measures are key to dealing with employees affected by domestic violence. By creating strategies that allow for the early recognition and assistance to employees who are victims of domestic violence, *[Organization Name]* will be able to create a safer working environment for all of its employees

4.11 Awareness

[Organization Name] is committed to providing awareness to all of its employees on the importance of dealing with domestic violence. It will accomplish this by:

- maintaining, publishing, and posting a list of resources available for employees affected by domestic violence
- ensuring that all supervisors and managers are trained in the recognition and response measures when they suspect domestic violence or when an employee discloses issues of domestic violence
- ensuring that all supervisors, managers and employees are trained in safety planning and the handling of emergencies, such as the offender showing up at the workplace, armed and threatening the victim and coworkers.
- ensuring all employees are aware of the organization's domestic violence policy and its procedures

4.12 Response of Incidents of Domestic Violence

[Organization Name] seeks to create a supportive workplace environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing domestic violence and seeking assistance for domestic violence concerns. Below are guidelines for responding to issues of domestic violence.

Suspicion of Domestic Violence

If a supervisor suspects an employee is a victim of domestic violence and that employee has not disclosed any information, the supervisor will:

1. Indicate to the employee they have observed signs the employee may be experiencing issues
2. Indicate to the employee they are concerned for their safety
3. Acknowledge domestic violence is inappropriate and encourage the employee to seek assistance. (Supervisors will only assist the employee with obtaining assistance and will not provide counselling to the employee.) If the employee refuses to disclose or denies assistance, respect the employee's rights to refuse and their right for privacy, but reaffirm that resources are available for assistance.

If an Employee Self-Discloses Domestic Abuse

If an employee self-discloses they are a victim of domestic abuse, all employees should:

1. Acknowledge the disclosure and reaffirm to the employee the injustice of the domestic abuse
2. Determine if the employee and their family is in immediate danger and contact appropriate authorities, if needed
3. Encourage the employee to seek help

Co-workers Have Concerns About Domestic Violence

If an employee suspects a co-worker is a victim of domestic violence, the employee should express their concerns to their immediate supervisor or manager in a confidential manner.

4.13 Confidentiality

[Organization Name] respects the employee's right not to disclose acts of domestic violence to its employer. *[Organization Name]* will hold all information in the highest confidence for any employee who wishes to disclose they are affected by domestic violence as far as the confidentiality does not pose a direct safety concern for the workplace, children or vulnerable individuals.

4.14 Anti-Discrimination

[Organization Name] will not discriminate towards anyone who is a victim of domestic abuse. *[Organization Name]* recognizes that an employee who is exposed to domestic violence may have issues with work performance and/or behavioural challenges. If these situations are a result of the domestic violence, every effort will be made to accommodate and assist the employee.

4.15 Accommodating Victims of Domestic Violence

[Organization Name] will make every reasonable effort to create workplace accommodations to employees affected by domestic violence. The following will outline these forms of accommodations:

[Organizations will need to determine and insert their own organization's workplace accommodation policies. The following are some suggested accommodations:]

Leave Options

It is recognized that employees affected by domestic violence may require time away from work. The length of time will be determined based on the employee's current situation and in collaboration with the supervisor, manager and or union representative. *[Organization will need to insert its exact policy of leave of absence]*

Alternative Work Locations

If available, *[Organization Name]* will consider re-locating the employee affected by domestic violence, either temporarily or permanently, to another work facility. If re-location to another facility is not an option, consideration will be made to re-locate an individual to another area in the facility.

Safe Work Plan

If required, the manager/supervisor will create a written personal safety plan to address the employee's particular domestic violence situations. These plans will be created in conjunction with the employee as the employee is able to provide the most adequate information on his/her safety.

The employee will provide the manager/supervisor with regular updates on their current situation in an effort to guarantee the safety plan is still appropriate. In the event it is determined that the plan is no longer appropriate, the manager/supervisor and the employee will make the necessary updates or changes.

4.16 Training

[Organization name] will provide training to all of its managers and supervisors on the recognition and response of domestic violence. This training will include how to:

- Identify if an employee is experiencing difficulties
- Provide initial support
- Offer referrals
- Discuss ways to help the person stay safe in the workplace
- Understand that they are not counsellors. Counselling is to be left to trained professionals and no one should attempt to act in place of a domestic abuse expert or counsellor. The best thing a manager can do is to refer the person to the appropriate domestic abuse resources.

Additional Support Documentation

[Organization Name] has provided the additional resources and supporting documentation references that can be used by all employees when dealing with domestic violence.

[Organization will need to insert its own determined resources and supporting documentation. The following are few suggested documents]

[*Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A Handbook for Employers Outside of B.C. – WorkSafeBC*](#)

Violence in the Workplace - Domestic Violence CCOHS

[*https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence_domestic.html*](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence_domestic.html)

APPENDIX A – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION RISK ASSESSMENT

Requirements and Other Considerations

The Violence in the Workplace Regulations require that *[Organization Name]* conduct a workplace violence risk assessment to determine if there is a risk of violence, and detail the extent and nature of any risk identified by the assessment.

All employees who are exposed to a risk of violence in the workplace must be provided with information on the nature and extent of the risk(s) and on any factors that may increase or decrease the extent of the risk.

A completed workplace violence risk assessment must include:

- The risk factors associated with the hazard(s) of violence,
- Communication of the workplace violence hazard(s) and risk(s) to *[Organization Name]*'s employees, and
- The development of a workplace violence prevention plan.

Workplace incidents of discrimination, harassment or domestic violence that meet the definition of violence as defined under the Regulations must be considered in the risk assessment.

Any reference to items which fall outside of the definition, such as workplace incidents of discrimination, harassment and domestic violence, are considered optional. However, some workplace violence prevention programs do include provisions for these items.

[Organization Name] will use the Workplace Violence Hazard Risk Assessment Template (<http://awarens.ca/wp-content/uploads/Workplace-Violence-Hazard-Risk-Assessment.pdf>) in conducting the risk assessment. The risk assessment will be completed by the JOHS Committee and submitted to the senior leadership team for final approval. Managers/delegates should consult with employees of *[Organization Name]* when conducting the workplace violence risk assessment, as employees have valuable knowledge about the hazards and risks, and appropriate controls. The manager will then consider the JOHS Committee recommendations and finalize the workplace violence risk assessment.

A workplace violence risk assessment is to be conducted at least in any of the following circumstances:

- a) Every five years;
- b) If *[Organization Name]* becomes aware of a type of violence occurring in similar workplaces that was not taken into consideration when the previous workplace violence risk assessment was conducted;
- c) If an order is issued by an Officer from the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education;
- d) If there is a significant change to any of the following:

- The circumstances in which work takes place,
- The interactions that occur in the course of performing work,
- The physical location or layout of the workplace, or
- When *[Organization Name]* plans to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility.

Hazard Identification, Probability and Severity

A risk assessment involves the identification of the risk of violence at *[Organization Name]*. The assessment of risk involves the identification of workplace hazards, the likelihood of an incident happening related to those hazards (*probability*) and the consequences of the event happening (*severity*).

i) Estimate the **probability** of the hazard resulting in an incident(s) of workplace violence at *[Organization Name]*.

Risk Category	Risk Name	Characteristic	Chance it will happen (%)
1	Rare	Rare - Event will likely not be experienced	<5%
2	Unlikely	Unlikely but could be experienced in several years	25%
3	Occasional	Will likely happen sometime in next two years	50%
4	Likely	Will likely happen in next 6-12 months	75%
5	Certain	Will likely happen often in the next 6-12 months	>95%

ii) Estimate the **severity**, the most serious, reasonable possible outcome (as opposed to the "most likely" outcome) for the hazard you are considering.

Risk Category	Risk Name	Characteristic
5	Catastrophic	Extreme - Fatality / Coma
4	Major	Critical - Severe injury – loss of, or use of limbs, overnight hospitalization
3	Moderate	Serious - Medical attention (e.g. Doctor visit, Physio.)
2	Minor	Marginal - Minor injury – bruises, cuts
1	Negligible	Insignificant - No injury

iii) Determine the Risk

		Severity (consequence of exposure)				
		Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	Catastrophic (5)
Probability (likelihood of occurrence)	Certain (5)	5	10	15	20	25
	Likely (4)	4	8	12	16	20
	Occasional (3)	3	6	9	12	15
	Unlikely (2)	2	4	6	8	10
	Rare (1)	1	2	3	4	5

High Risk (16- 25) – Significant and unacceptable risks. Immediate action required.

Medium Risk (9-15) – Significant risks. Include in the workplace violence prevention program

Low Risk (1-8) – Not significant. Should be addressed through regular health and safety measures and procedures.

A workplace violence risk assessment of [Organization Name] should include a review of the following:

- Past violence incidents,
- Violence that happens in similar workplaces,
- Conditions under which the work is done,
- Potential interactions amongst individuals where the work is being done, and
- The physical location and layout of the workplace.

Application of Controls to Prevent and Manage Violence

Once appropriate preventive and protective measures (i.e. controls) are identified within [Organization Name]'s workplace violence risk assessment, the controls must then be implemented and utilized.

- **Managers/Supervisors:**
 - Must take action to ensure that the controls are put in place without undue delay; and
 - Are responsible to follow through and monitor to ensure that the controls are implemented and sustained.
- **Employees:**
 - Are responsible to implement and/or utilize the controls.

Re-assessment

A new violence risk assessment is required of *[Organization Name]* in any of the following circumstances:

- A type of violence occurring in similar workplaces that was not taken into consideration when the previous violence risk assessment was conducted;
- Significant changes in the circumstances, interactions, location or layout of the work;
- Plans are developed to construct a new facility or renovate an existing facility; or
- An order is issued by an OH&S Officer from the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Otherwise, a new risk assessment will need to be done at least every 5 years.

REFERENCES

Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety

Nova Scotia Violence in the Workplace Regulations

Nova Scotia Health Authority - Violence Prevention Plan Template

Nova Scotia Health Authority – Violence in the Workplace Program Guide

Nova Scotia Health Authority – Respectful Workplace

Simon Fraser University Workplace Bullying & Harassment Program -

<https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/srs/ehs/wbh/2014.08.06.Revised%20BH%20Program%20-%20final.pdf>

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence Sample Policy on Domestic Violence – 1998 -

http://www.ncdsv.org/images/sample_policy.pdf

<https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/srs/ehs/wbh/2014.08.06.Revised%20BH%20Program%20-%20final.pdf>

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence Sample Policy on Domestic Violence – 1998 -

http://www.ncdsv.org/images/sample_policy.pdf