

Work-related Violence and Aggression

Statement of Principles

Workers of the Office of Industrial Relations have a right to feel safe at work.

The Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) provides a wide range of services across the Queensland community, including workers, businesses, license holders, other government agencies, stakeholders and the broader public.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce is of utmost importance – our workers have a right to feel safe at work. We are committed to:

- providing our workforce with a safe working environment
- valuing equally the health and safety of our workers and the public
- promoting a culture where violent and aggressive behaviour is not tolerated.

We will not tolerate any form of violent or aggressive behaviour towards our workers from members of the public. We aim to provide a high standard of service, however we understand at times people will feel their needs have not been met. We encourage people to contact us with feedback on their experience interacting with our workers.

All reported incidents will be lodged on our incident registers and investigated. All incidents or work-related violence and aggression will be investigated as per the Work-related Violence and Aggression Prevention and Management Guideline.

What is work-related violence and aggression?

Work-related violence and aggression is any incident where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted at work by another worker or member of the public. This definition covers a broad range of actions and behaviours that can create a risk to the health and safety of workers, including both physical and psychological harm, regardless of any intent to cause such harm.

Examples of work-related violence include, but are not limited to:

- biting, spitting, scratching, hitting and kicking
- throwing objects
- pushing, shoving, tripping and grabbing
- verbal threats
- robbery
- sexual assault
- attacking with any object used as a weapon

Aggressive behaviour can also include:

- angry and hostile behaviour
- antagonism and jeering
- intimidation and insults
- shouting and swearing
- encroaching on someone's personal space, i.e. standing too close
- stamping feet
- banging, kicking or hitting items
- road rage

Where and when can work-related violence and aggression occur?

Violence and aggression can occur within the workplace, whilst workers are undertaking their duties or as a direct result of his or her work. The workplace is not restricted to workplaces of the OIR, but also includes any worksite or public space where a worker of the OIR is carrying out work duties. Work-related violence and aggression can also occur where an individual has been identified as a worker of the OIR, including approaches made to officers at the locals shops, sporting events, walking down the street, or when driving.

It is an offence under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* to obstruct, hinder, threaten, intimidate or assault a Work Health and Safety Inspector in carrying out their regulatory duties.

We will not tolerate any form of violent or aggressive behaviour towards our workers.

Office of Industrial Relations workers expect that the members of the public will:

Act in a manner that is not violent or aggressive

Treat them and other stakeholders with respect

Use calm and appropriate forms of communication

Be open and honest and provide accurate information

Be cooperative

Act in a way that is non-discriminatory

Take an active role in creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone

Office of Industrial Relations workers will:

Provide courteous and professional service

Be open, accountable and respectful

Communicate clearly and keep stakeholders informed

Provide accurate and timely services and advice

Work cooperatively to understand stakeholders' needs

Act in a way that is non-discriminatory

Take an active role in creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone

Factors that we consider when determining consequences include:

- the nature of the service, advice or regulatory activity occurring at the time of the incident
- the circumstances that preceded or lead to the violent or aggressive behaviour
- the environment in which the incident occurred
- whether the behaviour is repeated
- whether there has been any contravention of the *WHS Act 2011* in relation to protections for Work Health and Safety Inspectors.

- ensure sufficient controls remain in place to address risks to our workers associated with exposure to violence and aggression
- support workers who decide to report an incident to the police
- ensure appropriate policies and procedures remain up to date and are enforced
- provide support networks for our workers
- support workers who require medical or other professional assistance as a result of an incident.

To support our workers, we will:

- provide ongoing opportunities to develop knowledge and capability
- develop service specific responses to incidents and the consequences for perpetrators
- increase internal reporting of incidents
- increase awareness of expected and appropriate behaviour, both for our workers and members of the public