

Responding to Work-Related Violence and Aggression

Violence and aggression towards OIR workers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

It can be a work health and safety risk and a criminal offence.

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, verbal threats, robbery, assault and attacking with a weapon.

Aggressive behaviour can also include: angry and hostile behaviour, antagonism and jeering, intimidation and insults, shouting, swearing, invading personal space, and road rage.

Work-related violence and aggression is a work health and safety issue

The Office of Industrial Relations is committed to ensuring the risk of work-related violence to workers is eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable, to minimise the impact of any exposure and to provide rapid response and appropriate support following any incident.

OIR will not tolerate violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, or other disruptive behaviour, either physical or verbal that occurs in the workplace or while carrying out duties for OIR.

The policy commits OIR, through all levels of the organisation, to protect staff in the course of their work from exposure to work-related violence risk and to clearly demonstrate that work-related violence is unacceptable.

Following OIR procedures

In addition to this fact sheet, employees should always refer to the OIR Work-Related Violence and Aggression Policy (Policy) and Work-Related Violence and Aggression Prevention and Management Guideline (Guidelines) when preventing and responding to work-related violence.

Preventing exposure and mitigating risks

Workers should plan carefully when entering work situations that are likely to result in exposure to violence or aggressive behaviours. Where possible, workers should not enter volatile situations alone (e.g. an inspector attending a work health and safety complaint) and establish protocols for escalating incidents to a manager.

Identifying hazards

Work-related violence hazards generally arise as a result of the work environment, the nature of work tasks and how they are carried out, and the way work is designed and managed.

Typical hazards include factors such as working alone, working in the community, working at night or outside business hours, providing services to distressed or angry people, enforcement activities, service methods that cause frustration, etc.

In an emergency, call the police on 000

If you are assaulted, experience threats of physical harm or death, stalking, sexual assault, indecent assault, or damage to property, you should immediately call the police. These forms of violence are against the law and the perpetrator may be charged with a criminal offence.

During an incident...

If you have received training through OIR and if it is safe to do so, try and de-escalate the situation by communicating in such a way to encourage the aggressor to cease the aggressive behaviour. If this is not possible and your personal safety is at risk, immediately retreat to a safe location.

Notify your manager or a colleague as soon as possible. If you have been assaulted or you feel physically threatened, call 000. If possible seek support from other near-by colleagues or stakeholders.

After an incident...

Ensure you are at a safe location and are no longer at risk of exposure to violence.

If you are injured, seek medical attention. Ensure the medical practitioner records the extent of any injuries, both physical and psychological.

If you are not injured, you may wish to provide support, as required, to any OIR workers or persons who have been exposed to violence or aggression.

Record what has happened

As soon as is possible, record the details of the work-related violence or aggression, including the date, time, and location of the incident, what happened leading up to, during and after the incident, and who was involved. Write down the names and contact details of any witnesses to the incident.

Employees will record and report this information using the [incident report form](#). This information will be used in the investigation process.

Talk to your manager

Let your manager and/or relevant duty manager know about the incident. Keep a record of conversations and agreed actions. If you don't feel comfortable talking to your manager, you may wish to speak to another manager, your Health Safety Representative or contact the Executive Director, Business and Corporate Service, to report and discuss the incident.

Seek support

Experiencing violence and aggression can be distressing and even traumatic. It is normal to feel shaken or upset by such events. Consider whether you feel well enough to continue working, and speak with your manager about going home to rest and recover.

Make use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to seek a confidential discussion or counselling to help process the incident.

When you are comfortable, debrief with your manager and talk about how such a situation could be prevented from occurring in the future.

Record information

Actions should be taken to ensure other workers are aware of the incident and are cautious of future interactions at the incident location, or dealing with the aggressor involved in the incident. If the incident has occurred during an engagement with a business, such as during a site inspection, notes should be recorded on the business's file so that inspectors and advisors required to visit the business site in the future can undertake appropriate risk management actions.

Contacts for assistance

Employee Assistance Program

For access to free counselling and support, visit [Employee Assistance Program](#)

OIR REHAB – Health and Wellbeing

For assistance in reporting and responding to health and safety incidents. contact:



Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee (HSWC) and Health Safety Representatives (HSRs)

To escalate concerns regarding work-related violence, contact:

Your work group's HSR OR



Queensland Police Service

To report offences or seek police assistance with work-related violence, contact the appropriate line:

In an emergency: 000

Policelink (if not urgent): 131 444

Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000