

SB321 Guidelines for Workplace Violence Prevention
DRAFT Aug 26, 2022

Workplace Violence

Description of the hazard

Workplace violence (WPV) refers to the threat or use of physical force against a worker that could result in injury, psychological trauma, or stress. Examples of violence incidents include:

- Physical attack, including biting, choking, grabbing, hair pulling, kicking, punching, slapping, pushing, pulling, scratching, or spitting
- Attack with a weapon or object, including a gun, knife, or use of a common object as a weapon
- Threat of physical force or threat of the use of a weapon or other object
- Sexual assault or threat, including rape/attempted rape, physical display, or unwanted verbal/physical sexual contact
- Animal attack

An act may be considered to be workplace violence even if the worker doesn't sustain an injury.

Potential injury/illness outcomes

Workplace violence may result in physical injuries such as cuts and bruises, broken bones, sprains, etc.. It may also result in psychological trauma or stress, either short-term or long-term. In extreme cases, workplace violence could result in a worker death.

Where might this hazard be found?

- Providing care to clients with dementia or other forms of mental decline
- Providing care to clients who might be confused or disoriented
- Providing care to children
- Encountering other people in the home while worker is there

Prevention measures that employers can take

- Consider potential for use of physical force by clients (elderly, sick, disabled, children) and communicate risks to workers
- Establish systems for workers to communicate with employer about WPV concerns
- Open discussions with workers about WPV hazards, how to report incidents to employer
- Alert workers about others who may be in the home while working
- Alert workers to presence of firearms or dangerous weapons in the house
- Provide contact info for local law enforcement agency

Prevention measures that workers can take

Commented [1]: Note that animal attacks are included in Cal/OSHA's WPV standard for healthcare. Not sure if we should include it here or treat it as a separate hazard.

Commented [2]: Would like help from other committee members to create this list.

- Identify risk factors such as the presence of weapons in the home, evidence of substance abuse, or the presence of uncooperative cohabitants or others from outside the home
- Identify risk factors in the community where you are working, such as high-crime neighborhoods, XXX

Commented [3]: What should workers do if they identify risk factors?

Commented [4]: This is part of the Cal/OSHA WPV standard for healthcare, not sure whether/how to integrate it here

NOTES FOR COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

There are a couple tricky things when it comes to WPV and residential work:

1. What should workers or employers do if they identify risk factors in the home?
2. How to handle situations in which employer is the perpetrator of violence against the worker?
3. Tricky dynamics when it comes to relying on local law enforcement

Do we want to encourage a written violence prevention plan and/or keeping records of violence incidents? (This is required under the Cal/OSHA standard for WPV prevention in healthcare)