



Domestic Violence in the Workplace – What Employers Can Do

The following considerations are taken from a **Refuge – Dealing with Domestic Violence in the Workplace** policy document. Some of these suggestions may be relevant to the situation with your employee. Please discuss with the employee first, prior to implementing.

If your organisation has a Domestic Violence Policy, there should also be an identified HR Manager who can act as point of contact and who can assist with implementing such adjustments. The onus should not be on the individual too try to co-ordinate such adjustments.

Workplace

- Remind all staff never to divulge personal information about employees to callers (such as addresses, personal and work telephone numbers, or shift patterns)
- Review security of information held by Human Resources or elsewhere such as temporary or new addresses, bank details, telephone numbers, work locations etc.
- Review the employee's next of kin information – the ex-partner may still be listed
- Remove the victim's name and number from automated phone directories; change the victim's telephone number. Ensure no contact details or photographs are placed on company websites that are externally accessible to the general public.
- Ensure access to buildings is open to authorised staff only
- Ensure car parks have adequate lighting
- Set up security cameras in public entrances and in the area where the employee works
- Have a security guard patrol the work area
- Conduct environmental surveillance, for example, keeping intruders easily observable, keeping areas such as car parks visible
- Place silent alarms or buzzers at the employee's workstation
- Change keys or keypad numbers/codes for gaining entry to work premises
- Alert reception, security staff, staff in workplace nurseries; with consent, provide a copy of any existing non-molestation/occupation orders, a photo of the abuser, details of the abuser's vehicle (car registration and description)

Legal

- Obtain a restraining order to keep the perpetrator off company property if their actions could impinge on the health and safety of staff

- Set up procedures for alerting security staff and police and being clear about what to do if the perpetrator gains access to the workplace

Employee

- Enable the employee to change work patterns e.g. working hours
- Relocate the employee's workstation
- Move the employee out of public view – i.e. from an outwardly facing role, ensuring that they are not visible from reception points or ground floor windows
- Ensure that the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area
- Consider what to do if the employee works from home
- Explore the possibility of relocation or redeployment where this would be appropriate and supportive of the employee; provide assignments in alternative locations if necessary
- Establish a method of communication with the line manager if the employee is absent so that they are aware that the individual is safe
- Ensure daily communication is maintained with the employee during any absence
- Identify a work contact for support and an emergency contact should the organisation be unable to contact the employee
- Change the employee's telephone number and/or divert telephone calls from the perpetrator (but monitor as they will help provide evidence of harassment if needed)
- Set up firewalls to block e-mails/divert e-mails to a separate folder (these can also be used to demonstrate harassment)
- Record any threatening or violent incidents by the perpetrator in the workplace including visits, abusive/persistent phone calls, e-mails and other forms of harassment which can be used by the police or if the employee wants to seek a court order
- Allow the employee to use an assumed name at work.
- Give victims priority parking close to the building
- Escort victims to and from their cars or public transportation
- Help victims vary their route to and from work
- Help the employee find a safe way of getting to and from work
- Minimise risks if work requires visits outside the office – changing duties/allowing another member of staff to accompany them/ensuring they have a mobile phone with them
- Issue the employee with a mobile phone that is pre-programmed with emergency response numbers. Designated work mobile rather than having to use a personal mobile number for work will be easier as employee is likely to need to vet calls from unidentified numbers and use voicemail.

Colleagues

- With the employee's consent, advise work colleagues on a need-to-know basis and agree what the response should be if the abuser contacts them on the phone or comes to the workplace
- With the employee's consent, share the abuser's photo with co-workers so they can recognise the abuser and report any sightings
- Remind colleagues about the importance of confidentiality- no personal information (personal mobile/email/home address) to be given out to anyone.