

# Using this Information

**“ Studies have shown that tens of thousands of shop workers are subject to verbal abuse and threats every year. The stress that this causes is damaging to employee’s health and can impact on their family life. It is also bad for business because of levels of sickness absence and the loss of experienced staff. In addition good customers are put off visiting stores if they have a ‘rough reputation’.”**

This pack provides information to assist you to identify, assess and control the risk of violence in your workplace. If you follow the advice set out here, you will be well on the way to complying with your responsibilities for providing a workplace that is safe from all types of violence, as required under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The pack generally outlines measures that could be taken to reasonably reduce the opportunity of violence at work. The recommendations are based on current best practice. Any risk assessment should be based on trends and patterns, which dictate reasonable, practical and cost-effective measures that can be incorporated to reduce the risk of violence.

This information is for employers, managers, health and safety representatives, contractors and employees interested in or with a responsibility for, preventing and minimising the impact of violence and aggression in the workplace.

Whether you are setting up a new business or operating an existing business, this guidance will help you to understand the issue of workplace violence. It will enable you to assess violence risks and develop practical prevention, critical incident and post-incident measures to avoid and minimise the effects of violence on your workers and customers. The main focus is to help employers, in consultation with employees, prevent, managers and recover from aggressive and violent incidents.

This information is guidance only; you would not be able to rely solely on it to provide a defence to any criminal charge or civil claim.

# What is workplace violence?

Work-related violence is described by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as:

**“ Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened, or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”.**



Violence and aggression includes verbal and emotional abuse or threats and physical attack to an individual or to property by another individual or group, it also includes the intention to injure or harm, uncivil behaviour and a lack of respect for others. Incidents of extreme violence are still quite rare, however, evidence has been emerging in recent years of the harm caused by non-physical forms of violence, including aggression and verbal abuse. It may be one unexpected incident or a series of repeated incidents. Over time this kind of violence has detrimental effects on the health and well-being of the victim. It is also apparent that non-physical forms often precede physical violence.

Workplace violence may not always begin in a critical or extreme situation; it sometimes

follows a pattern of escalating behaviour – from agitation, expressed anger or frustration and intimidating body language, to verbal abuse and threats, physical threats or assault.

Discrimination or harassment should be dealt with early, to help prevent more serious and violent behaviour.

Violent acts may be committed for their own sake, often with little or no planning such as “smash and grab” shoplifting offences brought about by opportunities such as few or no staff in the shop, or valuables left in an accessible position. Other attacks may appear to be random but are planned when security and violence control measures are not adequate. Offenders may not be behaving rationally at the time but under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Violent acts include:**

- Verbal abuse, in person or over the telephone
- Unreasonable and/or offensive remarks or behaviour
- Written abuse
- Rude gestures
- Intimidation
- Harassment, including sexual and racial abuse
- Threatening behaviour e.g. squaring-up without physical contact
- Ganging up, bullying and intimidation
- Physical or sexual assault
- Spitting
- Armed robbery
- Malicious damage to the property of staff, customers or the business.

The impact of violence on a victim depends on the severity of the violence, his or her personal experiences, skills and personality.

Retail staff are at risk from workplace violence as the goods and cash held in the shop put them at risk from criminals who will use violence to steal and contact with all sections of the public puts them at risk from people who become violent when they are angry. Incidents usually fall into one of four main categories: theft; troublemakers; angry customers and drunk, drugged or disturbed customers.

Confronting or trying to deal with customers who steal can frequently result in violence as can dealing with suspicious payment cards. In some cases young people, often in groups, can deliberately create conflict, for example by causing a disturbance to hide the fact that they are trying to steal goods. A large group of young people who accompany a single purchaser of goods can cause uneasiness in staff. Disputes with customers over goods and services can sometimes lead to violence. Complaints and requests for refunds are a notable 'flash point' as are refusal to sell age related products such as cigarettes and alcohol. Staff also face the possibility of violence when dealing with people with mental health problems or those under the influence of drink or drugs.

# The Law

## Health and Safety Law;

There are five main pieces of health and safety law, which are relevant to violence at work:

- **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**

Employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees, so far as is reasonably practicable

- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

Employers must assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective: planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. Employers with five or more employees must write this assessment down, although it is recommended that employees with less than five employees also write it down. The risks covered should include the need to protect employees from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence where appropriate.

- **Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**

Employers must notify the local authority of an accident at work resulting in death, major injury or incapacity for normal work for three or more days. This includes any act of non-consensual physical violence done to a person at work.

- **Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977(a)**
- **Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b)**

Employers must inform, and consult with, employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety. Employee representatives, either appointed by recognised trade unions under (a) or elected under (b) may make representations to their employer on matters relating to the health and safety of those they represent.

## Employment and Civil Law;

- **Employment Rights Act 1996**

A claim for constructive dismissal can be made under this act after an employee has left a company. However it is important to obtain advice from an employment lawyer or a trade union before considering this option.

- **Race Relations Act 1976**

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**

- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

- **Employment Equality (religion or belief) Regulations 2003**

- **Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003**

These Regulations create the framework that obliges employers to protect staff from harassment from the public and allow the worker to take their employer to an employment tribunal.

- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**

This Act relates particularly to harassment in the form of stalking including harassment of an employee in the workplace. It gives police powers to prosecute someone who is persistently abusive towards an individual and also allows an individual to take out an injunction against a persistent offender.

- **Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994)**

This Act gives Local Authorities and the Police powers to issue Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's).

# Reducing workplace violence – practical ways to avoid violent situations

You must select the most suitable risk controls for your business. Having more than one control measure for a particular hazard would be a good way of reducing workplace violence incidents. Have a code of conduct that clearly defines what bullying, harassment, abuse etc actually are.

The effectiveness of your controls will depend on clear communication through all levels of the workplace, it is vital that employees know who is responsible for implementing the different areas of the procedure, including who will take charge during an incident or emergency and who will investigate after the event.

**“ Encourage employees to report all forms of workplace violence and aggression and act promptly on the reports. Don’t wait for a complaint.”**

## **Provide a secure work environment:**

Externally buildings should be well lit, have ready means of access and be kept free of possible hiding places for aggressors.

---

Remove or restrict access to equipment that could be used as a weapon.

---

Ensure that staff are not working alone or in isolated conditions without adequate support

---

Ensure staff are not alone when carrying out high risk tasks such as banking money.

---

Where possible night staff should be allowed to park where there is easy access to the store and where their cars can be monitored.

---

Where there are problems with public transport for staff that finish late, the employer should provide transport or assist staff in arranging lifts home together.

---

Staff who are key-holders should be trained in what to do in a call-out and should not be expected to enter the store on their own.

---

### **Install and use physical barriers and security systems:**

Provide a workplace that has service counters that act as a barrier to physical contact between clients and staff.

---

Lock doors to "staff only" areas and ensure that only staff have (and use) keys.

---

Install security and access key/card/code systems.

---

Provide a "safe area" for workers to retreat to in case of emergency.

---

Check visitors credentials, especially those using entrances not normally used.

---

### **Remove the motivation or incentive for violence:**

Reduce cash held on site by encouraging use of electronic payment methods.

---

Regularly remove cash from more accessible areas and ensure that the till is emptied of cash at night.

---

Don't cash up/count money in public view.

---

Have a safe procedure for banking and/or cash collection.

---

Reduce stocks of valuable items to minimum levels.

---

Advertise that your business has security measures to detect aggressors.

---

Ensure that staff limit their personal valuables in the workplace.

---

### **Ensure effective management, including selection of the right person for the job, fair employment conditions, training, employee consultation and regular supervision:**

Promote the fact that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated.

---

Provide effective management and supervision.

---

Develop and implement grievance procedures to allow reporting and action.

---

Create a culture of respect.

---

Give clear guidelines on what is unacceptable behaviour and how to recognise early signs of aggression.

---

Give training on how to handle difficult situations with customers and how to act to reduce a person's aggression.

---

Give training on how to apply security measures.

---

## **Ensure that work systems and service do not promote aggression from customers:**

Provide reasonable waiting/queuing times.

---

Ensure staffing levels are adequate for the time of day/week.

---

Look at stress reduction factors such as temperature control, noise, natural and adequate light levels.

---

Ensure staff are trained in violence detection and management including complaint and grievance handling.

---

Provide customers with information about rights and responsibilities, including proof of age schemes. Ensure information is clear to reduce uncertainty.

---

## **Provide detection measures, for example:**

Security video cameras.

---

Mirrors.

---

Beezers to announce entry and exit.

---

Duress alarms.

---

Report forms to encourage description taking of incident and offender.

---

## **Deter offenders by making it known that security measures are in place:**

Notices declaring CCTV and other security measures are on site, these must be compliant with the Data Protection Act.

---

Visible camera's and mirrors.

---

Notices stating that a minimal amount of cash is kept in tills.

---

Notices stating that 'A time delay safe operates on this premises which cannot be overridden by staff'.

---

## **Create Guidelines for Specific Situations:**

Lone working.

---

Extended trading. Reduced staffing levels for late-night trading and problems with drunken customers increase the risk of violence.

---

Night workers. Staff closing a store late at night are much more vulnerable than those closing in the early evening. Night shift staff have to travel to, or from work, later in the evening when access to public transport may be more risky.

---

Key-holders who are called out in the middle of the night if the store alarm has gone off feel particularly vulnerable, especially if back up is not available.

---

Age related sales such as cigarettes and alcohol.

---

# Workplace violence checklist

This checklist can help to identify present or potential workplace violence problems. The checklist contains common features relating to the occurrence of workplace violence and control measures that are practical for retail establishments. Employers are encouraged to expand and modify the list for their own circumstances, as not all control measures will be relevant for all businesses.

<b>Contributing Factors</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Is the site located in a high crime area			
Has the site experienced a robbery in the past 3 years			
Has the site experienced threats, harassment or abusive behaviour in the past 3 years			
Do employees exchange money with the public			
Is the business open during late night or early morning hours			
Does the business serve alcohol			
Do employees work alone or in small numbers			
Do employees work with, guard or transport valuable items like jewellery, camera's or cigarettes			

<b>Administrative/Work Practice Controls</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Is the workplace often understaffed?			
Are there emergency procedures in place to deal with different types of violence, incl. robberies and physical violence?			
Have employees been instructed to report suspicious persons or activities?			
Are employees trained in;			
β Ways to prevent workplace violence?			
β How to recognise warning signs of potential violence?			
β Ways to respond to hostile or threatening situations?			
β Use of the alarm systems and other security devices?			
β What to do in an emergency?			
Do you provide means for internal reporting after various situations, incl. descriptions of assailants?			
Are employees encouraged to report accidents, incidents and near misses?			
Is there a clear procedure for dealing with complaints and refunds?			



<b>Administrative/Work Practice Controls</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are emergency telephone numbers for police, fire, medical services and business contacts posted adjacent to the telephone?			
Does the premises have a policy to maintain minimum amounts of cash in tills, especially during late night openings?			
Do employees work with at least one other person throughout shifts?			
Are there procedures in place to assure the safety of employees who open and close the store or respond to alarm callouts?			
Do you carry out daily checks on control measures such as lighting, CCTV and that emergency exits are clear?			
Are doors used for deliveries, rubbish removal etc, locked when not in use?			
Are doors to the front of the business locked before and after official opening times while staff are on the premises			
Is there a proof of age scheme in place, and is it enforced?			

<b>Engineering Controls</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do employees have access to a telephone with an outside line?			
Is the entrance to the building easily seen and free from heavy shrub growth?			
Is lighting bright in parking and adjacent areas?			
Are all indoor lights working correctly?			
Are windows and views outside and inside clear of advertising and obstructions?			
Is there a working drop safe or time access safe to minimise cash available?			
Are security cameras and mirrors placed in locations that would deter robbers and provide greater security for employees?			
Are there height markers on exit doors to help witnesses provide more complete descriptions of assailants?			
Does the customer entrance have a door detector to alert employees when persons enter?			
Are silent or personal alarms in place to notify police or management?			
Can exit doors be opened only from the inside to prevent unauthorised entry?			
Are additional security measures put in place to protect employees at night?			
Are there employee only areas, separate from members of the public?			
Is there a secure place for employees to store personal belongings?			
Does the workplace have physical barriers, e.g. partitions protecting staff area?			

# Risk Assessment

No two workplaces are exactly the same, a combination of many factors will determine the need for protecting against violence towards staff. When selecting control measures you must consider what the different risk factors are that might lead to violent or aggressive situations. When looking at these factors you should consult with the people most likely to be affected, i.e. your employees, look at the history of occurrences recorded in accident/incident books and anecdotal evidence. The consultation process will reveal particular risks and **give employees the opportunity to contribute to violence prevention**. Without their input and support it is difficult to identify the actual risks and successfully implement preventive measures.

You need to know your own business. Signs of trouble might include; high staff turnover, high sickness absence (for example why can't people face work late at night or during busy periods at weekends), women who don't come back from maternity leave but do go on to work elsewhere, apprentices and juniors who resign suddenly, without explanation. It is recommended to always have exit interviews. Check the culture of the workplace, most bullying and verbal abuse is tolerated as "part of the job" or by a misguided loyalty and silence. The best way to deal with this is to **encourage recording of all incidents, then classify them, and look for common causes and patterns. If there are patterns look for common elements such as certain times of the day or the week/weekend.**

In general a business may reduce the risk of workplace violence by increasing the effort that the perpetrator must expend (trained staff in conflict management, controlling access and deterring offenders), increasing the risk of the perpetrator being caught (CCTV, reporting all incidents) and reducing the rewards to the perpetrator (removing cash or high value goods from easy access and identifying property). It is commonly agreed that single solutions, such as the installation of a panic button that can be activated in a crisis situation, are not completely effective in reducing the complex risk of violence at work. Instead a planned and systematic approach is needed so that employees understand their respective role and responsibilities.

# Step 1 – Hazard identification

- Check past incident and injury reports, and any employee compensation records, to identify past injuries and any patterns. **(Finding few incident reports does not necessarily mean that workplace violence is not a problem, they may not have been reported in the past, especially verbal abuse that employees may have accepted 'as part of the job.')**
- Ensure you have an effective consultation process in place. Consult employees on their own experiences. Encourage them to express their feelings and concerns regarding workplace violence, and whether they have been threatened or harassed while at work or when leaving the premises.
- Consult with the local police on what is happening in your area, is it a high crime area or has there been incidents in similar businesses recently.
- Conduct workplace inspections, using the checklist, to check for workplace violence risk factors. Include workplace design and layout and work practices.
- Set up a system for reporting all incidents, including verbal aggression, and ensure all staff are aware of it and are actively encouraged to report all incidents.
- Check procedure implementation, how staff deal with situations and check that any existing measures are being followed.
- Have exit interviews. Is an employee leaving because they feel unsafe at work?
- Contact local businesses, relevant community groups and industry associations for information on other similar businesses experiences.

# Step 2 – Work out the risk

- Which of the identified hazards is most likely to occur? **Identify high risk situations.**
- What are the likely injuries that may result?
- How severe are the injuries likely to be?
- Which? And how many employees and/or other groups of people are likely to be affected?
- **How effective are any existing security measures at minimising the risk of violence?**

You can now focus on the high priorities first.

## Step 3 – Controlling the risks

- Eliminate the hazard. **The best method of protecting employees is to change the system of work to reduce the chance of workplace violence.**
- Replace the hazardous procedure with a less hazardous one. When you cannot eliminate the hazard look for safer alternatives, for example, keeping less cash in tills
- Design safety and security into the premises and procedures. This includes improving visibility in and out of workplace, location of workstations and counters, no lone working, adequate lighting inside and outside, screens, use of drop safes, door detectors, alarms and surveillance systems.
- Integrate violence prevention activities into daily procedures, such as checking lighting, locks and security cameras.
- Establish systems of communication in the event of emergencies.
- Provide training. All employees must be trained in safety procedures, in the operation of security equipment and in what is unacceptable behaviour.
- Be prepared. **Despite preventive measures incidents of workplace violence may still occur, when they do managing the event during and after is just as important. Employees must know what to do and how to handle the types of situations that are likely to occur.**
- Contact other businesses and trade associations for advice on what has worked well in similar businesses elsewhere.
- Run a well-managed business. Aggression in customers can be increased by; invoicing errors, the product not corresponding to what was advertised, inadequate stock and not enough staff leading to long waiting and queuing times.

## Step 4 – Record what you have done

It is a legal requirement to record this assessment if more than 5 people are employed in the workplace, if there are less than 5 employees it is still good practice to write it down. This will help in passing information to employees and when you come to review your assessment in the future.

# Step 5 – Review/Monitor what has been done

It is important to know whether or not your actions are providing effective and efficient safeguards for your employees. Two basic questions need to be asked at this stage:

How effective are your preventive measures at reducing the frequency and severity of violent incidents? And

How effective are your reactive measures at minimising the negative outcomes associated with incidents of violence?

- Check accident / incident books or other methods of recording violent incidents that have been implemented. Have incidents been reduced? Are the control measures working? (At first you might see an increase in the number of incidents, especially of verbal abuse, as employees are being encouraged to record all incidents, these should decrease as the control measures become familiar and are used). Good recording is vital to the review process.

- **Consult with employees on whether the control measures are user friendly, whether they hinder the job, and whether they could be improved or different ones used.**
- Examine reports and minutes from staff meetings.
- Have return to work interviews. Could anything have been done differently?
- Keep abreast of new strategies to deal with violence in the retail industry.
- Change or improve the control measures as required through employee consultation, accident/incident/near miss monitoring and/or change in working practice.
- Ensure that any new employees have been informed of the procedures and any existing employees that are not using them are retrained. Procedures will not work if employees are not using them or do not know about them.
- Set a date for the next review.

# Example Risk Assessment

<b>Task and location</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>People affected</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Action needed</b>
Handling dissatisfied customers	Verbal abuse and physical violence from customers	Counter staff	Occasionally	Ensure staff trained in handling customers and complaints procedures. Have adequate numbers of staff
Handling drunken customers from pub next door	Verbal abuse and physical violence from customers	Late night staff and other customers	At pub closing times, especially at weekends	Ensure staff aware of emergency telephone numbers and trained in handling violence and aggression. No lone working at these times
Handling cash at counter	Robbery	All employees involved in cash handling and other customers	Frequently	Check cash handling and alert procedures. Ensure staff trained
Taking deliveries	Robbery of valuable goods	Employees involved in deliveries	Stock delivery times	Check id's of delivery drivers, have more than one member of staff to look out
Shop-lifting	Physical violence if caught in the act	Employee who apprehends offender	Irregular	Ensure staff trained in how to deal with situation, i.e. how to apprehend thief or to not approach
Late night opening	Robbery	Night-shift employees	After dark	To review lone working policy
Age related sales	Verbal abuse from customers asked for ID or refused sale	Counter staff	Frequently	Strict age policy display proof of age posters. Trained staff

# What to do during a violent incident

Prevention is the best method of dealing with violence at work however despite preventative measures, incidents of workplace violence may occur. An essential part of your plan is to be prepared. **All workers likely to be exposed to violence and aggression must be aware of and trained in the violence prevention controls, and the types of situation that may happen in their workplace.**

Violent situations often follow a pattern of escalating aggression;

- Annoyance
- Raised voice
- Verbal threats, physical gestures
- Actual physical violence

Avoid physical violence by recognising this and try to de-escalate the aggressive behaviour. Violence from other aggressors such as robbers and shoplifters may be immediate and unpreventable. Be prepared to take escape action as soon as possible. Where the aggressor threatens violence but has not yet become physically violent, do not do anything to

aggravate them. If a duress alarm is in place, and the situation is enough to warrant it, activate for response. Summon help and call the police, if appropriate, if there are no other alternatives, self defence may be the only option.

After the incident record details, notify or report the incident to the supervisor/manager. The supervisor/manager should ensure post incident support is provided as required including first aid, other impact management, reporting, debriefing, counselling, compensation or legal assistance.

## Basic principles for dealing with any violent incident

- Take every violent incident seriously
- Investigate what happened
- If major incident report to the police
- No matter the size of the incident report it within the organisation
- Debrief in all cases
- Have a grievance procedure in place both for customers and staff and use it

# Verbal abuse and threats

- Withdraw from the situation immediately. Do not put yourself at risk or make the situation worse
- Inform supervisor immediately
- Complete any reporting forms or write down the details
- Supervisor to ensure that the threatened worker is not left alone at work or placed in situation at work where he or she is at risk of repeated aggression
- Supervisor should ensure that the worker is accompanied home or taken home by taxi if applicable, to reduce the risk of continued aggression away from the workplace. Such protection should be provided as long as there is reasonable fear of repeated aggression
- The incident should be reported to the police where appropriate
- Remain calm and quiet
- Speak only when spoken to
- Do not shout or provoke the offender
- Be submissive and do not draw attention to yourself
- Do not stare at the offender or make direct eye contact
- Mentally note, if you can do so safely, the offenders details, height, build, hair colour, race, age, any scars or tattoos, their speech (accent, any names or phrases used)
- Allow the offender to leave
- Do not chase the offender – summon help, activate duress alarm, contact your supervisor and/or call police
- Ask any witnesses to remain
- Immediately seal off the area, including locking doors to prevent the offender re-entering

## Physical and Armed Assault

- If a duress alarm is in place activate it
- Withdraw from the situation immediately if possible. Do not put yourself or others at risk or make the situation worse
- Take refuge in a safe place
- Summon help if possible
- If you cannot withdraw you are entitled to use reasonable force to protect yourself
- As soon as you can withdraw to a safe place
- If you are injured seek medical help immediately
- Contact the police and notify your supervisor

## Armed Hold-Up

- Stand still and keep your hands where they can be seen
- Do not make any sudden movements
- Obey the offender's instructions exactly

## Bomb Threats

- Take the threat seriously
- Remain calm – try to record the exact wording of the caller and distinctive background noises which might be used to identify the source of the call
- Ask questions to find out – where the bomb is, what it looks like, what time it will detonate
- Report the incident immediately to your supervisor
- Assist as instructed to report the incident to the police and evacuate the area
- For further guidelines on this matter contact Greater Manchester Police on 0161 872 5050 to request the publications; 'Bombs, protecting people and property' and 'Business as usual - maximising business resilience to terrorist bombings'. The public information line at Home Office Terrorism Advice can be contacted on 0870 000 1585 for further information.



# What to do after a violent incident

**Post incident response is important, it will help to prevent the incident occurring again and reassure employees that their welfare is important to the business.** The response will depend on the nature and severity of the incident.

Reporting incidents provides the opportunity to ensure that the incident can be investigated, safety measures can be reviewed and modified to improve protection for staff in the future and that there is a secure basis for any legal redress or prosecution following the incident.

**Be aware that even seemingly minor incidents can cause emotional and psychological trauma, which may not be immediately evident, the effect of constant low level aggression or abuse is very wearing on employees and is a major contributor to high staff turnover.**



# Practical things to assist staff and your business to recover from a violent incident;

- Secure the premises
- Provide prompt first aid treatment for injured people and/or arrange for medical treatment for any serious injuries
- Record details of the incident immediately, making details that may be forgotten over time including what happened, who was involved, what triggered the incident, place, conditions, time of day, witnesses.
- Senior management must become involved, sympathise and support the victim
- Both employees and the employer can contact victim support for help and advice
- Report the incident to the business owner or senior manager and the police if necessary. Complete any reporting form required. Notify all crimes to the police. Report to the enforcing authority under RIDDOR if necessary.
- Advise employees that they need to fully co-operate with the police to be able to apply for compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICA). The incident must be reported to them as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours.
- Support employees and others involved, both directly after the incident and if any further action results. Employees should put the business address on any witness statements rather than their home address if they are worried about reprisals.
- Provide a debriefing to affected workers
- Allow workers time to recover. Do not force workers to “get over it” and continue work, this may induce further trauma and even other injury because they cannot concentrate on tasks
- Offer professional counselling
- Inform other employees, unless of confidential nature, to avoid spreading rumours
- Acknowledge the incident and take steps to prevent a reoccurrence. This includes investigating the causes of the incident and looking to see why your prevention measures did not work
- There may be further underlying causes not identified in your assessment that need to be addressed. Identify and overcome these. Investigations should not be looking to assign blame but to learn from an incident.

# Example violent incident report form

Date of report			
Date of incident		Time of incident	
Person reporting & position			
<b>Details of incident</b>			
Employee(s) involved (include age and sex)			
Activity / task at time of incident			
Type of incident (physical injury, verbal abuse, sexual/racial abuse, threatening behaviour, damage to personal/other property)			
Location of incident (attach a sketch if possible)			
Outcome (assailant apprehended, police called, medical assistance required, first aid treatment required, time lost, emotional shock or distress, legal action initiated)			
Relevant events which preceded the incident and possible contributing factors			
Details of witnesses (name and address, attach a signed statement if possible)			
Other relevant information (include possible preventative /remedial actions)			
<b>Details of the offender</b>			
Sex		Race	Age
Height		Weight	Build
Glasses		Facial hair	Eyes
Tattoos		Scars / Marks	Hair
Clothing			
What was said			
Accent / distinguishing features of voice			
<b>Vehicle description</b>			
Colour		Registration number	
Make		Model	
External features		Interior features	

# Websites, resources and references

HSE	Work related violence topic:	<a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/index.htm">http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/index.htm</a>
RIDDOR	Reporting:	<a href="http://www.riddor.gov.uk">http://www.riddor.gov.uk</a>
	Information and guidelines:	<a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hse31.pdf">http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hse31.pdf</a>
DTI	Employment Regulations 2003:	<a href="http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/eeregs a.htm">http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/eeregs a.htm</a>
	Part Time Workers Regulations 2000:	<a href="http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/ptime.htm">http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/ptime.htm</a>
	Working Time Regulations (amended 2003):	<a href="http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/work time regs/wtr.htm">http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/work time regs/wtr.htm</a>
ACAS	Equality Direct website:	<a href="http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk">http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk</a>
	Advice and guidance for business managers on all equality issues	<b>Helpline: 0845 600 3444</b>
	The Suzy Lamplugh Trust:	<a href="http://www.suzylamplugh.org/home/index.shtml">http://www.suzylamplugh.org/home/index.shtml</a>
	The leading authority on personal safety offers advice, publications, training and research. Telephone: 020 8392 1839	
	Victim Support:	<a href="http://www.victimsupport-gm.co.uk/index.html">http://www.victimsupport-gm.co.uk/index.html</a>
	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, USDAW, 'Freedom from Fear' campaign:	<a href="http://www.usdaw.org.uk/campaigns/freedomfromfear/">http://www.usdaw.org.uk/campaigns/freedomfromfear/</a>
	British Retail Consortium (BRC):	<a href="http://www.brc.org.uk/">http://www.brc.org.uk/</a>
	Workplace violence video and training programme 2003	
	Association of Convenience Stores:	<a href="http://www.thelocalshop.com">http://www.thelocalshop.com</a>

## References:

Tackling violence and abuse at work, an employer's guide, fact sheet 9 (2003), London Chamber of Commerce and industry in conjunction with Corporation of London. Occupational health helpline; 020 7203 1871

Upson, A. (2004), Violence at Work: Findings from the 2002/2003 British Crime Survey, Home Office

Rogers, K.A.; Chappell, D. (2003), Preventing and responding to violence at work. International Labour office

Violence at Work, a guide for employers, (2002), HSE. INDG69(rev) 4/02

Violence at Work. Facts 24 (2002), European Agency for Safety and Health at Work