What Is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. U.S. Department of Labor, 2016

Anyone in an organization can be a perpetrator.

✔ Verbal/non-verbal abuse
✔ Harassment and bullying
✔ Threatening behavior
✔ Domestic violence

LEVEL 1: INITIAL SITUATION TO DIFFUSE (verbal/non-verbal abuse, rude/disrespectful or intimidating behavior)

• Stay calm and speak softly and slowly.
• Demonstrate understanding through body language such as nodding and short statements.
• Don’t argue or tell the person outright that he or she is wrong.
• Ask how you can help or propose a solution if possible.
• Involve another employee or a supervisor if appropriate for the situation.
• Be firm but respectful about what is unacceptable such as “Please don’t shout” or “Let’s step to the side so we can discuss this.”

IF BEHAVIOR CONTINUES:

• Disengage from the situation as quickly as you can.
• Document the incident in case it becomes a pattern and ends up being investigated.
• Ask for assistance from your supervisor or Human Resources (HR) representative.

LEVEL 2: ESCALATED SITUATION TO MANAGE (repeated verbal/non-verbal abuse, harassment or bullying, threatening behavior, physically, in writing or verbally)

• Take actions to secure your own safety such as leaving the area, calling for assistance, or involving a supervisor or HR representative.
• Contact your supervisor or HR representative to report the incident and get direction on what to do.
• Document the incident.
• Call for security or 9-1-1 if needed.

LEVEL 3: EMERGENCY RESPONSE NEEDED (extreme and out of control anger, suicidal statements, display or talk of weapons, domestic violence, criminal incidents such as property damage, physical assault and armed robbery)

• Take actions to secure your own safety such as leaving the area, calling for assistance or involving a supervisor or HR representative.
• Call 9-1-1 immediately and cooperate with law enforcement officials.
• Document the incident.