



Occupational Violence and Aggression – Toolbox Script

Belgravia adheres to 'Think Safe. Act Safe. Be Safe'. That means we're committed to creating a culture that promotes safety wellbeing for team members and the community.

This safety toolbox is an opportunity to learn and share. Throughout this safety toolbox you will be provided with information on occupational violence and aggression (OVA) and have the opportunity to ask and answer questions. [Document training attendance electronically HERE](#).

OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION (OVA)

Welcome to our safety toolbox talk. Today, we'll be discussing occupational violence and aggression (also called OVA).

Occupational violence can happen anywhere, any time and it can come from a co-worker, a customer, or a stranger. It can include physical assault or be a form of threatening or disruptive behaviour, such as a raised fist, hitting or spitting on someone, or condescending language.

As always, 'Think Safe. Act Safe. Be Safe.'

What is occupational violence and aggression (OVA)?

OVA is a serious issue that affects employees' well-being, productivity, and overall safety. As part of our commitment to maintaining a safe work environment, let's discuss the different types of OVA and how to respond if you encounter such situations.

Physical Aggression:

- Physical harm inflicted on another person.
- Punching, slapping, spitting on a person.

- Includes physical assaults or threats of harm.

Acts of Violence:

- Various forms of violence, including sexual, neglect, and psychological.

Intimidation:

- Making employees feel fearful or timid.
- Forms of intimidation include emotional, sexual, verbal, and physical actions.

Threats:

- Statements expressing an intention to cause harm to another person.
- Even non-direct threats should be reported.
- Don't remain silent if you receive threats. While some may not consider threats a direct form of violence, they should still be reported.

Disruptive Behaviour:

- Inappropriate behaviour that distracts from work tasks.
- Maintain a focused and respectful work environment.



QUESTION: Which of the following is an instance of occupational violence?

- a) A customer verbally abusing an employee
- b) Snide, intimidating remarks whispered by one co-worker to another
- c) Insults posted by a customer on an employee's Facebook page
- d) One co-worker striking another



ANSWER: They're all forms of workplace violence.

Responsibility of the employer

Employers are the ones in charge of making a safe environment for their employees. Belgravia has a zero-tolerance rule in place for OVA.

If there is an incident of a threat or aggression being shown, the employer or supervisor should address the situation right away. There are times when employers may be out of view of the act of violence, which is why reporting incidents as soon as they happen is so important.

As the worker, if you ever feel upset or concerned about a situation, go to your supervisor. They will help you resolve the problem at hand.

How to address OVA in the moment

It is unfortunate that OVA exists. If you have found yourself in this situation without a supervisor present, you may be trying to decide how to address the situation in the moment. Here are a few ways that may help you:

- Use calm verbal and non-verbal communication to respond to the client or visitor who is being aggressive or violent.
- Position yourself so that you are out of arms reach of the aggressor. Ensure that you have space to move out of the area if required.
- Maintain an open body language, uncross your arms, show your palms, and make eye contact.

- Avoid apologising; paraphrase what the person is saying in a calm voice.
- If the OVA continues, escalate the situation by using support from other team members such as senior staff, management.
- If OVA continues ask the aggressor to leave.
- If the aggressor does not leave, or an escalation occurs, contact police to ensure the safety of others and retreat to a safer place.



QUESTION: If you work alone or off-site, you should:

- a) carry a personal alarm or mobile phone.
- b) establish a call-in schedule with a designated contact.
- c) confirm credentials of those you have appointments with.
- d) all of the above.



ANSWER: (d) All of the above.

What to do if you experience OVA

It is important to talk with your supervisor if you have experienced violence at work. You may be asked to give a written statement about the situation. This will help to keep the story straight and have something in writing to document it.

From there, your employer will address the situation with the other person. It may not be their responsibility that it happened, but they will help to fix the problem.

All instances of OVA should be reported as this helps the company to understand risks and allows for escalations where required.

Effects of occupational violence

If you are the victim of workplace violence, it can make you very uncomfortable. There are many emotions that you may experience after the



incident occurs. Some other of occupational violence are:

- Trouble focusing at work
- Anxiety
- Feeling insecure

Belgravia partners with Converge International to deliver an employee assist program (EAP) that provides our people short-term, solutions focused counselling which aims to support and empower employees through a variety of best practice counselling approaches to assist in resolving personal and work-based issues.

The program provides a broad range of services including dedicated support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTQIA+ people, those who experience domestic violence, people who experience disability and older people and their carers.

More information can be found on [B-Connected](#).

Always report occupational violence and don't retaliate

When you are the victim of occupational violence, it can be tempting to retaliate. That is not always the best decision. Try not to fight back and be confrontational. Diffuse the issue as much as possible and report to your supervisor.

There are times that you may feel that your problem is not taken seriously. If that has happened, take the problem to the person higher up than the supervisor. When a situation is addressed in the early stages, it is often much easier to control.



QUESTION: If you or a co-worker experience OVA, how do you report it? What support can you access?



ANSWERS:

- Report the incident to your supervisor.
- Log an incident report on B-Connected as soon as possible.
- Call the police if an aggressor does not leave the venue when asked.
- Access EAP services if needed.