# Workplace Violence Prevention Checklist

## Background

This tool was originally developed for hospitals as part of the Workplace Violence Prevention in Health Care Leadership Table. It has been adapted for long-term care homes to address the needs of the sector.

Long-term care homes are an environment where residents often feel vulnerable and anxious. This can include, for example, aging residents and their caregivers/care partners, individuals experiencing a physical or mental health crisis, those needing addiction support, and residents who have unmet needs they are unable to express. According to the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) (2015-16), fifty percent of residents with dementia in long-term care exhibit responsive behaviours. Some examples of responsive behaviours include: verbal or physical aggression (striking, self-harm), exit seeking, resistance to personal care, refusal to eat/take medication, etc. These behaviours may be due to a number of factors including an unmet need (e.g. pain, environment (hot/cold), feeling hemmed in, influences of other residents/staff and social history). Despite the fact that an aggressive action stemming from a responsive behaviour may be due to dementia or an unmet need, if it leads to an aggressive action against a worker in a workplace and meets the definition of workplace violence under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, (OHSA), it is considered workplace violence (herein referred to as workplace violence). Workplace violence in long-term care homes can originate from a number of sources, including from residents and their families and friends or other external people and/or from any employee associated or formerly associated with the workplace.

In order to prevent workplace violence, employers must implement workplace violence policies, measures, procedures and programs, conduct risk assessments and re-assessments for the risks of workplace violence, establish measures and procedures for: summoning immediate assistance when violence occurs or is likely to occur, reporting violent incidents and investigating incidents and complaints of violence, and providing information, education and training to workers so they may recognize and be protected from workplace violence. Employers, typically represented by senior management, hold the greatest responsibility with respect to worker health and safety within health care workplaces such as long term care homes.

# Purpose

Workers in long term care homes face significant risks of workplace violence. This Healthcare Checklist is designed as a prevention tool to enable health care and community care facilities to adopt leading practices when establishing systems and practices to prevent workplace violence.

Long term care homes are required to comply with the workplace violence provisions as set out under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and the Regulation respecting *Health Care and Residential Facilities*. This tool is intended to be used in addition to the OHSA and other existing tools such as the Violence, Aggression and Responsive Behaviours (VARB) tools available on the Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) website at https://workplace-violence.ca/tools . This checklist serves as a mechanism through which the health care sector can implement a standard of practice which goes beyond compliance and brings Ontario's health care sector in alignment with industry best practices when dealing with the prevention of workplace violence.

# Rationale

In the literature[1], action plans to prevent **violence** in the workplace have tended to include five (5) key focus areas, namely:

1. **Leadership Support and Worker Participation:** The commitment of leadership to the prevention of workplace violence provides the motivation and resources for workers and employers to become involved in and prioritize the successful implementation of a workplace violence prevention program.

2. **Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment:** Risk assessment is necessary to identify the specific risks of exposure to violence in particular work settings, considering the type of work being done and the physical environment; to recognize potential risks of violence previously identified in similar work settings; and to put in place controls to prevent and minimize, to the extent possible, the occurrence of workplace violence. Participation of workers, unions, and the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or HSR (for workplaces with 6-19 workers) along with employers in identifying and assessing risks in the workplace is a benchmark of a successful violence prevention program.

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[1] OSHA (2015). Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers. https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3148.pdf.; CDC (2004). Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies and Research Needs. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-144/pdfs/2006-144.pdf.; HROntario (June 2010). Workplace Violence Prevention Program: Guide to Conducting Workplace Violence Risk Assessments.

3. **Risk Mitigation, Hazard Prevention and Controls:** The risk assessment should serve to pinpoint appropriate steps that can be taken to address the identified risks. Risk mitigation strategies could include implementing controls that eliminate or reduce the risks of violence, modifying environmental design and physical layout of the unit/facility; and developing and maintaining administrative and work practice controls. Risk mitigation strategies should also include mechanisms where organizations learn from past incidents in order to protect workers from future workplace violence incidents.

4. **Education and Training:** Education and training ensure that all staff members are aware of potential hazards. In addition, it helps to increase their awareness and competence about how to protect themselves and co-workers through established policies, measures, and procedures. Education and training should be established in a manner that adequately protects all staff against common risks, while recognizing that certain environments and roles require increased violence crisis intervention/self-protection training that should also include training on gentle persuasive approaches that bring awareness to all staff about triggers that may evoke an aggressive and responsive behaviour, for certain segments of the worker population.

5. **Performance Reporting (Key Performance Indicators) and Evaluation:** The tracking and analysis of established/standardized key performance indicators provides a basis for assessing an organization's strengths and weaknesses in addressing risks associated with workplace violence. These results can provide key learnings to create action plans to address persistent areas of concern. Maintaining a repository of data which contains workplace violence key performance indicators ensures that workplace violence programs can be evaluated, which is essential in demonstrating an organization's commitment to continuous improvement, transparency and accountability in the prevention of workplace violence.

This tool consists of two parts:

## Part I: Program Assessment Checklist

The checklist below sets out a number of criteria under each of the aforementioned focus areas to serve as a best practice guide for health care facilities committed to preventing harm to long term care home workers resulting from workplace violence.

## Part II: Proposed Action Plan

The Action Plan Template is included in this tool so organizations can formulate next steps in order to bring existing workplace violence prevention policies and procedures into alignment with leading practices. The proposed actions would be founded upon the gaps identified through the Program Assessment Checklist in Part I.

# Part I: Program Assessment Checklist

| 1. Leadership Support and Worker Participation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Criterion** | **Meets Requirements** | | | | **Action Required (Yes/No)** | **Explanation** |
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Partial** | **N/A** | | |
| 1. Our Administrator/Executive Director is personally accountable, leads and champions workplace violence prevention initiatives which includes initiatives to also prevent violence caused by responsive behaviours. | | | | | | |
| 2. Our organizational culture focuses on prevention of workplace violence:<br>▪ Included in strategic plan, vision, mission statements, policies, procedures, contracts, mandates, action plans, and safety plans<br>▪ Utilization of leading practice strategies such as PSHSA VARB tools and promising practices in use at other health care facilities | | | | | | |
| 3. Our organization has identified representatives amongst executives, managers, supervisors and workers who are responsible and accountable to the Administrator/Executive Director for championing, implementing and monitoring workplace violence prevention initiatives | | | | | | |
| 4. Our organization has established a crisis management/chain of command team and their roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined in a procedure (who responds first, who are first complaints reported to, who is next in line to receive the complaint if that individual is not available or does not act upon the complaint) | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 1. Leadership Support and Worker Participation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 5. Management demonstrates commitment to the health and safety of workers and residents by:<br>▪ prioritizing its discussion in meetings<br>▪ enacting risk mitigation strategies | | | | | | |
| 6. The organization has a documented workplace violence prevention policy and program (Sample Workplace Violence Policy & Examples of Measures and Procedures for Workplace Violence Programs, including all sample measures from the toolkit) | | | | | | |
| 7. The organization's workplace violence prevention policy and program include procedures, practices, and training and education requirements pertaining to identifying, reporting, and addressing domestic violence, abuse, and/or harassment as it relates to the workplace | | | | | | |
| 8. Our organization, has an adequate number of trained persons providing security functions, if applicable. For those performing the role of security trained in use of force, on all shifts who can anticipate, mitigate, and intervene to protect workers and residents from workplace violence and also help prevent violence. | | | | | | |

Rationale

Workplace Violence Prevention Checklist

| 1. *Leadership Support and Worker Participation* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Criterion** | **Meets Requirements** | | | | **Action Required (Yes/No)** | **Explanation** |
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Partial** | **N/A** | | |
| 9. Our organization makes all persons entering the long term care home aware that workplace violence will not be tolerated. Our organization:<br>▪ holds all perpetrators of workplace violence accountable for their actions<br>▪ has resources for residents and families to encourage them to participate in workplace violence prevention<br>▪ implements organizational plans to increase awareness of the organization's and public's accountability and responsibility for adopting leading practices in workplace violence prevention | | | | | | |
| 10. Our organization includes workers (including point-of-care workers) and the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or Health and Safety Representative (in workplaces with 6 to 19 workers) to champion workplace violence prevention initiatives within the organization, including in the development, implementation, evaluation of workplace policies and programs | | | | | | |
| 11. Our organization implements appropriate recommendations generated from workers and the JHSC or HSR | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 1. Leadership Support and Worker Participation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 12. All employers, supervisors, and workers are aware that that they must report a concern about workplace violence, including domestic violence. | | | | | | |
| 13. All employers, supervisors, and workers are aware that they must report witnessed workplace violence, including domestic violence. | | | | | | |
| 14. Workers are aware of who to report incidents to (including who is next in line to receive the complaint if that individual is not available or does not act) and how they will be investigated | | | | | | |
| 15. Our organization demonstrates how they welcome and value reporting | | | | | | |
| 16. The reporting and investigation of complaint process takes into account confidentiality, where possible | | | | | | |
| 17. Our organization ensures that there are no obstacles or penalties for workers that report injuries or concerns | | | | | | |
| 18. Our organization has a procedure that outlines the employer's reporting obligations to WSIB, MOL, JHSC or HSR and the union | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 1. Leadership Support and Worker Participation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 19. Our organization responds to all reports of workplace violence which includes aggressive and responsive behaviours whether verbally or in writing | | | | | | |
| 20. Our organization requires that leadership review incidents of workplace violence, do a root cause analysis, and implement an action plan to reduce incidents of workplace violence, including improving the workplace violence prevention policy, program, measures and procedures. | | | | | | |
| 21. Our organization informs all affected workers of any measures and procedures taken (or to be taken) to resolve issues identified in the investigation and the timelines they should expect for these problems to be resolved | | | | | | |
| 22. Our organization develops and implements safety plans that articulate what measures are in place for workers who are victims of domestic and/or workplace violence. | | | | | | |
| 23. Our organization enables workers to obtain post-incident care including: debriefing, counselling and referral to/facilitation of care | | | | | | |

Rationale

Workplace Violence Prevention Checklist

| 2. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 1. Our organization has appointed a lead for the workplace violence risk assessment process. They are responsible for ensuring that:<br>▪ a risk assessment process is put in place<br>▪ risk assessments are conducted<br>▪ control measures are implemented and maintained | | | | | | |
| 2. Our organization conducts a pre-risk survey of the workers prior to conducting a risk assessment | | | | | | |
| 3. Our organization conducts risk assessments to determine the risk of workplace violence associated with:<br>▪ nature of the workplace<br>▪ type of work<br>▪ resident population<br>▪ resident acuity<br>▪ conditions of work/work flow<br>▪ communication<br>(Please consult the PSHSA Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool) | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 2. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 4. Our risk assessments include an analysis of:<br>▪ incidents<br>▪ accidents<br>▪ code white calls<br>▪ security reports, if applicable<br>▪ staff reports/discussions | | | | | | |
| 5. Our organization has a process to identify and address any gaps in skill sets and core competencies within the team related to workplace violence prevention. | | | | | | |
| 6. Our risk assessments are conducted in consultation with the JHSC or HSR (in workplaces with 6 to 19 workers), occupational health & safety team, clinical staff, and other relevant parties to assess the risk of workplace violence. | | | | | | |
| 7. Our organization reports the findings of risk assessments to the JHSC or HSR, and provides the committee with a copy if the assessment is in writing | | | | | | |
| 8. Our organization has established a protocol to determine when a re-assessment of risk is required | | | | | | |
| 9. Our organization conducts re-assessments of as often as necessary to ensure that the policy and program continue to protect workers from workplace violence | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 3. Risk Mitigation, Hazard Prevention and Controls | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 1. Our organization has established processes to control and/or eliminate, where possible, risks identified through the risk assessment. (See PSHSA Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for more details of the assessment of environmental design) | | | | | | |
| 2. Our organization has put into place environmental design measures to eliminate hazards which could lead to workplace violence incidents (See PSHSA Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Tool for more detailed assessment of environmental design, VARB tools.) | | | | | | |
| 3. Our organization has established measures and procedures to complete regular reviews and updates of risk assessment measures and procedures (refer to OHSA section 32.0.3 and O.Reg 67/93 section 9(2)) | | | | | | |
| 4. Our organization implements measures and procedures to control the gaps identified in root cause investigations of hazards, near misses, accidents, and illnesses | | | | | | |
| 5. Our organization involves frontline workers in the designing of controls and solutions to address workplace violence | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 3. Risk Mitigation, Hazard Prevention and Controls | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Criterion** | **Meets Requirements** | | | | **Action Required (Yes/No)** | **Explanation** |
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Partial** | **N/A** | | |
| 6. Our organization consults with the JHSC or HSR to solicit input on ways to reduce risks for workplace violence including aggressive and responsive behaviours, improve workplace violence prevention measures, procedures and policies, and prevent future occurrences of workplace violence | | | | | | |
| 7. Our organization utilizes measures to prevent future occurrences of workplace violence that includes aggression and responsive behaviours such as:<br>▪ Using personal alarms<br>▪ Having trained persons providing security functions immediately available<br>▪ Implementation of environmental safety measures (e.g. cameras, mirrors, lighting, visibility/sight lines, décor to not trigger a resident with responsive behaviours etc.) | | | | | | |
| 8. Our organization has an electronic and visual flagging system where a resident's history of violence, triggers, potential negative behaviours, and safety measures for residents and workers is permanently tracked (unless removed due to a successful appeal) | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 3. Risk Mitigation, Hazard Prevention and Controls | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 9. Our organization provides information (including personal health information) necessary to protect workers from the risk of violence committed by a person with a history of violent behavior (including during escorts/transfer, upon readmission) and mitigate risk | | | | | | |
| 10. Our organization encourages safe work practices such as: <br> ▪ reviewing resident profiles before meeting with the resident <br> ▪ communicating relevant safety-related information at high risk times (e.g. shift changes, escorts, or transfer) | | | | | | |
| 11. Our organization establishes safety plans (ideally on admission) for individuals identified as a risk for workplace violence which includes communication of information and instruction about managing a person with history of violent behaviour, security assistance, triggers, coping strategies, and preferred interventions. Safety plans should be communicated and understood by all staff who have contact with the high-risk resident. | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 3. Risk Mitigation, Hazard Prevention and Controls | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 12. Our organization has established mechanisms whereby workers can signal for help and summon immediate assistance in the event of workplace violence, that includes aggression and responsive behaviours incidents, including using:<br>• personal panic alarms with GPS, two-way voice activation and linked to security<br>• noise makers<br>• code buttons<br>• telephones<br>• cameras in high-risk areas<br>• availability of workers such as trained persons providing security, security trained in emergency response and workplace violence prevention<br>Our organization has a staffing protocol for evenings, nights and weekends; and also takes precautions to limit access to building after hours and ensures everyone is signed in. | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 4. Education and Training | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Criterion** | **Meets Requirements** | | | | **Action Required (Yes/No)** | **Explanation** |
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Partial** | **N/A** | | |
| 1. Our organization provides instruction on the contents of the workplace violence policy and program, including:<br>▪ managing high-risk residents<br>▪ summoning for immediate assistance<br>▪ how to report incidents of workplace violence<br>▪ how the employer will deal with and investigate incidents, complaints and threats | | | | | | |
| 2. Our organization provides training to workers and all levels of management related to violence committed by residents (including those with a history of violence), visitors, workers and others. This training should include a practical component. | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 4. Education and Training | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 3. Our organization has established specialized education and training for workers in jobs with a higher risk of violence (if applicable), including:<br>• predictive factors for aggression and violence<br>• verbal and physical methods to diffuse, de-escalate, or avoid aggressive behavior<br>• preventive techniques for responsive behaviours (i.e. residents diagnosed with dementia or other cognitive impairments)<br>• techniques for responding to violent individuals<br>• response options in the event of a physical attack (e.g. break-free, blocks, take down procedures, restraint application, and other self-defense techniques)<br>• management of violent disturbances<br>• the emergency response plan including: codes, workplace organization, handling of disturbed persons, risk assessments in place | | | | | | |
| 4. Our organization ensures everyone who carries out work (including contract work and transfers/escorts) in the workplace receives training on workplace violence prevention appropriate for their work. | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 4. Education and Training | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 5. Our organization trains workers on all of its workplace violence measures and procedures that are relevant to their work (refer to Training Matrix developed by the Workplace Violence Leadership Table) | | | | | | |
| 6. Our organization requires workers and management to participate in all workplace violence prevention training | | | | | | |
| 7. Our organization has trained employers (Operators/Executive Directors) supervisors, and workers to identify and report signs of abuse and domestic violence | | | | | | |
| 8. Our organization has trained employers, supervisors, and workers to respond appropriately to workers who are the victims and perpetrators of domestic and other forms of violence | | | | | | |
| 9. Our organization ensures that workplace violence related training is developed, established and provided in consultation with JHSC or HSR (in workplaces with 6-19 workers) | | | | | | |
| 10. Our organization requires refresher training on an as needed basis and this refresher training includes a practical component | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 5. *Performance Reporting (Key Performance Indicators) and Evaluation* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 1. Our organization includes workplace violence prevention in the Quality Improvement Plan(s) | | | | | | |
| 2. Our organization tracks and analyzes key performance indicators regarding workplace violence including the number of:<br>▪ Violent incidents<br>▪ Near misses<br>▪ Security calls, if applicable<br>▪ Code white calls (both those resulting in injuries and those not leading to injuries)<br>▪ Incidents resulting in the use of force (physical contact)<br>▪ Risk factors identified that are associated with incidents or near misses<br>▪ Residents with a history of violent behavior flagged (visually) along with their triggers, behaviours, and safety measures to protect residents and workers<br>▪ Risk assessments conducted<br>(please refer to suggested indicators from the Workplace Violence Prevention in Health care Leadership Table) | | | | | | |

Rationale

| 5. Performance Reporting (Key Performance Indicators) and Evaluation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criterion | Meets Requirements | | | | Action Required (Yes/No) | Explanation |
| | Yes | No | Partial | N/A | | |
| 3. Our organization uses standardized metrics to capture incidents and near misses | | | | | | |
| 4. Our organization conducts post-incident investigations to assist in determining the root cause of the incident, with reporting back to the worker(s) involved | | | | | | |
| 5. Our organization reports all incident data to the leadership team/senior management, JHSC or HSR (in workplaces of 6-19 workers) and makes this data available to all workers | | | | | | |
| 6. Our organization has established a cyclical review process, in consultation with the JHSC or HSR, to evaluate the validity and efficacy of workplace violence policies, measures, procedures and training | | | | | | |
| 7. Our organization assesses our key performance indicators, and conducts an annual evaluation of the efficacy of our existing workplace violence policies, measures, procedures and training | | | | | | |
| 8. Our organization meets program objectives and identifies trends in workplace violence incidents to assist the employer with revising policies, measures, and procedures to address concerns | | | | | | |

Rationale

# Part II: Proposed Action Plan

For each section of Part I where the organization has identified a need to improvement (i.e. a 'Yes' has been inserted in the 'Action Required' column), suggest actions to be taken for each focus area in the tables below.

| 1. *Leadership Support and Worker Participation* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gap Identified | Action Step(s) Required | Person/Department Responsible | Review/Completion Date |
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3.     ` | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |

| 2. *Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gap Identified | Action Step(s) Required | Person/Department Responsible | Review/Completion Date |
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |

Rationale

| 3. Risk Mitigation, Hazard Prevention and Controls | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gap Identified | Action Step(s) Required | Person/Department Responsible | Review/Completion Date |
| 1. | | | 1. |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | 3. |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | 5. |

| 4. Education and Training | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gap Identified | Action Step(s) Required | Person/Department Responsible | Review/Completion Date |
| 1. | | | 1. |
| 2. | | | 2. |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | 4. |
| 5. | | | 5. |

Rationale

| 5. Performance Reporting (Key Performance Indicators) and Evaluation – Proposed Action Plan | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gap Identified | Action Step(s) Required | Person/Department Responsible | Review/Completion Date |
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |

Rationale

# Acknowledgements