



Preventing Workplace Harassment & Physical Violence in Construction

A Guide for Employers & Workforce Leaders

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Please Note: The information contained in this guide is not intended to serve as legal advice. The guide and any definitions, recommendations, or other content contained within do not replace or take precedence over applicable federal/state/local requirements or collective bargaining agreements. Employers must adapt to jurisdictional mandates.

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Introduction

Acts of violence are the [third leading cause of fatal occupational injuries](#) in the United States (CFOI, 2026). For the purposes of this guide, **workplace violence** includes any [act or threat of physical violence or assault in the workplace](#) (State of California Department of Industrial Relations, 2024). It is also important to recognize that **physical violence often follows harassment, intimidation, bullying, or other threatening behavior**. Even if these behaviors don't escalate to physical violence, they can create harm by themselves and need to be addressed and prevented through early intervention.

Like other occupational safety hazards, workplace harassment and violence are recognizable, foreseeable, and preventable. Risks can be identified and mitigated with appropriate policies, procedures, and precautions. This guide was developed through a review of relevant guidance and literature along with input from industry stakeholders. It is intended to help construction employers and workforce leaders develop and implement a program that can prevent harassment and physical violence on construction worksites.

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Understanding Workplace Violence and Contributing Factors

On November 11, 2025, 20-year-old industrial welder Amber Czech was bludgeoned to death by her coworker in an act of violence that sent shockwaves through the industry and increased existing fears among tradeswomen. In his statement, Amber's murderer admitted to thinking about killing her for some time before doing so. The following year, on April 23, 2026, 47-year-old ironworker Timothy Ted McFarlin was shot on the jobsite by a coworker during an altercation. Both cases raise questions about what could have been done to prevent these deaths, and what more can be done to prevent anything similar from happening in the future?

When preventing workplace violence, we also need to prevent precursors to violence that occur widely in the construction industry. Harassment and bullying should not be tolerated. These types of threatening behaviors can cause harm by themselves *and* can also be predictive of more physically violent acts. Perpetrators and targets of workplace harassment and physical violence can include workers, supervisors, managers, and the general public, site visitors, or intruders. Among other things, violent or threatening acts in the workplace can include physical or sexual assault, active shooting, concealing or brandishing a weapon, stalking, verbal or other threats to safety, property damage, bullying, intimidation, and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and transgender status), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. Harassment and physical violence among coworkers can also cross over into life outside the workplace through social media, texting, or in-person social interactions. Conversely, threats from individuals' personal lives can spill over into the workplace. Among U.S. women, [33% of workplace homicides are perpetrated by intimate partners or personal relations of the victims](#), who are not supposed to be on site (Centers for Disease Control, 2024).

Violence causes one in six workplace deaths and based on data from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), OSHA estimates it is the third leading cause of death in the workplace (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). In construction, between 2011 and 2022, an average of 18 deaths annually resulted from homicides at work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011-2022). Also in construction, workplace violence contributed to 270 nonfatal injuries resulting from days away from work in the years 2021 and 2022 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021-2022). Violence also affects many demographics of workers: for all industries in 2020, [81% of deaths due to homicide in the workplace were men, 44% of deaths were individuals age 25-44, 28% were Black, and 18% were Hispanic](#) (NIOSH, 2024).

Harassment and assault not resulting in a death is much more difficult to track, with many cases going unreported amid fears of retaliation, disbelief, and discrimination. When it comes to gender-based violence in particular, ["only a small percentage of survivors report the abuse"](#) (Runge, 2017). We do know, however, that among reported

incidents across all industries in 2020, 73% of those who experienced workplace violence were women (NIOSH, 2024).¹ Although not representative of all construction workers, a [2021 survey](#) of 2,635 tradeswomen and non-binary tradespeople in construction also demonstrates how often these groups experience harassment at work: 82% of respondents had been sexually harassed on the job, and almost a quarter (24%) reported this harassment happening either ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ (Hegewisch & Mefferd, 2021). In the same survey, 76% of non-white and non-Hispanic respondents reported that they had experienced racial harassment directed at them personally at work, with 22% saying this harassment happened either ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ (Hegewisch & Mefferd, 2021).

Effects of Workplace Harassment and Violence

Harassment, bullying, and other threatening behavior can [have serious psychological, health, and social or work-related effects](#) on the worker experiencing it. It can also impact those who witness it even if they are not directly involved. Workers may experience a desire to avoid the workplace, poor concentration and decreased productivity, mental health issues, high blood pressure, and other stress-related health issues. Physical violence in the workplace can cause all these same issues, while also putting the affected worker at risk for physical injury, including permanent disability or death. In both cases, these primary impacts can lead to additional challenges for the worker experiencing them, such as conflict with other crew members, increased risk of work-related injury, job loss or change, financial difficulties, and missed opportunities for new work or promotions (American Psychiatric Association Foundation, 2026).

Contributors to Workplace Harassment and Violence

The causes of threatening behavior and violence are complex and interconnected, and can include a variety of [individual, relationship, community, and societal factors](#) (Centers for Disease Control, 2025). On an individual level, [many offenders themselves have experienced violence](#) or threats of violence (American Psychiatric Association Foundation, 2026). However, being exposed to risk factors does not automatically lead to someone committing threatening or violent acts.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), stress-inducing characteristics of the construction industry—such as the high-pressure environment, tough-guy culture, long hours, employment arrangements such as multi-employer worksites—can [act as additional contributors](#), amplifying other existing risk factors (U.S.

¹ BLS refers to workplace violence not resulting in death as intentional injury by another person. For the full definition of intentional injury by another person see page 276 of [OIIICS Manual 2012](#).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2024). By monitoring the jobsite culture, relationships between workers at all levels, and the presence of any bullying or threatening behavior (even disguised as joking), early intervention is often possible. It is especially important to keep in mind that women and non-binary people are often targets of harassment and violence both at work and in the world at large.

Workplace violence can also be caused by people from outside of the workplace. Sometimes workplace violence follows from someone's experience of violence at home, such as when an intimate partner escalates abuse by trying to assault or murder a worker at their job. At other times, violence can come from a stranger or strangers who find their way onto the jobsite. Although the people causing these types of violence may be from outside of the workplace, there are steps employers can take within the workplace to prevent incidents and reduce harm at work.

Your Commitment to Preventing Workplace Harassment and Physical Violence

Committed leadership is crucial for the success of your organization's efforts.

Creating or shifting toward a culture of care that is free from harassment and violence requires regular input, modeling, and reinforcement from leadership and supervisory workers (see page 17). As the EEOC points out in its [report on promising practices for preventing harassment in construction](#): "The cornerstone of a successful harassment prevention strategy is leadership's consistent and demonstrated commitment to create and maintain a culture in which harassment is not acceptable" (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2024).

Leadership can implement its commitment to preventing workplace violence through proactive planning. Identify all leadership roles and/or individuals responsible for overseeing or executing the organization's commitment to prevention. Assume that there is always a risk for workplace violence on your jobsites and apply the skills and practices that your company has for planning for other workplace hazards to the issue of workplace violence. Start by identifying potential factors in the workplace (across the company and/or individual jobsites) that could increase the risk of violence. Talk to employees to identify potential threats from outside of the workplace. Learn more about behaviors that can serve as predictors of violence. Then, use this information to come up with a plan to prevent violent acts whenever possible and a policy to address them if/when they do occur. While employers may not be able to prevent all harassment on site, the way management responds to threatening behaviors if/when they do occur is critical to preventing further harassment and physical violence.

Assessing Risks for Workplace Harassment and Violence

To determine whether there are factors related to the work environment or work tasks that could lead to threatening behavior and ultimately violence, conduct a **workplace violence hazard analysis** like you would any other hazard analysis. Identify and evaluate risk factors to determine the locations, jobs, times, or tasks with a likelihood of workplace violence. Once you have identified any potential hazards or risks, you can create a plan to eliminate or control exposure to them.

Conducting a Workplace Violence Hazard Analysis

Use the following questions and examples to think through whether potential stressors and other factors that could lead to harassment and violence are present on the jobsite. Please note, this should be repeated at regular intervals, especially as the work environment, work tasks, or crews present onsite change. It is important that attention also be paid to ‘near misses’—or incidents that could have escalated, as they can provide insights into jobsite stressors or even be a leading indicator of harassment and violence.

- 1. Are there stressors related to the work environment that could potentially contribute to agitation and ultimately violence?** For example:
 - Inadequate break spaces or basic facilities
 - Limited space and trade stacking (leading to possible overcrowding and territorial conflict)
 - Limited parking, long commutes
 - Consistent loud noise
- 2. Are there stressors related to the work itself that could potentially contribute to agitation and ultimately violence?** For example:
 - Dangers (e.g., work at heights, confined spaces)
 - Low margin for error
 - Schedule pressure without relief valves
 - Long hours and overtime (leading to fatigue)
- 3. Are there challenges related to crew dynamics or relationships that could potentially contribute to agitation and ultimately violence?** For example:
 - Challenging power dynamics between crew leaders and other workers
 - Poor communication, especially during scope or sequencing changes
 - Skill gaps
 - Presence of bigotry, prejudice, or discrimination

4. Will there be people other than employees entering the site? For example:

- Non-construction vehicles (e.g., roadwork)
- The public, tenants, travelers, and other types of building or campus users who may pass through or near the jobsite
- Equipment suppliers, vendors, delivery trucks/drivers
- Other subcontractors

5. Is the jobsite secure? Are there any locations, times, or situations that may put workers at risk of violence from coworkers or the public? For example:

- Late night/early morning hours, especially working alone or in small groups
- Poor lighting
- Lack of separation from or increased tension with the public (e.g., road work contributing to delays for drivers, night work taking place near bars or stadiums)
- Placement of facilities (storage, restroom, parking, etc.) in secluded areas
- High crime rates in the area
- Any employees with known external relationships or situations that could lead to violence in the workplace (e.g., stalking, domestic violence, community/group-involved conflict)

Identifying Warning Signs in an Individual

Trying to predict whether an individual may commit workplace violence is extremely difficult, but there are some [emotional and behavioral warning signs](#) that might indicate a person is becoming increasingly agitated. These include:

- Excessive drinking and/or drug use
- Having drastic changes in their mood, especially displaying a negative mood (e.g., irritability, anger, depression)
- Repeatedly breaking company policies and rules
- Increased conflict with coworker(s)
- Showing resistance to changes at work
- Vocally complaining about being treated unfairly at work
- Acting paranoid (e.g., thinks people at work are "out to get" them)
- Social withdrawal (American Psychiatric Association Foundation, 2026)
- Showing disregard or disrespect for the personal boundaries of others

Making a Plan to Prevent and Address Workplace Harassment and Physical Violence

Develop a formal, written policy that describes preventive, intervening, and corrective actions to be taken in response to workplace harassment and physical violence. The policy should include procedures for conducting a hazard assessment on each jobsite and developing exposure control and elimination plans. It should also include protocols for responding to any harassment or violence that occurs.

The written policy should be shared with everyone on site and incorporated into existing incident prevention programs, employee handbooks, or manuals of standard operating procedure. *See appendix for an example policy.*

Policies should cover the following:

I. Definitions and Identification of Prohibited Behaviors

Define workplace harassment and workplace violence and explain the types of behavior covered in the policy, such as:

- Threats to safety
- Bullying or intimidation by a single person or group
- Harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and transgender status), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information
- Physical or sexual assault
- Stalking
- Fighting
- Damage to property
- Concealing or brandishing a weapon
- Active shooting

It is important to note that some of these terms have specific legal definitions and may be considered crimes. Others may be defined differently depending on existing union contracts, the employer's existing policies, or other factors. If applicable, employers can consult qualified legal counsel regarding applicable federal, state, local, union, and contractual requirements. Your company and workers should share a common understanding of these terms and, as a result, how the policy and plan will be applied on your worksite. A set of example definitions are included in the appendix's sample policy.

In addition to ensuring a common understanding of the terminology being used to identify and reference prohibited behaviors, it is important to clarify when and where

these prohibitions apply. For example, bullying and harassment can take place virtually and outside of work hours while still having an impact in the workplace or a fight can occur between coworkers at a social event offsite. Determine how these types of incidents will be handled as it relates to reporting, recording, and response.

II. Exposure Control Planning Guidelines

As described above, superintendents should include an assessment of workplace harassment and violence risk as part of pre-phase planning, just as they would for access, logistics, and other safety hazards. Based on this assessment, an exposure control plan that addresses workplace stressors, crew dynamics, site security, and any other controllable risks should be developed. **The written policy should include instructions to guide the development of an exposure control plan on each individual jobsite.**

Implementing environmental and administrative controls can ensure the worksite is protected against foreseeable risks of workplace violence. Environmental controls physically alter the work environment while administrative controls change the way people work.

Environmental and administrative controls that can make a jobsite safer and more secure include:

- Setting up proper lighting throughout and around the site.
- Maintaining clear pathways around the site.
- Establishing site security. Be very clear on the specific policy and communication protocols that must be followed and incorporate the following measures as needed:
 - Working security locks
 - Video cameras
 - Fences or other barriers to maintain a perimeter
 - Badges for all individuals on site
 - Emergency communication or personal alarms for employees who work in isolated areas
 - Designated delivery points
 - Training for personnel in security or “gate-keeping” roles to identify and respond to potential threats
- Ensuring availability and ease of access to clean and private restrooms for employees of all genders.
- Having break rooms available for all sites.
- Controlling traffic flow in, out, and around the jobsite.
- Changing schedules or rotating workers as needed based on crew dynamics.

- Avoiding isolation of workers whenever possible, especially vulnerable workers.
- Evaluation of lone worker scheduling to avoid early mornings, late evenings, or specific patterns of isolation.
- Conducting anti-harassment and bystander training.

Keep in mind: conditions on site can change. The workplace harassment and violence exposure control plan should be regularly revisited and updated as needed.

III. Reporting and Responding Protocols

Develop an incident response and management team so that everyone knows who is responsible for an incident before one occurs. Employees should have a clear understanding of who they can report to and the protocol that will be initiated if they choose to make a report. Anonymous reporting options should be available to allow victims and bystanders to be more comfortable reporting and reduce fear of retaliation.

Establish the protocol that will be followed for the immediate response to and subsequent investigation of any/all accusations of workplace harassment or violence. The same protocol should apply to all employees (including subcontractors), clients, customers, and visitors, with no exceptions. *However, the protocol should allow for differences in response based on differences in threat level.* While all workplace harassment, threatening behavior, and violence needs to be taken seriously and addressed promptly, not all incidents present the same level of immediate onsite physical risk. In some cases, reporting and responding to an incident internally may be sufficient, while in others, law enforcement should be contacted immediately. Including a severity framework in the response protocol helps guide site-level responses and protect workers and the project. Refer to your list of prohibited behaviors and determine which behaviors warrant which types of responses.

Reporting and responding protocols should include the following information:

1. **A framework to determine severity**, including established threat levels and responses associated with different types of behavior. It is important to take time to establish the classifications that are appropriate for your company and be aware that no model can fully capture or predict the range or progression of violent behaviors. The sample plan in the appendix of this document includes a three-tier model as one example of a framework. It is not designed to inform employers about their legal responsibilities with respect to workplace violence and does not distinguish between legal and illegal behaviors.
2. **Emergency response protocols.** Identify who should contact 911 and under what circumstances (i.e., if there is an active or imminent threat of violence or an

ongoing assault). See more under Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans on page 12.

3. **Procedures for offering medical evaluation and treatment to the person experiencing violence.** Provide or refer workers to stress debriefing and post-traumatic counseling services to help with recovery, including sexual violence and domestic violence service providers as appropriate.
4. **Step-by-step investigation procedures**, including what evidence should be gathered and how. Evidence might include physical evidence, or it might include observations and testimonies. Who should be interviewed? How should information be recorded? Share the investigation protocol with those impacted.
5. **A framework for corrective action.** The employer's policy should be clear that employees found to have violated the provisions of the policy will be subject to appropriate corrective action, up to and including discharge and bans on rehiring for future projects. Be prepared to discipline the offending employee(s) and/or to involve law enforcement if needed and/or if requested by the victim. It is important to have a zero-tolerance policy in terms of always addressing workplace violence; however, the corrective actions may vary based on factors such as the severity of the incident, preferences of the person who experienced violence, and employee history.
6. **Guidance on using a [trauma-informed approach](#)** to decrease the risk of re-traumatization for people who report violent acts and to improve the likelihood that people will use your company's reporting process and participate throughout an investigation (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). This means that you build an understanding of the ways trauma can affect someone's response to experiencing or witnessing violence into your reporting and investigation protocols through taking steps such as:
 - Prioritizing, to the greatest extent possible, autonomy and privacy for people reporting violence. Victims have often experienced a profound loss of autonomy and control over their bodies or circumstances; prioritizing their autonomy and privacy in reporting and responding procedures is a way to be responsive to these experiences.
 - Being aware that people may respond to experiencing violence in a wide range of ways. While some people may be outwardly sad, angry, or fearful, others may laugh or appear numb, detached, emotionless, or even disinterested. People also may switch abruptly between emotions. There is no one "right" or "believable" way for a person to respond to experiencing violence. Be prepared to be emotionally supportive to employees regardless of the emotions they express, including if their reactions are counterintuitive to you.

7. **Information on victims' rights**, to be shared with them. This includes rights to privacy. Establish confidentiality practices and identify consequences for breaches of confidentiality.
8. **A policy on how, when, and why victim information may need to be disclosed**. This should be shared transparently with all workers and reiterated to those reporting an incident.
9. **A written commitment to anti-retaliation and anti-discrimination**. Employees must understand how employers will protect them against retaliation and discrimination. Non-reporting/underreporting is a widespread issue in part because of concerns about these two reactions. Multiple legal frameworks exist to protect reporting parties from retaliation or discrimination, including NLRA Section 7, OSHA 11(c), and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.
10. **A policy on recordkeeping and record retention**. Applicable state requirements for recordkeeping and record retention may vary.

Make it clear that all reports will be taken seriously and investigated according to the established protocol.

Keep in mind: behavior is often context-dependent. Individuals' behavior and treatment of others can vary and change depending on the situation, environment, power dynamics, and other interpersonal variances. It is important to take a report seriously even if it contradicts your personal feelings or beliefs toward an individual.

IV. Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans

When writing your plan to prevent and address workplace violence, consider whether your existing emergency or crisis response protocol covers all potential instances of violence. Include emergency response procedures in the workplace violence plan, including what to do if there is a security breach, an active shooter, or other threat.

- Identify designated person(s) to inform, if possible.
- Determine how the information will be spread more broadly. How will employees be notified in real time? Can you use radios, text message alerts, a loudspeaker?
- Establish safe areas.
- Identify locations for egress and gathering.
- Provide tips on how to stay safer in an emergency.
- Determine how and where first aid will be provided post-emergency. Designate first aid staging areas.

- Talk to law enforcement and emergency responders in the area BEFORE an event so they are familiar with your worksite. Share any key information about the site layout, safety hazards to be aware of, etc.
- Identify any measures that can be taken to contain active threats until law enforcement or other support arrives.
- Identify local sexual and domestic violence service providers in advance so that you can contact or refer employees to them in the aftermath of an emergency.

V. Plans for Engaging Jobsite Partners to Prevent Workplace Harassment & Violence

Owners

Workplace violence prevention should be discussed with owners the same way other project risks are — early, transparently, and tied to delivery outcomes.

Owners should consider workplace violence to be a:

- Schedule risk
- Public safety risk
- Workforce retention risk
- Reputational risk

Contractors and owners should coordinate on:

- Policy development and enforcement
- Removal authority
- Security staffing or access controls
- Communication/escalation thresholds
- Monitoring the actions of subcontractors to ensure adherence to sitewide violence prevention measures
- When owners should become involved

At minimum, workplace violence risks should be elevated to owners under the following conditions:

- Repeated incidents
- Public-facing threats
- Schedule compression driving fatigue or conflict
- Security limitations

Subcontractors

General contractors and construction managers should coordinate with subcontractors on [workplace harassment and violence prevention](#) to establish clarity and authority.

General contractors should coordinate with subcontractors on the following:

- Policies and protocols for harassment and violence prevention, reporting, and response, including whether subcontractors will adopt the policy of the general contractor
- Procedures for resolving conflict between contractors/crews
- Providing training
 - Determine the scope and type of training needed
 - Determine who will conduct training
- Monitoring adherence to policies and protocols – general contractors should:
 - Verify that all contractors and workers onsite are following through on commitments set out in contract language, including adherence to protocols as agreed upon
 - Monitor subcontractors' workplace violence prevention and correction
 - Spot check complaint procedures
 - Help subcontractors find solutions when they lack experience or resources to solve issues (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)

Supervisors

A workplace violence program is only effective if jobsite leaders are resourced, empowered, and backed when they act. Upper management should equip superintendents and other supervisory workers with:

- A clearly identified escalation chain specific to the project (e.g., Foreman → Superintendent → Ops/HR → Owner/Security)
- 24/7 contact protocols
- Owner-approved enforcement authority. Supervisors should have the authority to remove individuals from site immediately if needed.
- Security decision support. Supervisors should be empowered to call for security or law enforcement without delay.
- Information on mental health resources / Member or Employee Assistance Programs (MAP or EAP) when applicable and external referrals for domestic and sexual violence services. Supervisors should be aware of company, union, and local resources, and they should be posted onsite – not buried in HR portals.

Conduct supervisory training on the points above as needed, including any time changes are made to the policy or protocols.

Workers

Workers may have valuable insights and input on the development and implementation of a workplace harassment and physical violence prevention plan. Management should engage employees by:

- Seeking feedback on any items missing from the written policy and protocols for preventing and addressing workplace violence on site
- Equipping individual workers to respond appropriately to threatening behaviors from crew members through bystander or upstander training

Unions

Unions can assist in reinforcing a culture of care (see page 17) with members by:

- Committing to preventing and remedying harassment in all governing documents and negotiations
- Serving as a resource for members who need assistance
- Supporting and promoting efforts to help ensure apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs are fully inclusive and do not have unnecessary or discriminatory barriers to entry
- Addressing workplace violence if it occurs within the context of the union itself
- Developing guidance for representing members who experience and perpetrate workplace violence, including advice for addressing allegations of workplace violence

Getting the Word Out: Outreach and Training

Share the plan broadly. Make project owners, management, workers, union representatives, and site visitors aware of the plan. Post it conspicuously on the jobsite. Include it in employee onboarding and refresher trainings. Make it available in full on your website.

Conduct employee training. Consistent and tailored training is an important part of establishing a workplace harassment and violence prevention program. In addition to making employees aware of your policy, it is critical to educate them about what violence can look like, how to report it, and what the policy applies to this specific worksite. It is also important to use training as an opportunity to solicit feedback from employees on how your plan and policy can be improved.

A good training program will:

- 1. Make employees aware of the workplace harassment and violence policy.** Use this as an opportunity for workers to provide feedback and ask questions to help shape the policy. True worker involvement makes for a better policy and understanding.
- 2. Define workplace harassment and violence of all types.**
- 3. Teach trainees what to do if they experience or witness workplace violence.** Provide information on how to recognize, avoid or [de-escalate](#) potentially violent situations, while also informing employees to always first prioritize their own physical safety. Demonstrate how to speak directly to the person experiencing violence about their preferred next steps, and educate trainees on the impacts of trauma, how people's responses to experiencing violence may differ, and the importance of supporting autonomy and privacy for victims of violence. [Bystander intervention training](#) can empower bystanders to become upstanders who recognize a harmful or potentially harmful situation and take action to positively influence the outcome. This training gives individuals the tools and courage to act, fostering a sense of shared responsibility, and it helps create a culture of accountability where harassment is not tolerated and a culture of care where workers look out for each other and their wellbeing.
- 4. Clearly outline reporting procedures.** Share the reporting and response protocol. Employees should know when and how to alert supervisors to any safety or security concerns, including:
 - Providing a designated person(s) and anonymous methods such as a lockbox or website
 - Encouraging workers to inform their superintendent/employer of incidents before they escalate whenever possible
- 5. Seek employees' input in facility hazard assessments and training.** Be curious about what factors may be contributing to poor employee relations and ask for employees' input to help identify solutions. Rather than waiting to act until after an individual employee discloses they are personally being stalked, proactively seek employee recommendations about how the facility could be safer if a worker should ever experience stalking. Record 'near misses' to learn more about what's happening on site and incorporate into worker training. Use training as an opportunity for workers to provide input on hazards and prevention measures.
- 6. Provide information about workers' rights.** Let employees know that employers have a responsibility to prevent and address workplace violence and harassment, and that they have rights and resources as workers:

- Inform workers that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaws discrimination against employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and transgender status) or national origin
- Inform workers that occupational safety laws impose a general requirement on employers to maintain a safe workplace. For example, the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to have a workplace that is “free from recognized hazards,” and OSHA has historically [used this general duty clause to hold employers responsible for workplace violence](#) (Surber, 2021).
- Provide training on specific hazards, solutions, and any OSHA standards and guidance that may apply
- Provide information on how to file an OSHA or EEOC complaint.
- Inform workers about the company’s anti-retaliation policy for reporting hazards, including workplace violence
- Share information on which, if applicable, components of their collective bargaining agreements provide additional protection with respect to workplace violence

Provide information on how the following laws may offer additional protection for people experiencing workplace violence depending on the circumstances:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- State, territory, and local laws²

7. Provide information about available resources. Inform employees about available resources from your company, their union, and other sources. Provide information about:

- Any applicable Employee or Member Assistance Programs or other company mental health services
- Local sexual and domestic violence service providers
- Free legal support for workers experiencing workplace violence (See the “Additional Resources” section of this guide)

² Consult the “Additional Resources” section of this guide for databases that compile information on additional relevant laws based on your location. Your state, territory, or locality may mandate time off for survivors of domestic or sexual violence, prohibit employment discrimination based on an employee’s survivor status, require reasonable accommodations for survivors, provide unemployment insurance if a survivor is forced to leave their job because of domestic violence, or offer other specific protections.

Reinforcing a Culture of Care and Respect

Complement training by regularly reinforcing a culture of care. A [culture of care](#) refers to a welcoming, safe, inclusive workplace free from harassment where every employee feels valued, respected, and heard (Associated General Contractors of America, 2023). Leadership buy-in is critical to the effectiveness of any safety and health intervention. *If responsibility defaults to “everyone” — it means no one.* Consider providing extra training to forepersons and supervisory workers to enable them to lead by example when it comes to creating a culture where everyone feels safe and respected.

Leadership responsibilities include:

- Setting behavioral expectations as safety requirements
- Modeling calm, respectful conduct under pressure
- Intervening early in escalating conflicts
- Normalizing reporting
- Coordinating with ownership and company leadership
- Protecting crews through decisive action

Management can directly create and reinforce a culture of care through:

1. *Conducting refresher training.* Conduct a pre-shift toolbox talk or safety meeting to remind workers of the employer’s workplace violence policy and reporting procedures.
2. *Standing up for others on the job.* Management should be among the first to call out and try to diffuse bad behavior when they see it.
3. *Being a source of support.* If someone on your site experiences violence, be a source of support for them by helping them report it and seek resources as needed.

Keep in mind: a workplace violence program does not stand alone and should be one piece of the overall site safety plan. Mental health should also be considered and included in the overall plan. It is critical to have resources such as counseling available to refer workers for help immediately when needed.

Additional Resources

Policy and Plan Development & Implementation

- [Promising Practices for Preventing Harassment in the Construction Industry \(EEOC\)](#)
- [Developing a Workplace Policy to Prevent & Respond to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Stalking in the World of Work \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)
- [Workplace Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Stalking Policy Checklist \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)
- [The Importance of a Trauma-Informed Approach to Workplace Investigations \(The Canadian Institute of Workplace Bullying Resources\)](#)
- [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach \(The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration\)](#)
- [Responding to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Harassment: Trauma-Informed Strategies for the Labor Movement \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)
- [Workplace Violence Factsheet \(OSHA\)](#)

De-Escalation Resources

- [Crisis Prevention Institute's Top 10 De-escalation Tips](#)
- [The HEAT Model](#)
- [APA: Control anger before it controls you](#)

Understanding the Scope of the Issue

- [A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say About the Change They Need in the Construction Industry \(Institute for Women's Policy Research\)](#)
- [Workplace Violence \(NIOSH\)](#)
- [Preventing Homicide in the Workplace \(NIOSH\)](#)
- [A method to assess bullying and harassment as an upstream determinant of construction worker mental health \(CPWR\)](#)

Relevant State, Territory, and Local Laws

- [State Laws Requiring Private Employers to Provide Leave from Work to Employees who are Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and/or Stalking \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)
- [State Laws Prohibiting Discrimination Against Employees Based on Their Status as Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and/or Stalking \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)
- [State Laws Requiring Employers to Provide Reasonable Accommodations to Employees Who Are Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and/or Stalking \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)

- [State Guide on Employment Rights for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking \(Legal Momentum\)](#)
- [Paid Sick Days and Paid Family Leave Laws by State \(with Cities\) \(Family Values at Work\)](#)
- [Workplace Rights Hub \(A Better Balance\)](#)

Legal Support for Workers Experiencing Workplace Violence

- [Help for Workers Facing Sex Discrimination and Harassment \(National Women's Law Center\)](#)
- [Advancing Safety Through Employment Rights Resources \(Futures Without Violence\)](#)
- [Know Your Rights at Work: Sexual Harassment \(Equal Rights Advocates\)](#)

National Resource Centers

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(988\)](#)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline \(800 799 7233\)](#)
- [RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline \(800 656 4673\)](#)
- [1in6: The National Helpline for Male Survivors \(800 656 4673\)](#)

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Appendix A: Sample Policy

This sample policy from a fictitious company is provided as a resource to inform your company's policy development and is not a "one-size-fits-all" policy for construction companies or jobsites to adopt as is. Your company's policy should be tailored to your organization and be responsive to input from your employees, unions that represent your employees, project owners, and other actors.

Some of the language in this sample policy is based on Futures Without Violence's [Developing a Workplace Policy to Prevent & Respond to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Stalking in the World of Work Guide](#). Employers are encouraged to consult that resource for template language and detailed information on policy development.

"ABC Roofing's" Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention and Response Policy:

ABC Roofing enforces a zero-tolerance policy* for workplace harassment and violence. This policy is part of *ABC Roofing's* commitment to providing a safe and respectful workplace. It applies to all employees, clients, customers, visitors, and anyone present at company worksites. This policy will be shared with all personnel and posted conspicuously on site. *ABC Roofing* reserves the right to update or change the guidelines and other information contained within the policy at any time. Any changes will also be shared with personnel and posted on site.

**Note: by zero-tolerance, we mean that workplace harassment and violence will always be addressed, however the corrective actions may vary based on factors such as legality, harm done, and the wishes of the person experiencing harm.*

Prohibited Conduct

- Bullying or intimidation (by an individual or a group)
- Harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and transgender status), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information
- Physical or sexual assault
- Stalking
- Making verbal or physical threats
- Hitting, punching, kicking or any other action that harms another
- Concealing or brandishing a weapon that is designed to inflict bodily harm or using any weapon to hurt another.

- A weapon includes all things designed or used to inflict bodily harm or physical damage. For example, a tool normally used on the job, if used to inflict bodily harm, becomes a weapon when used in that way.
- Fighting
- Theft from an individual
- Damage to property

Definitions

Bullying – repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees) that are intended to intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or undermine; or that create a risk to the health or safety of the employee(s). Workplace bullying often involves abuse or misuse of power. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness and injustice in the target and undermines an individual's right to dignity at work (Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, 2011).

Intimidating or Harassing Behavior – threats or other conduct which in any way create a hostile environment, impair agency operations; or frighten, alarm, or inhibit others. Psychological intimidation or harassment includes making statements which are false, malicious, disparaging, derogatory, rude, disrespectful, abusive, obnoxious, insubordinate, or which have the intent to hurt others' reputations. Physical intimidation or harassment may include holding, impeding or blocking movement, following, stalking, touching, or any other inappropriate physical contact or advances. (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.)

Member Assistance Program/Employee Assistance Program (MAP/EAP) – a professional assessment, referral, and short-term counseling service available to employees or union members and, in some situations, to their family members to help with personal problems such as substance use disorder, financial pressures, job stress, and family issues which may be affecting work performance. MAP/EAP services are voluntary, confidential, and provided at no cost to the employee (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

Sexual Assault – any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent. (U.S. Department of Justice, 2025)

Sexual Harassment – unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment (Commission, 1997).

Stalking – engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety - or the safety of others - or

suffer substantial emotional distress. (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023) Stalking can take the form [of surveillance, life invasion, intimidation, or interference](#) (Workplaces Respond to domestic & sexual violence: A National Resource Center, 2025).

Exposure Control Planning

Superintendents, on-site supervisors, or others deemed responsible for workplace violence prevention planning by **ABC Roofing** will conduct regular jobsite hazard assessments to identify potential risks relating to workplace harassment or physical violence. Those responsible for exposure control planning will evaluate the following to determine if any factors are present that could precipitate harassment or violence *and will then work with the necessary parties to identify means of eliminating or reducing those risks:*

1. Stressors in the work environment
2. Stressors related to the work itself
3. Challenging crew dynamics
4. Security of the site

If you would like to report a risk factor, make a suggestion, or ask a question about planning to prevent and control exposure to workplace harassment and violence, please reach out to **Carla the Superintendent** or submit it anonymously via the form at www.abcroofing.com/employee-feedback.

Non-Emergency Reporting Procedures

If you have experienced or witnessed one of the types of prohibited conduct above, or you have experienced or witnessed some other violent behavior, please report it. Employees can report to **Joe the Site Safety Manager** or make an anonymous report via *the lockbox outside the office*.

Emergency Reporting Procedures

If there is an active threat, security breach, active shooter, or other threat: please get to a safe place as quickly and safely as possible, preferably one of the previously chosen safe areas. All employees are shown the designated safe areas during training, however if you are unsure where to go in the event of an emergency, please ask your supervisor or other site leader immediately.

Once you are safe, please inform **Joe the Site Safety Manager** via phone, text, or radio.

Once managers have been informed, other employees will be informed of any threats *via site-wide announcement*. If it is not safe to make a verbal announcement, we will inform all employees *via text and/or radio*.

Response Protocol

All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and fairly. Autonomy and privacy for people who report violence will be prioritized throughout the investigation process to the extent possible under the law. Actions taken in response to a report of harassment or violence will be based on the severity of the event using the following model as a guide.

	<u>Level 1: Harassing, Disruptive or Escalating Behavior</u>	<u>Level 2: Threatening Behavior or Credible Risk</u>	<u>Level 3: Immediate Danger or Physically Violent Act</u>
Ability to Intervene	Although harm may have already taken place, intervention at this level can prevent escalation.	The safety of all workers must be prioritized due to credible threat of physical or sexual violence.	Immediate and emergency action is required to protect life and safety.
Examples	• Repeated verbal hostility or intimidation • Harassment, bullying, or discriminatory remarks • Aggressive behavior that does not involve threats of physical harm	• Verbal threats of harm • Brandishing tools or objects in a threatening manner • Requests for sexual favors	• Physical or sexual assault • Active weapon threat • Any situation presenting imminent physical danger
Response Guidance Specific to Level	• Address immediately at the supervisory level • Document the behavior and corrective actions taken • Reinforce behavioral expectations • Monitor for recurrence • Escalate if behavior continues or worsens • Consider perpetrator removal from site pending investigation	• Ensure physical safety of individuals involved immediately • Document details promptly • Notify project leadership and designated escalation contacts • Evaluate whether law enforcement notification is appropriate • Consider removal of perpetrator from site pending investigation	• Activate emergency response procedures immediately • Contact law enforcement • Direct workers to safe areas • Follow established emergency communication protocols
Always	• To the extent possible, prioritize confidentiality and autonomy for the person who has experienced violence. • Ask the person who has experienced violence what their preferred outcomes would be and prioritize their preferences to the extent possible amid the company's legal obligations. This includes decisions about how and when to involve law enforcement if there is no ongoing threat to others onsite. • Provide referrals for medical, mental health, domestic violence, and sexual violence services as appropriate.		

Medical treatment will be provided promptly if any injuries occur. *Please do not hesitate to call 911 and/or report to the medical trailer as needed.*

Follow-up investigations will include site visits from **a member of ABC Roofing's leadership** to interview those involved and others who may have witnessed the act of violence. The person who experienced violence will be consulted about whether they would like the threat or act to be reported to law enforcement. To the extent possible under the company's legal requirements, their perspective will be prioritized. Additionally, a record of all reported incidents will be kept by management and stored securely for further investigation or future review.

Corrective Action

Any individual found to have violated this policy will experience disciplinary measures, where appropriate. Corrective actions can include but are not limited to: a one-day suspension from work duties; a multiple-day suspension from work duties; being required to take an anger management class, anti-bullying or similar class; being terminated from work; and a ban on hiring for future projects. Victims will be made aware of their rights, including the right to press charges or involve law enforcement.

Resources for People Who Experience or Witness Workplace Violence

Victims of workplace violence will be offered referrals to external medical evaluation, treatment, and care along with referrals to local domestic and sexual violence service providers as appropriate. Additionally, stress debriefing and posttraumatic counseling services will be offered to help workers who experienced or witnessed an incident.

Note to employer: this section can be greatly modified and tailored on your company's resources and access to internal or external medical care. For example, if you have a traumatic-event response team in place that is already in place, their protocols should be included in this section. In addition, if you have identified local domestic and sexual violence providers for referrals, you can include their contact information here.

Accommodations for People Who Experience or Witness Workplace Violence

The employer will collaborate with the person reporting violence to identify any needed reasonable workplace safety accommodations that do not impose an undue hardship on the employer. Accommodation may include steps such as increasing security, providing a revised or flexible schedule, or implementing measures to prevent an intimate partner from entering the workplace.

Anti-Retaliation and Anti-Discrimination Commitment and Procedures

Retaliation or discrimination against anyone who experiences workplace violence, reports workplace violence, witnesses workplace violence, or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Examples of prohibited acts of retaliation and discrimination include, but are not limited to:

- Demotion, including transferring to less skilled job duties
- Suspension
- Termination of employment

- Refusal to hire for future jobs
- Denial of overtime
- Creating or allowing the creation of a work atmosphere that is hostile toward the individual who made a report

Any individual who feels they have experienced adverse employment action as a result of their actions under this policy should *file a formal written complaint with the HR department.*

Confidentiality

ABC Roofing maintains a strong commitment to confidentiality and privacy for persons covered under this policy. To the extent possible under the law, the company will maintain confidentiality of information related to workplace violence disclosed by individuals covered under this policy. If disclosures are necessary, it will inform affected persons how, when, and why that information may need to be disclosed. Whenever possible, advanced notice will be provided regarding any necessary disclosures. Corrective action will be taken for violations of confidentiality under this policy.

Integration

This policy will be incorporated into the company's Incident Prevention Program, Employee Handbook, and Standard Operating Procedures.