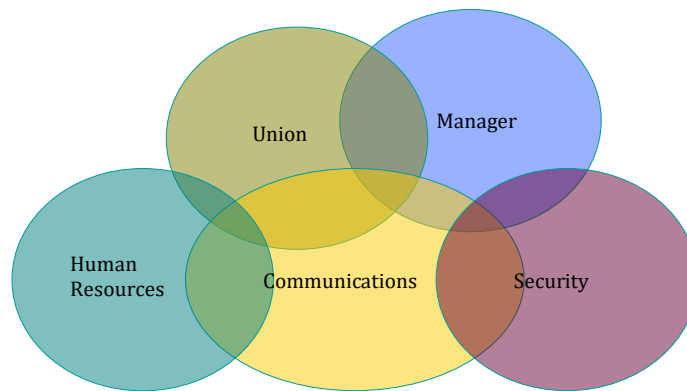


# Coordinated Workplace Response Plan on Domestic Violence

January 2010



## **Coordinating workplace supports for employees living in domestic violence.**

The following questions will help your DV team assess current organizational procedures in terms of DV supports and awareness.

### **All DV Team members**

- How do we assure employees living in DV that they can safely disclose to their supervisors and receive support?
- How do we include employees in the new DV program?
- How can we ensure that confidentiality is respected throughout the workplace?
- Do we have a clear, well-understood confidentiality policy?
- Do we have a relationship or link with local police? Is there a specialized Domestic Violence team within our local law enforcement?
- Do we have a relationship or link with the local women's shelter?

### **Supervisors**

- Are supervisors actively supportive of the DV program?
- Are they approachable to employees who might be living in DV?
- How will we address supervisory resistance to the program?
- Do we know that supervisors understand what supports, specifically, can be offered to DV victims (reasonable accommodations, time off, transfers, or leaves)?
- Do we know that supervisors understand what supports are available to them when an employee has a DV problem? (union, EAP, police, Security)

Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are security personnel open to DV program and training on DV situations?</li> <li>• Do we have a critical-incident response protocol in place? Will it work for DV situations? Are all staff aware of it?</li> <li>• Are communications fast and reliable between Security and other departments?</li> <li>• Do we have a policy/process for managing the aftermath of a DV incident at work?</li> </ul>
Occupational Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do our OH professionals screen for DV if potential signs* of DV are presented (for victims or perpetrators)?</li> <li>• Do OH professionals have specific DV training?</li> <li>• Are they included in creating a workplace DV program?</li> <li>• Do they refer women living in abuse to the women's shelter?</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we ensure that employees know it's safe to use workplace support services for DV issues?</li> <li>• Are we sure that employees are aware of all their benefits and resources (EAP?)</li> <li>• Are we sure that employees are aware of the DV policy, especially confidentiality and reporting protocols?</li> </ul>
Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do union stewards/representatives have specialized DV training?</li> <li>• What is their role in terms of assessing a DV victim's safety within the workplace?</li> <li>• What supports do they offer DV victims and perpetrators?</li> </ul>
EAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does our EAP include information on DV in relevant training (i.e., stress management)</li> <li>• Does our EAP have a link to a women's shelter?</li> </ul>

## Incident Response

### Coordinating an Incident Response

Once a DV policy has been developed and security, HR, and Communications processes have been revised accordingly, it's important to clarify incident-response functions. Many organizations have a critical-incident response process into which potential DV incidents can be integrated. If this is not the case, a consultation with a security professional could be very helpful in identifying the specific needs of your workplace. (see website for links: [www.acws.ca/workplacedv](http://www.acws.ca/workplacedv))

When addressing a domestic violence situation at work, supervisors must find a balance between the confidentiality and safety needs of the employee living in DV and the safety needs of the workplace. The woman's personal safety risks could increase if the perpetrator finds out she disclosed the situation at work. Confidentiality must be strictly practiced, so information is shared only when her safety at work, or any other employee's, would otherwise be at risk. The following chart can help you decide who must be informed should certain types of DV incidents occur. It's especially important to consider communication channels if the employee discloses to Security, or someone other than her supervisor, and asks that no one else be told.

There is an exception . . . It's very important to know . . . Although employers, managers, and supervisors are advised to stay within the workplace context, the employee living in DV may disclose information about the relationship. In the most dangerous cases, she may say her spouse will try to kill her. Believe her! Call police immediately. (Fifty percent of women killed by intimate partners (in Canada? Last year?) predicted the murders but were not believed.) Encourage her to speak with the police herself and to contact the women's shelter. Take the same steps if she discloses any of these signs of extreme danger: (reference to JCampbell.

There is presently no formal instrument to measure workplace risk related to DV. However, risk to the workplace and the abused employee at work appears to increase when the perpetrator:

- Has knowledge of, and access to the workplace.
- Has appeared at workplace previously.
- Is known to abuse substances
- Has a history of violence
- Owns a gun

Incident	Risk to employee (at work)	Risk to workplace	Who needs to know?	
Explicit threat made to harm employee at work.	Extreme	High	POLICE!!	√
			Security	√
			Supervisor	√

(eg. Abusive spouse threatened that morning to come to her work and “make her sorry once and for all.”)			Employer	√
			Reception staff	Possibly
			Co-workers	Possibly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have a threat-management plan? Is it applicable to this type of situation?</li> <li>• Do our communication practices allow us to respond to this type of threat immediately?</li> <li>• How does process change if DV victim discloses to Security? To Supervisor? To co-worker?</li> </ul>				
<p>Use the following examples to discuss a workplace response. The response may vary depending upon the women’s risk. A danger assessment completed with the woman will help you to create appropriate safety planning. You may wish to refer her to the local women’s shelter for a danger assessment and safety planning.</p>				
Perpetrator calls co-worker of spouse to demand knowledge of her whereabouts. In recent past, he has called workplace several times daily to check up on victim.	<p>If she is not a high risk, work with her to determine who should be involved (i.e., your local shelter or community domestic violence intervention services; speak to her about worksite related safety planning)..</p> <p>If she is at high risk, see above. Explore protective orders. Work with the women and determine who she wants to be involved.</p>			
Perpetrator is stalking his ex-wife by sitting in truck outside her office window.				
Perpetrator drops by unannounced and demands to see his intimate partner immediately.				
Perpetrator harasses victim by email throughout day				
Employee living in DV is afraid perpetrator may show up at work.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have a clear system for documenting DV incidents?</li> <li>• Do we have knowledge of the signs of domestic violence?</li> <li>• Has she recently left the relationship or has talked to him about leaving?</li> <li>• If so, how do we ensure confidentiality?</li> <li>• How can we stay informed on safety risks as a DV situation develops or continues?</li> </ul>				