



Workplace Harassment

Veterinary Loss Prevention Program

New California law on Workplace
Violence Prevention



Veterinary Insurance Program

Workplace Violence in the veterinary setting

Trainer's overview

To have your employees get the most out of their training sessions, it is suggested that:

- The training sessions should be conducted in a relatively quiet and uninterrupted environment.
- The sessions should be held the same time and day of the month (e.g., first Tuesday at 12:30).
- Employee handouts should be given out along with writing utensils.
- The trainers guide, employee handout and any references are reviewed.
- The sessions are kept to a maximum of 20 minutes.
- Personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked for you should be included.
- Be able to plan and execute on ["Run, hide, fight"](#) as it pertains to your organization/environment (see video [here](#))



All employees present will sign the safety training sign-in sheet for documentation purposes.

- If some employees were not present, then a second training session should be given.

The Employee Health & Safety exposures and loss prevention efforts are the responsibility of your company. Safehold services are intended to assist you and your management in evaluating potential exposures to loss and methods to minimize exposure. These services do not necessarily include every possible loss potential, code violation, or exception to good management practice.

Workplace Violence in the veterinary setting

Trainer's guide

What do you need to know?

California has enacted Senate Bill (SB) 553, effective July 1, 2024, which mandates that nearly all *California employers establish and implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan (WVPP). The WVPP must include procedures for incident reporting, hazard identification and inspection, training, employee involvement, and periodic review.

**Newly adopted Senate Bill for CA employers who have 10 or more employees. If less than 10 EEs they must NOT be accessible to the public for them to be exempt.*

Additionally, SB 428, effective January 1, 2025, allows an expansion of the law for employers to seek temporary restraining orders and injunctions against individuals who have threatened violence against employees. This law empowers employers to take legal action proactively to prevent potential workplace violence incidents.

What is the risk and who is at risk?

The four major types of workplace violence are:

- **Type 1:** Workplace violence by outsiders with no legitimate reason for being at the worksite, often involving criminal activities like robbery.

- **Type 2:** Workplace violence from customers, clients, students, or visitors who have a service-related connection to the workplace.
- **Type 3:** Workplace violence between current or former colleagues, supervisors, or managers within the same workplace.
- **Type 4:** Workplace violence by individuals not employed at the workplace but with personal connections to an employee, such as family members or acquaintances.

Employees, Customers, and our animal clients can all be at risk.

What do we need to do?

Develop procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and documenting workplace violence incidents by:

- Identifying, evaluating, and correcting workplace violence hazards
 - Providing training and communicating the plan to employees
 - Conducting periodic reviews and updates to the plan
 - Having employee involvement in developing and implementing the plan
 - Keeping logs (incidents and training)
- Cal/OSHA is responsible for enforcing SB 553 and ensuring employer compliance. Failure to comply can result in significant penalties, including fines of up to \$25,000 for serious violations and up to \$158,727 for willful violations.

Workplace Violence in the veterinary setting

Trainer's guide (continued)

Work practice controls

Work practice controls are meant to reduce the likelihood of exposure through regular refresher training, reminding and/or reinforcing of policies and procedures. Controls include, but are not limited to:

- Employees are instructed not to engage or confront the violent individual under any circumstances.
- Avoid escalating the situation or putting oneself at risk by attempting to intervene.
- Identify “safe places” in your clinic such as rooms, bathrooms, and under furniture. The shortest distance to a “safe place” is best. Injury statistics show that moving more than 5 feet to a safe place increases your chance for injury.
- Your best chance for safety is getting away and hiding or finding a safe place.
- Verify that all animals have updated ID tags. In case of runaway, escape, or loss, all animals should be in the best possible position for rescue and safe return.
- Ask animal owners to provide photos of pets in case of separation during any emergency.

Questions for discussion

Question: Who has responsibility for implementing a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan?

Answer: This is the responsibility of management to develop, train and implement as well as employees to attend training and understand the training and contribute to the plan.

Question: Who has the responsibility of knowing one's own action plan in case of a violence incident?

Answer: This is the responsibility of everyone.

Question: What are some preventative measures that can be taken prior to an incident to minimize loss?

Answer:

Everyone is encouraged to observe their work environment and promptly report potential workplace violence hazards, such as inadequate lighting, unsecured entrances, or aggressive behavior.

During training and safety meetings, everyone is encouraged to actively participate by sharing experiences, providing hazard information, suggesting improvements, and proposing topics. Everyone is expected to report incidents or threats promptly and may assist in investigations. Make sure the evacuation maps are up to date and posted in sight.

Question: What are some organizations that can be used during an emergency?

Answer: Call 911 in emergency

Local Police/Sherriff/Fire Departments

Question: Where else can I go to obtain additional safety information?

Answer: Your company should maintain a full Workplace Violence Prevention plan that you have access to. CalOSHA provides more information here:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Workplace-Violence/General-Industry.html>

Other questions?

Please complete the sign-in sheet



Workplace Violence in the veterinary setting

Attendance record

Date:

Trainer:

Print name:

Signature:

Workplace Violence in the veterinary setting

Employee handout

Overview

The Workplace Violence Prevention Plan is designed to address acts of violence, threats, intimidation, and harassment that may arise in the workplace. By offering prevention strategies linked to workplace violence, we empower all individuals to take ownership of their actions and promptly report any incidents or concerns related to workplace violence. These proactive measures aim to foster a workplace safety and security culture that benefits every employee and extends to families and our valued customers. Together we can work to collaboratively determine any necessary actions.

Engineering controls

Supervisors on a regular basis shall inspect and update:

- Evacuation plans/maps
- Emergency response kits
- First aid kits
- Training materials and content
- Conduct periodic inspections and ask for employee input
- Keep logs up to date
- Employees are strongly encouraged to report to their supervisor or directly to Human Resources the existence of any restraining order or any potential violent work or non-work-related situation that could likely result in violence in the workplace. Upon receiving notification of a restraining order, supervisors will promptly convene with Human Resources

Work practice controls

Work practice controls are meant to reduce the likelihood of exposure or loss through regular refresher training, reminding and/or reinforcing of policies and procedures. Controls include, but are not limited to:

Train and Re-train: Understanding the potential for threat and how to respond is important.

Avoid working alone: If needed to work after hours, use a buddy system so that you are not alone. Make sure others know you are in the clinic and when you plan to arrive home.

Identifying “safe places” in your clinic: These places should you decide it is best to “hide” may include rooms where you can lock/barricade, bathrooms, and under or behind furniture. The shortest distance to a “safe place” if it is not safe to run is best. Follow the “run, hide, fight” protocol.

Avoiding re-entrance to the building: If you have decided it is safe to “run,” do not go back to the building. Seek a safe place away from the building and notify emergency personnel that you are out of the building however, there is an incident ongoing. Be prepared to give address/location of your whereabouts as well as where the incident is taking place. Give as much information/description as you can (such as male/female/appearance, armed/unarmed and how, on foot, in car, hostages, etc.).

Verifying that all animals have updated ID tags: In case of runaway, escape, or loss during an emergency event, all animals should be in the best possible position for rescue and safe return.

Having a weekly log: This helps ensure animal inventory is up to date, animal supplies such as food, water, medicine, first aid, and even toys are quickly accessible after any emergency event.

Asking animal owners to provide photos of pets: This is in case of separation during the emergency.