

WORKING TOGETHER TO OVERCOME DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Employers have responsibilities to protect victims

19%
OF EMPLOYERS
Report dealing with a
DV issue in past year.

16%
OF ORGANIZATIONS
had an incident in past
5 years.

only 1 in 3 COMPANIES have a
formal workplace DV prevention policy



only 1 in 5 COMPANIES offer training
on the issue to supervisors & workers

Create policies & procedures

The first step in protecting employees from domestic violence and being able to provide support to victims is to create a formal policy and accompanying procedures. (Sheltering Wings can provide sample policies.) Policies may include:

- Statement that the company will believe and support employees who say they are victims.
- Requiring employees to report threats, acts of violence, or suspicion of domestic violence to a supervisor or Human Resources immediately.
- Procedures detailing how supervisors or Human Resources will handle reports of violence.
- Prohibiting unauthorized visitors from company premises.
- Banning weapons from company premises.
- Not allowing keys or key cards to be shared or copied.

When the company becomes aware that an employee is a victim, additional steps may include:

- Creating a safety plan for the employee while at work.
- Access to help through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or local domestic violence agency.
- Protecting the employee's privacy and right to confidentiality.
- Alerting security personnel and immediate supervisors to the situation and providing the abuser's name and photo.
- Screening or limiting calls and visitors to the employee.
- Changing the employee's work location, hours, and/or parking location.

Federal requirements

There are a variety of legal requirements that obligate employers to address and respond to the needs of domestic violence victims. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration has claimed in cases that workplace violence

standards fall under the General Duty clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. In addition, guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission suggests that affected employees may qualify for accommodations under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Employees who need to take time off to address medical conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder related to domestic violence may qualify for FMLA leave.

Other requirements

Specific laws and regulations related to the rights of victims of domestic violence and the responsibilities of their employers may vary by jurisdiction. Besides federal anti-discrimination rules, some states and localities have laws protecting victims from discrimination by employers. Other areas may have mandates for reporting suspected situations to the authorities, or about providing assistance to victims. Consult with legal counsel and human resources experts on requirements that may apply to your workplace.

Train the staff

Training should be provided so that supervisors and employees know:

- What domestic violence is and its prevalence.
- How to spot signs that a co-worker is a victim.
- How to respond to and help a suspected victim of domestic violence.

Awareness of resources

Employers should also make employees aware of resources for victims. These can include access to local domestic violence shelters and social service agencies, how to contact the police, how to obtain protective orders, and how to help a victim develop a safety plan.

Resources anyone can contact

- Sheltering Wings 317-745-1496
- Connect2Help 211
- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence 800-332-7385
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233
- Workplacesrespond.org

For help with any of the above or if one of your employees needs assistance call the Sheltering Wings Help Line at 317-745-1496 (24 hours).

SHELTERING WINGS



Healthy Me. Stronger Us.
shelteringwings.org