

Developing and Implementing Domestic Violence Policies for the Workplace

Domestic violence (DV) policies and procedures can play an integral role in prevention, but a 2013 survey found that 65 percent of companies don't have a formal domestic violence policy.¹ The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outlines strategies for prevention programs and DV policies in the workplace for employers, managers, and companies. The approach can be seen in the following table:²

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| Management and Employee Commitment |
| Top management should be engaged in prevention programs and DV policies to emphasize that the policies have support and commitment from employers and managers. Employees should also be involved in development and implementation. |
| Multidisciplinary Team Approach |
| Collaboration from people in all levels and departments ensures thorough, robust, and comprehensive DV policies. |
| Written WPV Policy/Program Tailored to Organization's Needs |
| The policy needs to be written and distributed. Clear definitions should be provided. Exact instructions for how to report workplace DV needs to be written and published. |
| Training |
| Include ongoing training of managers and workers on the DV policy and also on DV prevention. |
| Culture Change |
| Evaluate the company's culture and consistently reinforce positive culture change. For example, be very clear on what is unacceptable behavior and call it out and correct it every single time. |
| Evaluation |
| DV policies should be evidenced-based and consistently assessed, evaluated, and improved. |

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/risk-management/pages/domestic-violence-workplace-nfl-ray-rice.aspx>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-144/pdfs/2006-144.pdf>

Recommended Best Practices:

- Involve all relevant parties in the planning stage (i.e. human resources, top management, legal, etc.)
- Offer staff opportunities to contribute
- Use clear, plain language and definitions
- Ensure translations are available if appropriate
- Be specific about who employees should contact to report an incident
- Train staff on DV identification and prevention
- Ensure the policy is available to all staff (i.e., display it, etc.)
- Address support for victims, as well as investigation and discipline of perpetrators
- Include a statement of confidentiality

Sample Policies

- Sheltering Wings offers multiple [sample policies](#) and can consult with you as you build a policy that is best suited to your organization.
- The Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) has a Domestic Violence Leave Policy that ensures victims of domestic violence are entitled to paid leave and that employees are entitled to paid leave to care for a family member who is a victim of domestic violence. (This policy is on file with Sheltering Wings.)
- Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence is A National Resource Center that offers a [Model Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, and Stalking](#).
- Workforce.com offers a [Sample Domestic Violence Prevention Policy](#) provided by the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence that addresses reporting procedure, instructions for informing the company about a restraining order, leave options for victims, and more.
- The National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence created a [Template/Sample Policy on Domestic Violence](#), where companies can simply insert their name.
- The New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence [offers a policy](#) that is not as thorough as the policies above but that addresses firearms and workplace safety plans.