

# VIOLENCE AT WORK

Guidance for businesses in London

**VIOLENCE AT WORK IS NOT PART OF THE JOB!**

# IS VIOLENCE A PROBLEM IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

## What is violence?

Work related violence is any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted, in circumstances related to their work.

Have your staff ever been affected by violence at work?

VERBAL ABUSE  
INTIMIDATION  
HARASSMENT  
PHYSICAL ASSAULT  
SPITTING  
ROBBERY  
THREATS  
UNRULY BEHAVIOUR  
LACK OF RESPECT

**ULT**

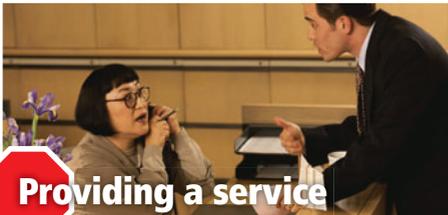
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# WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Employees whose role involves dealing directly with members of the public can be at risk from workplace violence.

Employees in these roles are most at risk:

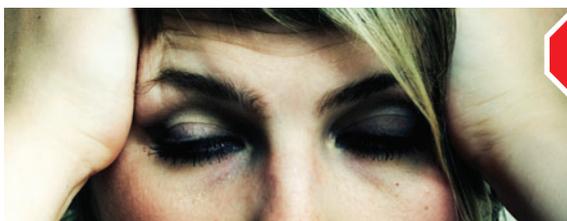


# WHO CAN CAUSE VIOLENCE IN A WORKPLACE?

Some people in these groups may pose a particular risk to employees:



**Unhappy customers/  
members of the  
public**



**People with mental  
health problems**



**People under the  
influence of drugs  
and alcohol**



**Young people,  
especially in groups**



**People carrying  
out shoplifting or  
planned robberies  
and burglaries**

# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO PROTECT YOUR STAFF?

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, employers have a legal duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees. This includes protecting them from the threat of violence while at work.

- **Risk management** – To find out whether your staff are at risk from violence at work you will need to look at the risks, how serious they are, and then decide what you need to do to reduce them. Involve your staff, they do the job so will be helpful to you during this exercise. A checklist to help you identify any areas of concern has been included at the end of this guidance ([www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/riskassessment.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/riskassessment.htm)).
- **Controls** – Put into practice measures that control both your working environment and working practices that reduce the likelihood of work related violence.
- **RIDDOR** – Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995, you need to report certain types of incident.
  - if a member of your staff has been unable to work for more than three days because of an incident at work
  - incidents involving members of the public, which result in them being taken straight to hospitalBoth include reporting violent incidents that result in physical injury.
- **Other records** – Threats or verbal abuse do not need to be reported under RIDDOR but they should be noted down.

You should record and regularly check work related violent incidents that involve suspicious people or events including verbal abuse and threats. This may help you to keep an eye on criminal trends in your area and possibly help the police at a later stage. Just to begin with, simply use a note book with the following headings:

Date and time	Type of incident	Description of suspect/ name	Did you Report it? If yes - to who and when?	Signed
<i>Example 7.5.2010 3.45pm</i>	<i>Verbal Abuse</i>	<i>Known male - Joe Bloggs</i>	<i>Yes to PCSO and manager on same day</i>	<i>LM</i> 

- **Training** – Train your staff to recognise, prevent and deal with violence. For example wherever possible, do not touch or remove items after a robbery until police arrive and advise you further.
- **Police support** – Contact your local Police Station, The Business Crime Reduction Partnership Officers and/or local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who can provide advice and visit you regularly to discourage antisocial behaviour.
- **Advice** – Speak to other local traders or business support groups to share experiences and tips for dealing with the problem.

# WHAT CONTROL MEASURES SHOULD YOU CONSIDER?

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

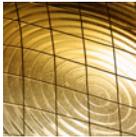


### Layout

Staff should be able to see their customers and be aware of what they are doing at all times.

Customers may feel less confident about committing a crime if they feel openly visible.

- Remove blind spots/concealed areas.
- Remove stock and posters that block front windows.
- Make sure customers can be seen entering and leaving the premises.
- Use mirrors and CCTV to monitor certain areas if necessary.
- Keep the height of larger displays as low as you can.



### Lighting

- It is important to find the right balance to allow staff good visibility while not upsetting the mood of customers.
- Entrances and exits should always be well lit.



### Protect staff

Reduce the risk of physical violence to staff by preventing customer access to them.

- Use plastic screens.
- Install high and wide counters.
- Make staff only areas hard for customers to reach.
- If you can, provide separate welfare facilities for employees, in a staff only area.



### Outside the workplace

A well maintained secure looking exterior may put off thieves.

- Eliminate hiding places for criminals.
- Lock access doors but don't lock fire exits.

- Prevent access to the roof – remove any climbing aids.
- Fit shutters/security fencing/anti climb paint.
- Have good lighting.



### **CCTV and security**

CCTV and security devices can act as a deterrent and CCTV may be used to provide evidence if a crime is committed.

- CCTV – ideally should not be a dummy but real.
- Seek advice from your local police about how to install CCTV correctly.
- CCTV should point to the entrance of the premises giving a good head and shoulders view of all customers.
- Check regularly that the CCTV is working, recording and pointing in the right direction.
- Bolt down recording equipment to stop it from being stolen.
- Alarms – do they work? Test regularly and write it down each time, to remind you.
- Train staff to know what to expect and do when the alarm goes off.
- Locks – Use security rated combination locks on internal doors so no keys are necessary.
- Security staff – must be SIA registered to have the correct training to take the right action [www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk).
- Request regular visits from Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).



### **People under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs**

- These customers can be unpredictable and can pose a risk to staff.
- Train staff on how to recognise difficult situations before they get out of hand.

## WORKING PRACTICES



### Excellent customer service

- Good service can stop customers from becoming upset.
- Welcome customers, be polite and helpful.
- Making sure they know you are aware of them, may stop customers from committing opportunist crime.



### Cash handling

Staff handling and transporting cash can be vulnerable targets for thieves.

- Count cash out of sight of customers.
- If possible accept debit or credit cards.
- Place tills out of the reach of customers.
- Use a time delay safe if you can.
- Show customers that larger notes are not put in the tills – use a drop safe.
- Make sure staff banking cash change their route/routines often.
- If possible arrange for cash to be collected from the workplace.
- Ask staff to either remove or cover their uniform when not at work, to stop them being identified as a possible target.



### Staffing levels

It is important to make sure staff are given the right support from colleagues at vulnerable times. They need this support either to prevent or handle a possible violent situation.

Importantly, make sure you have enough staff to:

- Meet customer demand.
- Provide enough cover at peak times to reduce waiting.
- Avoid staff working alone or being out of the way, for long periods, especially at night.
- Try to have at least two people present during opening and closing times.



## Unusual and late opening hours

Staff can be vulnerable outside work as well as inside work.

- Increase staff/security at those times.
- Staff who work away should have a way of keeping in touch.
- Think about staff safety when leaving work.
- Do they drive or use public transport?

# DO'S AND DON'TS FOR STAFF DURING AND AFTER A ROBBERY

- Stay calm and passive – DO NOT CHALLENGE A ROBBER!
- Comply with instructions but do no more than asked e.g. don't volunteer or offer concealed cash or security information.
- If possible, try to preserve evidence.
- Secure the place where the crime was committed straight after the incident when it is safe to do so.
- Prevent access by members of the public but do not usher out any witnesses to the robbery.
- Preserve the scene to protect any evidence – do not move or touch anything.
- Keep anything left by the robber, i.e. bags, notes.
- Preserve but do not touch anything the robber may have dropped outside the premises, e.g. cigarettes, chocolate wrapper.
- Get support from your employer if you feel upset or find somebody to talk to about it.
- Most importantly, make immediate notes about what happened and descriptions of the robbers – see the attached Early Warning Security Message form used by Business Watch members.



## EARLY WARNING SECURITY MESSAGE

**When completed this document may be required as evidence in any prosecution.**

## The following information will help the police to trace the suspect and for you to give a clear description:

Date:	Time:	Source:
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**Type of message:**  
 shoplifter  suspicious refund  till snatch  stolen cheque/credit card details

Direction taken of suspect:

Action taken:  informed police  early warning  security dept.

Inform other businesses:	Person taking details:
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1st person	2nd person	3rd person
Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="text"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="text"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="text"/>

Build	Build	Build
Slim <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Stocky <input type="checkbox"/>	Slim <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Stocky <input type="checkbox"/>	Slim <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Stocky <input type="checkbox"/>
Height:	Height:	Height:
Hair colour:	Hair colour:	Hair colour:
Style:	Style:	Style:
Colour of skin:	Colour of skin:	Colour of skin:

Complexion	Complexion	Complexion
Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Sallow <input type="checkbox"/> Dark <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Sallow <input type="checkbox"/> Dark <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Sallow <input type="checkbox"/> Dark <input type="checkbox"/>
Distinctive features:	Distinctive features:	Distinctive features:
Jewellery worn:	Jewellery worn:	Jewellery worn:
Moustache:	Moustache:	Moustache:
Beard:	Beard:	Beard:
Marks/scars:	Marks/scars:	Marks/scars:
Clothing worn:	Clothing worn:	Clothing worn:

Vehicles used			
	Colour	Make	Registration
1			
2			

**KEEP BY THE TELEPHONE**

# FURTHER INFORMATION

Hopefully the information in this booklet will help you to protect yourself and your staff and customers.

If you have more questions or need help on how to reduce workplace violence or any other health and safety concern, please contact a member of your local council's health and safety team:

Hammersmith & Fulham Council Commercial Services Team

5th Floor, Hammersmith Town Hall Extension

King Street, London W6 9JU

Tel: 020 8753 1081

Email: [commercialservices@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:commercialservices@lbhf.gov.uk)

## Other useful organisations and contacts include:

### REPORTING TO:

- **RIDDOR** incidents and accidents  
Tel: 0845 300 9923  
[www.hse.gov.uk/riddor](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor)
- **Council's antisocial behaviour team**  
To report people who persistently cause trouble in the neighbourhood  
Tel: 020 8753 2693  
Email: [asbu@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:asbu@lbhf.gov.uk)
- **Crimestoppers** – report crime anonymously  
Tel: 0800 555 111  
[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)
- **Trading Standards**  
Tel: 020 8753 1081  
Email: [trading\\_standards@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:trading_standards@lbhf.gov.uk)

## GETTING ADVICE:

- **Health and Safety Executive**  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- **Association of Town Centre Managers**  
[www.atcm.org](http://www.atcm.org)
- **Home Office – advice on crime reduction**  
[www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/CrimePrevention/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/CrimePrevention/index.htm)
- **Secure your business online tool on the Home Office website**  
<http://secureyourbusiness.homeoffice.gov.uk>
- **Local police force neighbourhood teams and crime prevention design officers**  
[http://cms.met.police.uk/met/boroughs/hammersmith/hammersmith\\_and\\_fulham](http://cms.met.police.uk/met/boroughs/hammersmith/hammersmith_and_fulham)
- **Suzy Lamplugh Trust** – personal safety  
[www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)
- **Institute of Conflict Management** – personal safety  
[www.conflictmanagement.org](http://www.conflictmanagement.org)

## JOIN FOR SUPPORT NETWORK

- **Action against Business Crime**  
[www.businesscrime.org.uk](http://www.businesscrime.org.uk)
- **Pub Watch** – Hammersmith, Fulham and Shepherd's Bush  
[www.met.police.uk/crimeprevention/pubwatch.htm](http://www.met.police.uk/crimeprevention/pubwatch.htm)
- **Business Links contact centre**  
0845 600 9006  
[www.businesslink.org](http://www.businesslink.org)
- **Victim Support**  
020 7735 9166  
[www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)
- **Retail trade organisations** – these associations support and advise their members

- **Association of British Bookmakers Safebet Standards**  
[www.abb.uk.com](http://www.abb.uk.com)
- **British Retail Consortium**  
[www.brc.org.uk](http://www.brc.org.uk)
- **British Chambers of Commerce**  
020 7565 2000  
[www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)
- **Federation of small businesses**  
[www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)
- **Business Crime Reduction Partnerships**  
[www.businesscrime.org.uk](http://www.businesscrime.org.uk)

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# YOUR CHECKLIST!

Name:

Date:

Address:



**Sufficient lighting in all areas?**

Yes  No



**CCTV working and recording?**

Yes  No

**No blind spots or concealed areas?**

Yes  No

**Customers can be seen entering/leaving?**

Yes  No



**Staff only barriers and signs in place?**

Yes  No



**No cash handling in front of customers?**

Yes  No

**Tills out-of-sight and out of reach?**

Yes  No

**Staff who do banking are fully trained?**

Yes  No



**Do staff know regular customers by name?**

Yes  No

**Do staff know how to deal with difficult customers?**

Yes  No



**Are staff safe during opening and closing times?**

Yes  No

**Staff not made to work alone at nights for long periods?**

Yes  No

**At least 2 staff when opening/closing?**

Yes  No



**Premises secure and maintained?**

Yes  No



**Do PCSOs/security staff visit you regularly?**

Yes  No



**Anything else?**  Yes  No