



# How to Effectively Manage Violence in the Workplace



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# Introduction: The Prominence of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is one of the most serious and pressing issues that organizations are attempting to address. Although most organizations in North America have a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence, the numbers are not dropping. For example, recent statistics show that 2 million workers report workplace violence yearly. Why aren't these figures falling? The purpose of this ebook is not to induce fear in the readers. Rather, the goal of the ebook is to assist them in better comprehending the realities of today's workplaces and investigating the best methods for dealing with workplace violence.



Not every industry today reports workplace violence as a significant issue. Nevertheless, workplace violence is an important health and safety issue. Workers do not anticipate becoming victims of workplace violence. However, violence may occur in any job and have substantial consequences for individuals, their families, coworkers, and the organization. Workplace violence is a global issue; however, it is more prominent in specific countries and industries. Spreading awareness is vital in such regions as this acts as a platform for unions and organizations to take action. This ebook, resultantly, divides the topic of workplace violence into four different sections.

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

### A GROWING THREAT, OR GROWING IN AWARENESS?

OSHA estimates more than

# 2 MILLION

are affected by workplace violence every year.

In 2017, more than

# 18,000

people suffered non-fatal injuries and more than

# 800

died as a result of workplace violence (BLS 2017)

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### To understand workplace violence, first you need to know

#### How common incidents are

Respondents who said their organization had an incident of workplace violence in the past year

25% HR Professionals  
14% Employees

Respondents who said their organization had ever experienced an incident of workplace violence

48% HR Professionals  
24% Employees

#### What workplace violence means

It's any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide

2x as many HR professionals report knowledge of incidents of workplace violence, when compared to other employees. HR knows what happens across the entire organization, while other employees may only know what happens in their department or division.

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### How safe from violence do employees feel at work?

Nearly **1 in 7** employees feels unsafe at work.

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### How prepared do workers feel to deal with workplace violence?

**“When I witness or am involved in a workplace violence incident, I know what to do”**

Supervisors and HR professionals are more confident that they know what to do in the case of workplace violence than individual contributors.

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### MORE EMPLOYEES KNOW WHAT TO DO

when they witness or are involved in a workplace violence incident if they work for organizations that have workplace violence prevention programs and employee response training.

# 45%

of employees say their organization has a prevention program

**87%** know what to do

**87%** know what to do

**workplace violence prevention program**

**employee response training**

**53%** know what to do

**54%** know what to do

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### What should organizations do about workplace violence?

- Make sure you have a workplace violence prevention program in place
- Establish an emergency response plan
- Provide trainings to all employees on how to respond to incidents
- Communicate with workers about what resources are available

For more guidance on workplace violence see SHRM's newly released online toolkit, *Understanding Workplace Violence Prevention and Response*

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## Section I: Defining Violence in the Workplace

In our turbulent society, the face of workplace violence is changing, with a variety of hostile behaviours perpetrated on workers by various perpetrators. While there is no universal definition of workplace violence, most commentators consider homicide, assault, threats, mobbing, and bullying on the job as examples of workplace violence. Even the concept of a “workplace” is becoming ambiguous, as many individuals work jobs from mobile sites, home-based workplaces, and telework.

The International Labour Organization, however, defines workplace violence as:

Any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured in the course of, or as a direct result of their work:

- Internal workplace violence is that which takes place between workers, including managers and supervisors.
- External workplace violence occurs between workers (and managers and supervisors) and any other person present at the workplace.

The following ILO definition above highlights this behaviour’s physical components. Many countries employ a slightly broader definition that includes verbal abuse, threats, bullying, and other types of non-physical behaviour.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) in Australia, for example, defines such violence as:

“The attempted or actual exercise by a person of any force to cause injury to a worker, including any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe he or she is at risk.”

Historically, people saw most workplaces as relatively pleasant and violence-free settings where discourse and debate were commonplace. However, workers and managers face personal and work-related issues daily, including coworkers’ anxieties and frustrations, organizational and production difficulties, personality clashes, diminished resources, increasing production/output demands, aggressive intruders from outside, and problematic relationships with clients and the public. Despite this, the discussion typically triumphs over conflict, and individuals manage to plan efficient and productive professional activities.

However, there are times when this sequence of events fails to unfold positively, when relationships between workers, managers, clients, or the general public worsen and the goals of working effectively and producing productive outcomes suffer. When this circumstance arises, which appears to be happening more frequently, violence may invade the workplace and turn it into a hostile and unsafe environment. We can see specific workplace violence trends and patterns using empirical observations, predominantly a shift from physical violence to increasing psychological violence.





## Violence in the Workplace: Trends and Patterns

### FROM PHYSICAL VIOLENCE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Traditionally, physical violence has gotten larger attention, and the usual picture of workplace violence that has evolved has been essentially one of solitary, significant episodes of this type. However, additional evidence of the impact and suffering caused by non-physical violence, often psychological violence, has emerged in recent years.

“Psychological” violence can take many forms, all of which can cause considerable emotional harm to individuals who are victims. This largely includes bullying, mobbing, coercion, verbal abuse, and sexual harassment. Offenders have often repeated many of these kinds of workplace violence. While individual incidents may be minor, the cumulative impact on receivers has significant repercussions.

#### Workplace Bullying:

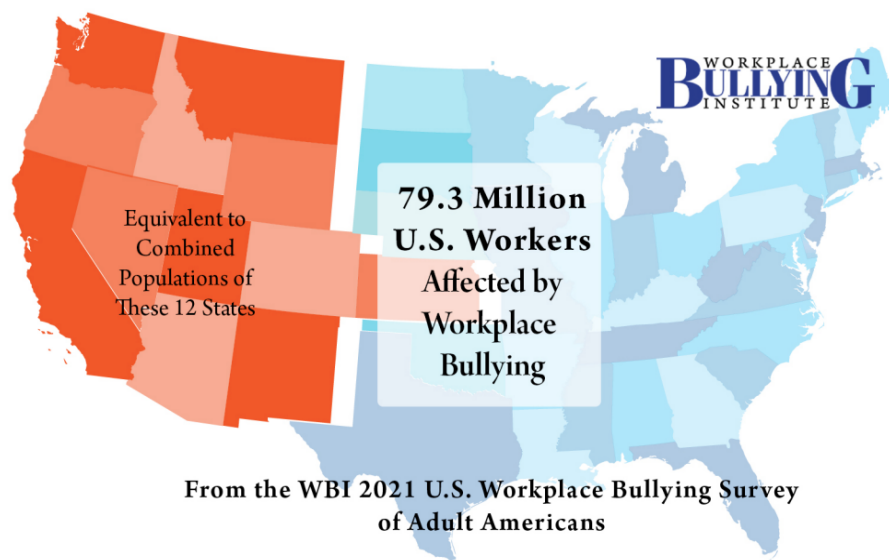
Workplace bullying is one of the most common types of violence in the workplace. OSHA characterizes workplace bullying as vengeful, harsh, malicious, or humiliating attempts to undermine a person or groups of employees through behaviours such as:

- Making life challenging for people who can perform a better job than the bully;
- Yelling at employees for work-related reasons;
- Insisting that the bully’s method is the sole correct method;
- Refusing to delegate because the bully does not trust anybody else;
- Punish people for being very competent by criticizing or withdrawing their duties.

On estimate, 13% of the working population in the United States is prone to workplace bullying.

In the year preceding the poll, almost 79 million U.S. workers were victims of workplace bullying. This includes 48.6 million employees harassed personally and 30.6 million who watch it.

Remote employees are equally vulnerable, with around 43% reporting symptoms.



Bullies in the workplace are 67% male and 33% female. Surprisingly, 58% of victims of male bullies are male, while 42% are female. On the other hand, female bullies have 65% female victims and 35% male victims.

The poll also discovered that companies frequently defend or dismiss workplace bullying claims.

In a report based on the European Foundation Second and Third Surveys on Working Conditions, we can see that bullying and intimidation is the most common type of violence in the workplace.

However, the situation in the United States is quite different. The subject of workplace bullying is so widespread in the United States that an entire organization is dedicated to investigating and reporting on it. The Workplace Bullying Institute conducts a workplace bullying survey every 3-4 years. The latest recent poll was conducted in 2021.

## EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC ON VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

NIOSH has seen variations in the risk of workplace violence over the previous 50 years. The COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in unusual workplace violence. Since the pandemic began in early 2020, U.S. media has reported on retail workers and other workers being verbally and physically abused while enforcing COVID-19 mitigation techniques such as mask-wearing or physical separation. Several worldwide studies have looked into violence toward healthcare workers during the epidemic.

Unfortunately, due to the significant time gap between the occurrence of these incidents and data transmission via typical occupational safety and health monitoring sources, COVID-19-related workplace violence data will be unavailable for some time. To address this latency, NIOSH conducted various studies that used media reports to offer more timely information on the number and characteristics of workplace violence incidents (WVEs) that occurred in U.S. workplaces during the early stages of the COVID-19 epidemic.

The preliminary findings of the unpublished analysis show:

- Between March 1 and October 31, 2020, the media reported at least 400 WVEs associated with COVID-19. 27% of observations reported non-physical violence, 27% of observations reported physical violence, and 41% reported both physical and non-physical violence. Non-physical violence is using words, gestures, or actions to intimidate or fear another person. In contrast, physical violence is any action that results in bodily contact to injure, such as striking, kicking, choking, or grasping.
- The vast majority were in retail and eating businesses committed by customers or clients. Most perpetrators (59%) were men who acted alone (79%).
- The bulk of COVID-19-related WVEs (72%), including 22%, featured perpetrators coughing or spitting on workers caused by mask disagreements.



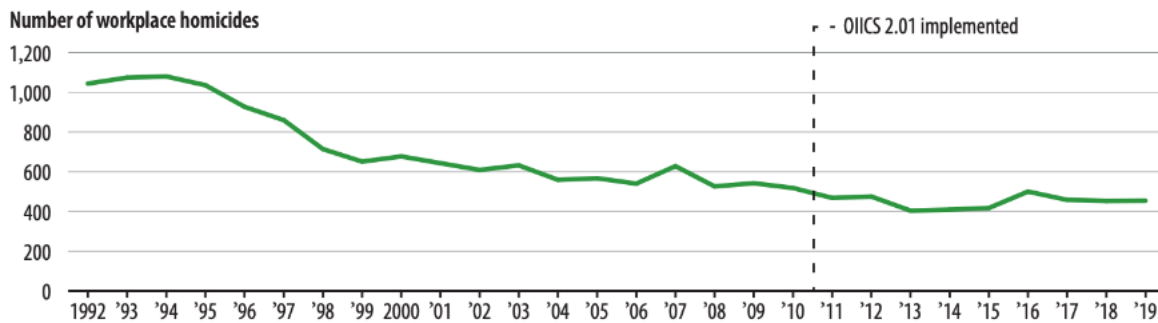
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, employers and employees may have to continue to enforce COVID-19 mitigation policies—which could lead to COVID-19-related WVEs. Workplace Violence Events have impacted sectors and vocations differentially, especially those requiring workers to be physically present at work throughout the epidemic. Aside from those mentioned above, one of the workforce categories that has suffered is public health personnel. We will focus on them later in this ebook.

## WORKPLACE HOMICIDES: FROM 1990 TO NOW

In the 1990s and early 2000s, robberies accounted for 65% of workplace killings. According to new research published in *Injury Epidemiology*, this percentage has dropped to 46%, with 54% related to non-robbery incidents such as interpersonal conflicts or mass shootings.

**FIGURE 1.1a**

**Number of workplace homicides, 1992–2019**



While the number of workplace homicides has dramatically decreased over the past few decades, the change in circumstances of homicides from robbery to non-robbery incidents can also create a specific problem for employees.

According to the study, the shift in workplace homicide circumstances from robbery to non-robbery-driven homicides may be partly related to increased handgun exposure. Most states ( $n = 42$ ) have loosened restrictions regarding who can carry a hidden firearm and who can open-carry a handgun in the previous 30 years. According to recent research, states with these loose rules had a higher percentage of loaded handgun carrying than ones without such restrictions.

Workers are more likely than ever to come into contact with a client or coworker who is carrying a handgun. Because of the lethality of weapons, there is a higher likelihood of death when firearms are present during an altercation.

## GENDER AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

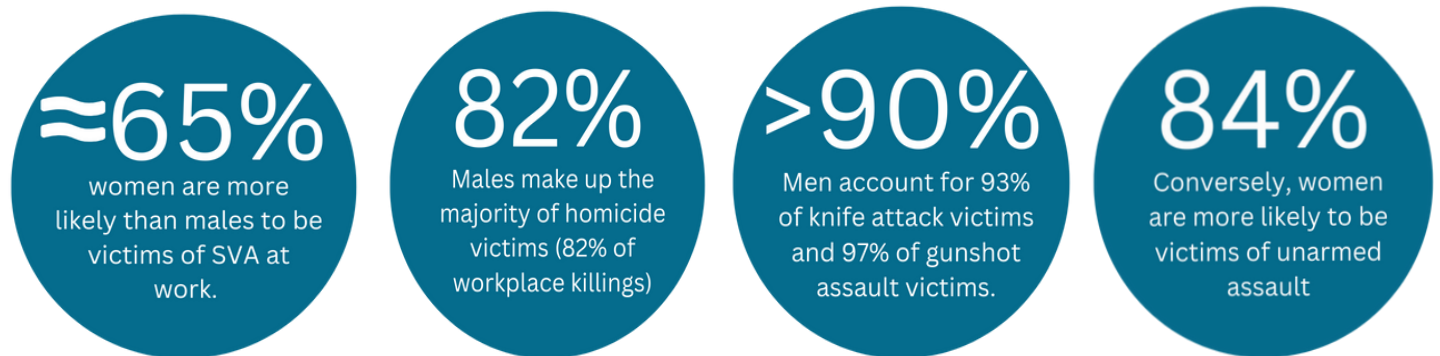
Gender-based violence and harassment are pervasive in North America and frequently occur in the workplace or have workplace consequences when they occur outside of the office.

Gender-based violence or harassment is any “violence or harassment perpetrated against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender” and most commonly targets women, transgender persons, and gender nonconforming or non-binary people. People who are socially marginalized have greater rates of violence and abuse (such as, for example, Indigenous people, immigrants and refugees and people with disabilities).

Employees may face gender-based violence or harassment in the workplace from a coworker, boss, or employer. It is commonly a pattern of behaviour, and the violent or abusive individual is usually someone in a position of power.

## Statistics for gender-related violence in the workplace:

The statistics show the differences in the types of violence that men and women face in the workplace:



Overall, an article written by waste360 summarizes the most important trend of violence in the workplace: It states:

Incidents of workplace violence are on the rise, with more than 20,000 workers each year experiencing trauma each year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The National Safety Council (NSC), a nonprofit advocacy organization, stated that “nearly half” of U.S. employers have said they are unprepared to prevent or respond to these incidents.

Our next section will now focus on the leading causes of workplace violence and talk about different industries that are most at risk from violence in the workplace.

## Section II: Leading Causes of Violence in the Workplace

Most folks have a strong and natural urge to seek straightforward explanations and answers to the violence that may consume their community and threaten “the way decent people live.” As noted, the media frequently provide such explanations and leaves lasting images of the types of people responsible for “an epidemic” of workplace violence.

Images of “disgruntled employees” and “angry spouses,” “unhappy, needy, often psychiatrically ill people” expressing their rage on others, frequently dominate such perceptions. Those media pictures propagate at incredible speeds worldwide, influencing public and official perceptions of violence well beyond their original location.

It is tempting (or convenient) for many people to see violence as having a single source and, as a result, to see a reduction in violence as having a single remedy. For example, some believe that eliminating televised violence is the solution to violent behaviour. Others believe stricter weapons regulations are the best approach to removing bloodshed.

Unfortunately, the cause of workplace violence is a combination of reasons. It involves the work environment, the individual, the situation, how employees interact, how managers treat employees, and how customers and clients connect with employees. The sole source of workplace violence is not a single person.

## REASONS FOR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Previous studies have identified significant risk factors that contribute to violent behaviour, which may be found in people, society, cultural norms, or deprivation. These risk factors include:

- Child Development/Family Influence
- Cultural Factors:
  - Norms of Behaviour
  - Economic Inequality
  - Cultural Disintegration
- Setting
- Gender
- Personality Factors
- Substance Abuse
- Biological Factors
- Mental Illness
- Media Influences



Without going into depth regarding the probable causes of violent behaviour, we can see many circumstances that may play a significant part in any employee or individual displaying violent behaviour. Again, the ebook is not attempting to excuse workplace violence but rather to provide insight into the underlying causes of such conduct.

## SITUATIONS THAT PUT EMPLOYEES AT RISK

Almost all workers are in danger of being subjected to workplace violence, but those interacting with the public are at a higher risk. Many employees, including women, racialized, Aboriginal, LGBTI, and disabled people, are at a higher risk because they are subjected to discrimination-based violence. Although no occupation is entirely immune to workplace violence, it is widely acknowledged that workers performing specific occupations are more vulnerable.

For instance, women have a heightened risk of workplace violence, owing to the gender imbalance in high-risk industries such as retail, social service, and health care. Workers of any gender in any occupation are equally vulnerable to psychological assault. Stress and workplace violence are also clearly linked.

Increasing job expectations, workforce cutbacks, and other factors can result in explosive or repressive office settings. Public members may mistreat service providers due to social poverty and emotional stress. Clients who are dissatisfied with a company's rules frequently lash out at frontline employees. It's easy to forget that those who remove children from terrible circumstances, refuse loans, turn off electricity, or perform evictions are merely doing their jobs.

All these situations put employees at higher risk of violent behaviour. Let's address some of them in detail!



## Working Alone

The number of people who work alone is growing. As automation spreads in factories and offices, frequently accompanied by processes of production rationalization and workplace rearrangement, solitary labour becomes increasingly common. Outside of the conventional workplace, this tendency manifests itself in the expanding practises of subcontracting, outplacement, teleworking, networking, and “new” self-employment—the desire for more mobility and the advancement of interactive communication technology favour one-person operations.

Working alone full-time is simply one-half of the equation. A far more significant proportion of people work alone at least part of the time. In a study of Canadian public employees, for example, over 84% of respondents said they often worked alone. Working alone does not inevitably increase the danger of violence. On the other hand, working alone is widely acknowledged to enhance the employees’ vulnerability. This amount of exposure is determined by the circumstance in which the solo work is performed. A quick detour down a backstreet may seem entirely normal in broad daylight, but on a night, it may be asking for danger. Mail delivery may be a perilous activity in a high-crime region while being entirely safe in a low-crime neighbourhood.

People may find themselves working alone in several circumstances. For instance:

- Small shops, petrol stations and kiosks
- Working alone outside regular hours
- Working as sole operators

### Working in contact with the public

Contact with the public occurs in various jobs and work settings. While this form of labour can be relatively agreeable in most circumstances, there are several occasions when exposure to the public might increase the danger of violence.

Workers in extremely big organizations that interact with a vast number of the general public are likely to encounter people with a history of violence, hazardous mental illness, or intoxication. This “random” hostility is difficult to predict and can result in difficult situations.

In other circumstances, violent behaviour may be triggered or arise from a perceived or actual lack of service quality. Violence may also be triggered by dismissive and uncaring behaviour by the service worker. It may be a more general attack on the organization itself, based on a general failure to fulfil the wishes and expectations of the customer, which has nothing to do with the actual conflict at hand. Disputes with such customers have usually occurred in public, social, or the hospitality industry.

For example, according to a poll of 274 students on a hospitality and catering programme at a British higher education institution, 57% had received unwelcome sexual attention during times of supervised work experience.

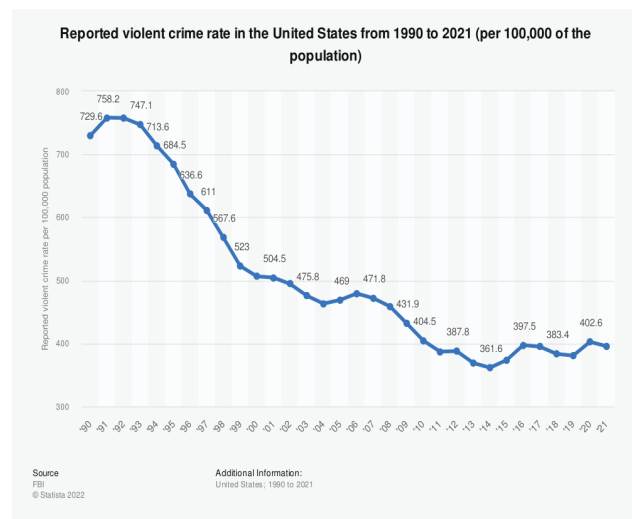


## Working with valuables and cash handling

When assets are or appear to be within “easy reach,” crime is dangerous, particularly violent crime. Workers in a variety of industries are under threat. Workers in stores, post offices, financial institutions, and other places where money is handled are particularly vulnerable to robbery-related violence. The best examples of where such situations can take place are:

- Financial Institutions
- Shops
- Postal Services

The graph shows how much crime has decreased due to heightened security. However, some of the violence associated with hold-ups may have shifted to other, more susceptible groups of employees handling money and valuables.



## Working with people in distress

People who are afraid, distressed, in pain, or desperate may be more likely to perpetrate violence. Workers in the healthcare industry are more likely to encounter such situations, and as a result, they are frequently victimized.

Violence is so widespread among professionals who come across people in distress that it is sometimes regarded as an unavoidable element of the job. Frustration and fury caused by disease and suffering, old-age difficulties such as dementia, mental conditions, or drunkenness from alcohol and substance misuse can alter behaviour and cause people to become verbally or physically aggressive. Inadequacies in the environment where care activities are performed, or in the way these are organized, insufficient training and interpersonal skills of staff providing services to this population, and a general climate of stress and insecurity at the workplace can all contribute significantly to an increase in the level of workplace violence.

Typical workplaces where such a situation might exist:

- General Hospitals
- Healthcare sectors

We can sense that there seem to be some industries that have found to increasingly need solutions to increasing workplace violence. Let's take a look at these industries.



## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN HEALTHCARE

An article by Forbes shared, "Healthcare Remains America's Most Dangerous Profession Due To Workplace Violence." Isn't it worrying that the employees that spend day and night trying to rescue the public are also the group that is most vulnerable to violence?

Innocent individuals are killed on the job while attempting to protect others, yet receive little to no protection. Violence against employees in the healthcare and social services sectors is an increasing problem across the country, inflicting severe injuries and often culminating in death, making healthcare one of the most dangerous professions to work in.

Healthcare and social sector employees face danger daily. These employees are subjected to physical abuse due to inadequate staffing and little to no protection, with 69% of physical attacks and 71% of non-physical assaults recorded in the industry. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) published research in 2016 that revealed workplace violence is a significant risk for about 15 million healthcare employees in the United States. A U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics study stated that nonfatal workplace violence against healthcare professionals occurred at a rate of 10.4 per 10,000 workers in 2018. This increased over the previous year's rate of 6.4 per 10,000. In 2018, the rate for all industries was only 2.1. Why aren't these numbers reducing? Why don't healthcare workers report such violence and ask for greater security?

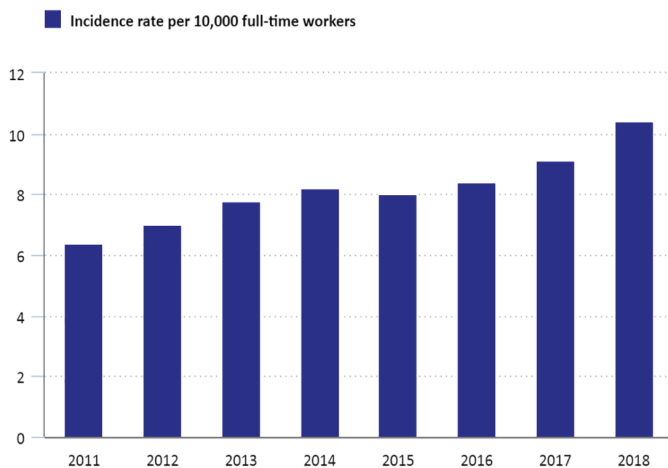
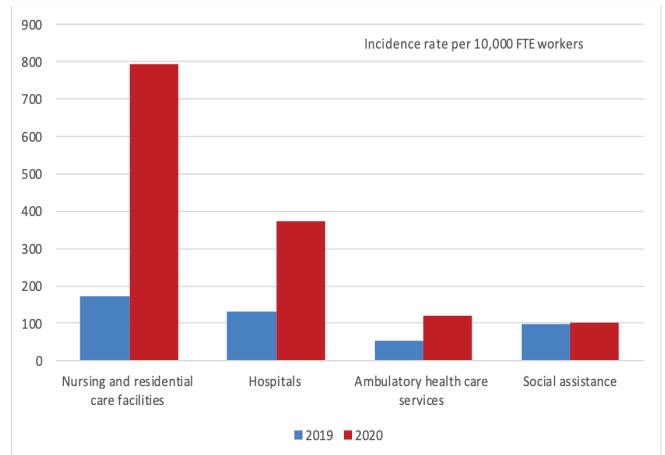


Chart 4. Incidence rates for cases resulting in days away from work in selected health care and social assistance industries, private industry, 2019-20



### Lack of Reporting

"Healthcare workers may not always record such instances, and there is an inadequate study on the subject, among other reasons," according to the GAO report. According to research, barely 20 to 60 percent of nurses report acts of assault. That being said, according to the ANA policy statement on incivility, bullying, and workplace violence, one must first comprehend its fundamental nature to resolve an issue. As a result, in order to combat healthcare violence, particularly among Registered Nurses, the causes of underreporting must be recognized and addressed. A systematic reporting procedure is essential since workplace violence is difficult to substantiate with physical evidence. The lack of reporting is a major barrier to successful research and regulatory or legal action.

Here are some frequent reasons why violent acts are not reported:

- A workplace culture that embraces workplace violence as a regular aspect of the job.
- There is a prevalent notion that violent incidents are regular.
- A lack of agreement on definitions of violence, such as whether it includes verbal harassment.
- Fear of being accused of poor performance or blamed for the incident
- Fear of retaliation from the offender and employer.
- Inadequate knowledge of the reporting method.
- A belief is that reporting will have little effect on present systems or lower the possibility of future violent incidents.
- The opinion was that the situation was not severe enough to need reporting.
- The practice of failing to disclose unintentional violence, such as in the circumstances involving Alzheimer's patients.
- Manager and employer support is lacking.
- There is a lack of training on reporting and dealing with workplace violence.
- Fear of reporting workplace abuse by supervisors.



It's unlikely that these numbers are likely to change unless action takes place. The Covid pandemic did allow a lot of healthcare workers to raise their voices and ask for support. However, there needs to be a significant part done by government organizations in addressing this problem.

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY

There are indeed great risks in working in the security industry. To a large part, they are the people who work to reduce workplace violence. But as we've mentioned earlier in our blogs, there isn't much protection for our protectors. Unfortunately, workplace violence is a problem that is rarely discussed in the private security profession. Whether security firms don't wholly comprehend what workplace violence is or don't feel they have a pivotal role to play in preventing it, there appears to be a lack of focus on the subject.

During the night, workplace dangers and risks related to safety grow tremendously. When there is less crowding and activity in public places, crimes such as theft, vandalism, and violence become more prevalent. Security guards working alone are frequently the victims of such acts. While most security guards are trained in self-defence, staying vigilant 24\*7 is not humanly possible. Moreover, self-defence firearms may not be enough tools or resources to address this issue. As a result, businesses in the security industry bear a larger duty to provide measures and perks that reduce the load on security guards.

Employers, for example, frequently demand security guards at locations where alcohol use is common. Fights, abuse, or violence of any kind are all risks associated with alcohol intake. Subsequently, security guards must maintain discipline and control over their surroundings to ensure that no third party is hurt, even if it requires putting themselves in danger. There must be some method to control such a threat if your employer is not physically watching out for you. Unfortunately, because security guards are the final line of defence, there is no one to defend the protectors.



## Facts and Figures

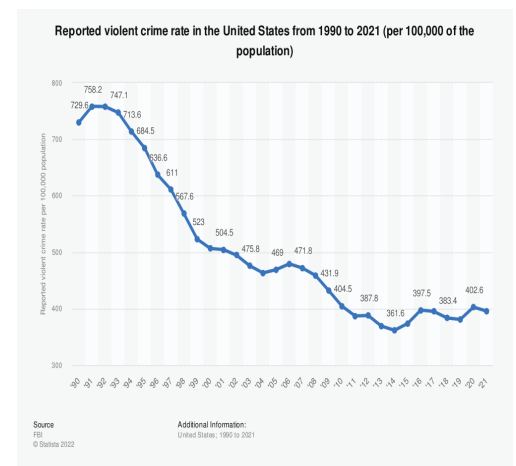
- Law enforcement and security jobs had the highest prevalence of nonfatal workplace violence (70.9 per 1,000) of all employment categories studied. This includes mental health occupations (31.4 per 1,000).
- Police officers and security guards, in particular, were responsible for 19% of workplace homicides in 2019, as per the Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- The overall rise in crime rate has led to increasing use of security services in the United States.
- A database created by TPSO shows that violence against security workers seems to be at an

## Crime Rate & Demand for Security Workers

In 2020, The Wall Street Journal released an article on the increase in commercial burglaries in New York due to business closures due to Coronavirus Emergency Measures. In September 2021, the New York Times released a story regarding the surge in murder rates in 2020. Since WHO announced a state of emergency in response to the COVID epidemic, safety has been the world's top priority. Unfortunately, countries such as the United States have seen an increase in two major issues: COVID cases and violence. While the former may be remedied by rigorous medical study, vaccine development, and dissemination, the latter is reliant on a variety of conditions, including the pandemic.

The graph on the right shows that the pandemic resulted in a surge in crime. As a result, the security business has expanded and diversified dramatically in recent years. Much of this expansion has happened post-pandemic when the jobs performed by security professionals have changed dramatically as operatives have been given new and unexpected responsibilities. However, this tendency was already evident in the pre-pandemic era.

Furthermore, the image of the security professional has shifted dramatically in recent years. Operatives are increasingly regarded as skilled and reliable in areas other than door observation and



Door supervisors also serve as brand ambassadors for the brands/venues for which they work, as well as emergency responders and crisis leaders in times of crisis. Retail security guards now serve a dual purpose as helpful, accessible guides assisting consumers as they traverse post-pandemic 'one way' systems. In contrast, street-based security teams frequently serve as local police's 'eyes and ears.'

In recent years, local governments have resorted to security firms to 'fill the vacuum left by police more visibly, by aggressively patrolling the streets. The outcomes have been mixed. Because security operatives lack police powers, they can only prevent violent crime, act as deterrents, or merely report what they see to the authorities. Therefore, the increasing responsibilities have greatly increased the demands for security officers, but the risks associated with the job make it unappealing and worrying.



## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Industries affected by COVID-19 safety regulations, such as hospitality, are seeing exceptional growth rates now that the restrictions are being removed globally. However, with the exceptional growth rates come increasing alcohol consumption, violence and alcohol-related accidents.

According to the U.S Bureau of Justice Statistics, hospitality employees make up 9.3% of the U.S. workforce yet account for 13% of all workplace violence incidences and 27% of all workplace homicides. In terms of workplace violence victimization, hospitality is third only to law enforcement and mental health professions.

Such situations are not usually characterized by the use of weapons, such as knives or firearms, or by crowds pushing for a sale item or a daily special. Customers may verbally insult and physically assault personnel as a result of discontent with services delivered or personal difficulties.

The high-profile episodes are unending, with a continual stream of violent outbursts erupting in U.S. retail and restaurant businesses. Violence in such places is unexpected and challenging to predict. Aside from personal safety concerns for employees and consumers, the ramifications for organizations vary from reputational injury to financial losses.

Despite the relaxation of limitations and the reopening of opportunities, we can observe that the hotel industry is now struggling to fill available positions. Because of the changing nature of occupations and the increased danger of violence, the expectations for these jobs are currently far too high for any individual to work in hospitality.

What makes working in hospitality so unappealing?

### Key Challenges in Hospitality

While approximately two million American workers report becoming victims of workplace violence each year, retail and restaurant workers are especially vulnerable. Among the several obstacles to reducing workplace violence in retail and restaurant contexts are the following:

**Location:** Stores, restaurants and bars occupy the American landscape. Their accessibility and the continuous human encounters in these areas might make them fertile grounds for violent occurrences.

**Working hours:** According to OSHA, late-night businesses such as liquor stores, convenience stores, and petrol stations are the most dangerous. Problems can be exacerbated at numerous establishments with poorly lighted parking lots and/or managed by lone personnel.

NELP has published a study about how Mcdonald's fails to protect workers from violence in the workplace. On the next page is a summary of that report:



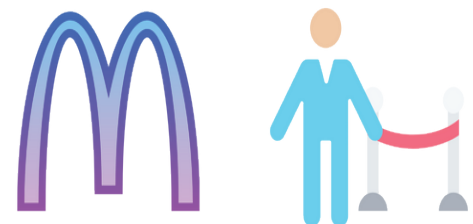
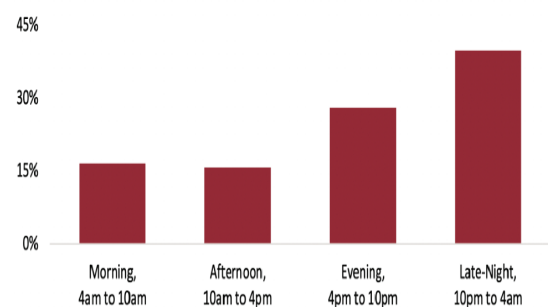
## Violence in the Workplace: McDonald's case study

There have been many instances where McDonald's employees have been victims of violence in the workplace by angry customers. These stories reflect a pattern of violence that occurs regularly at their employment. Ranging from upset customers complaining about missing items to armed robbers demanding cash and fist fights in the lobby. Over the previous three years, the media has highlighted over 700 incidences of workplace violence at U.S. McDonald's locations. However, as demonstrated, the occurrences publicized by the media represent just a tiny percentage of the overall number of violent crimes committed at McDonald's locations each year. Verbal threats, harassment, and other forms of violence are frequently not reported to the police. Regardless of media attention, workplace violence constantly endangers both employees and customers.

The figure shows a key result for the case study: McDonald's extended hours of operation—the longest among its national competitors—regularly put thousands of workers in danger owing to the high levels of violence associated with late-night retail.

According to employee interviews, McDonald's is not adequately training its employees or consistently equipping its stores with violence hazard controls. This includes controls such as cash handling procedures, panic buttons accessible to all staff, and safe drive-thru windows, to prevent or at least reduce the number and severity of such incidents. Late-night hours, a lack of proper hazard controls, and hundreds of documented violent occurrences and worker tales of violence across the country all implicate McDonald's in harmful workplace carelessness.

Figure 1: Share of violent incidents at McDonald's U.S. stores reported by news media, by period of the day, April 16, 2016 - April 15, 2019



## Other Studies

This is just the case study for one company that comes under the large umbrella of the restaurant/hospitality sector. Recent studies look to see the influence of violence in the workplace on employees working in nightclubs and bars, where alcohol intoxication is high.

A study conducted on bouncers' experiences of violence, stress and other work-related problems provided some critical results on the nightclub industry:

- Although bouncers may be a source of insecurity and harm, they, along with bartenders, D.J.s, and other nightlife personnel, play a crucial part in maintaining a safe and pleasurable environment within clubs.
- However, as part of their job, these nightlife experts occasionally take personal risks. According to a recent poll in Denmark, many bartenders have been screamed at, intimidated, seen violence, and had to interfere in conflicts.
- In all, 40% of bouncers from the study said they had been threatened with a weapon. 58% said they had been physically attacked at work. Furthermore, 16% reported feeling anxious, and 50% claimed weekly sleeping issues.

Whether this finding highlights the costs of working in the night-time economy or shows how dangerous working in hospitality is not very conclusive. But the studies do provide that violence in the workplace is a key issue in the hospitality industry.

With this, you may have somewhat of an idea of the leading causes of workplace violence. Our next section will discuss the general effects that violence in the workplace has on employees.

## Section III: Effects of Violence in the Workplace on Employees

Our last section explained that when it comes to the prevalence of workplace violence, not all sectors are created equal. According to the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), social services (14 attacks per 100 employees) and healthcare professionals have the highest rates of workplace violence (9 assaults per 100 employees). 1.8 attacks per 100 full-time equivalent employees is the national average. This data is likely underreported because of what NIOSH defines as an industry-wide belief that attacks are a normal part of the work.



Whether or not workplace violence is resistant to this risk, the consequences of workplace violence can be severe. The consequences are high and pervasive, affecting not only the victims and other employees but also the organizations. Let's first take a look at the human cost of workplace violence.

### THE HUMAN COST OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Workers who witness or are victims of violent incidents may sustain both physical and psychological damage. This can have a negative impact on their professional and personal life. Although these employees are hurt directly due to job dangers, they have minimal rights or safeguards in the aftermath of violent occurrences.



#### Physical injury

Workplace violence may be detrimental to the individuals involved. The most obvious and evident of them include bodily harm or death. Wounded workers may be required to miss work to seek medical treatment, recuperate, and restore strength and well-being. According to NIOSH, gunshot and stabbing victims frequently miss up to a month of work, while other mild injuries typically need employees to miss three to five days. Individually, the cost of personal misery and sorrow caused by workplace violence is difficult to quantify. However, the physical consequences of workplace violence can result in severe psychological harm.



#### Psychological injury

Aside from physical injuries, workplace violence, abuse, or threats can result in severe and debilitating psychological harm. Victims of workplace violence are also more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a disorder frequent among combat veterans and victims of terrorism, crimes, rape, and other violent situations.

Psychological trauma is a typical result of violent acts, but it has gotten too little attention or study. There has been an increasing focus on indirect costs rather than monetary costs when speaking about the violence in the workplace. General studies state that the psychological effects of workplace violence include the following: Witnessing or experiencing workplace violence may have a catastrophic effect on the victim's well-being and sense of security.

Victims may feel emotional shock and denial, which can impair decision-making and prevent meaningful involvement in everyday life.

Victims may also suffer from acute stress disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder. This can cause sleeping problems, anxiety, and/or other distressing symptoms.

## Study on Psychological effects of Workplace Violence

The findings from a study conducted in 2017 revealed that exposure to verbal abuse was the most common (76.2%), followed by problems (58.3%), smear reputation (40.8%), mobbing behaviour (40.2%), intimidation behaviour (27.6%), physical violence (24.1%), and sexual harassment (7.8%). WPV exposure substantially impacted doctors' psychological stress, sleep quality, and self-reported health. Furthermore, psychological stress moderated the association between workplace aggression and health impairment. If the causes of violence are not addressed, or if the effects of violence are not adequately addressed, these symptoms are likely to progress to physical illness, psychological disorders, tobacco, alcohol, drug abuse, and so on. These can lead to reduced employability, invalidity, and even suicide.

These negative repercussions affect not just the individual who is the target of such violence but also those surrounding, as well as persons far distanced or physically absent from the scene of the crime. As a result, the impacts of violence can infiltrate the whole workplace, the victim's family, and the community in which they reside.

Our earlier blogs have spoken about quite a lot about burnout for employees, and we noticed that there seems to be a direct correlation between workplace violence and job burnout. The figure below shows how significant burnout is in the hospitality and healthcare industry. Let's look at some examples:



### Job Burnout in Hospitality

Workplace violence and stress are more prevalent in service industries than in other economic sectors, owing to the interaction between workers and clients. Violence and tension can be sensed in this interaction either directly, when a client behaves irrationally, or indirectly, via unanticipated events that are difficult to regulate and may elicit improper behaviours. Like other service sectors, the hotel, catering, and tourist industries are distinguished by their contact with the public/customer.

While job burnout in hospitality primarily exists due to unpredictable scheduling, working long hours and low wages, increasing violence in the workplace does not make it any better for the employees. As mentioned earlier, working in the night economy has been a massive factor in job burnout.



## Indicators of Burnout Statistics

Indicators of 'burnout' and work alienation have been discovered in several nations and they are frequent among hotel managers. 40% of hotel managers scored highly on the Emotional Exhaustion scale and 28% on the Depersonalisation scale, both of which are often employed as markers of burnout. There is anecdotal evidence that high levels of pressure, along with cruel or aggressive management methods, appear to have a significant effect on a considerable number of chefs' choice to leave their positions in the United Kingdom.



The pandemic added tremendous pressure on many employees. There was increasing interaction among customers unwilling to oblige to the mask or the vaccine mandate in certain countries. Wall Street Journal even wrote an article addressing the concern. It stated that owners should set new ground rules, going against the adage that the customer is always right. Unfortunately, it is difficult for employees in the hospitality industry to fully enforce these laws since they are constantly required to control their outward display of emotions for the sake of the client and their company, regardless of how they are feeling. This only adds to the stress.

## Job Burnout in Healthcare

Nurse burnout is a state of mental, bodily, and emotional tiredness produced by long-term occupational pressures. Examples include long hours, pressure, rapid decision-making, and the stress of caring for patients. Burnout, as opposed to workplace stress, results in disengagement and can lead to diminished motivation. According to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), 35-54% of nurses and physicians have significant burnout symptoms.

Nurse burnout affects not just nurses but also the patients they care for. Research published in the American Journal of Infection Control found a relationship between nurse burnout and an increased risk of infection in patients. An article by Forbes stated that 'Healthcare Remains America's Most Dangerous Profession Due To Workplace Violence. Is that true?



- According to studies, contentious politics around vaccinations was recognized as the primary cause of increased violence against nurses as of September 2021. Patients are increasingly aggressive towards nurses because of the proximity and long hours they spend together, according to 31% of nurses, up from 22% in March 2021.
- Healthcare workers make up 50% of victims of such crimes.
- Workplace violence statistics in healthcare reveal that medics are absent from the hospital for an average of 112.8 hours due to workplace violence. This causes additional stress for employees who must cover shifts and cope with violent patients.
- According to the findings of a Japanese study, mental healthcare nurses who experienced WPV had lower mental health status, and WPV was connected with burnout among Japanese mental healthcare nurses.



## Job Burnout in Security

Like hospitality, the security industry also faces stress and burnout from working long hours and low wages. Still, increasing violence and crime rate in the city makes the job of security professionals even scarier. The pressures that security professionals face at the time are equivalent to the pressures that other frontline workers face as they are expected to be vigilant all the time.

Security operations professionals have an exceptionally high-stress level because of ransomware, phishing and social engineering, web skimming malware, supply chain attacks and brute forcing. A study by Deloitte on security professionals provided these results:

- 77 percent of respondents say they have experienced employee burnout at their current job.
- 91 percent of respondents stated that having an unmanageable amount of stress or frustration negatively impacts their quality of work.
- 83 percent of respondents say burnout from work can negatively impact their personal relationships.
- 87 percent of professionals surveyed say they have passion for their job, but 64 percent say they are frequently stressed. This goes against the myth that passionate employees are immune to stress or burnout.
- Nearly 70 percent of professionals feel their employers are not doing enough to prevent or alleviate burnout within their organization.
- 21 percent of respondents say their company does not offer programs or initiatives to prevent or alleviate burnout.



## Section IV: Tackling Workplace Violence

If violence can be foreseen, it can also be avoided. Especially in companies that service aggressive and violent groups of people. There are solutions to practically every problem. Some are simple, painless, and inexpensive, while others are more challenging and expensive. Solutions vary widely between occupations and workplaces. Nonetheless, alleged actions can be implemented to make the work environment less unsafe, even in the most intrinsically dangerous organizations. Let's look at some ways that any organization can tackle workplace violence.



### STRICT ACTION: ZERO VIOLENCE TOLERANCE POLICY

It is the employer's responsibility to keep the workplace safe. A dangerous workplace is violent. Unfortunately, employers are frequently unwilling to collaborate with the union to address the issue. That's why a written zero-violence tolerance policy is the best start for any employer to tackle violence in the workplace. The policy should:

- Be developed by management and employee representatives, including the health and safety committee or representative, and union, if present.
- Apply to management, employees, clients, independent contractors and anyone with a relationship with your company.
- Define what you mean by workplace violence, harassment and bullying in precise, concrete language.
- Provide clear examples of unacceptable behaviour and working conditions.
- State your organization's view of workplace violence and harassment clearly and its commitment to prevention.
- Precisely state the consequences of making threats or committing violent acts.
- Outline the process by which preventive measures will be developed.
- Encourage reporting of all incidents, including reports from witnesses.
- Outline the confidential process by which employees can report incidents and to whom.
- Assure no reprisals will be made against reporting employees.
- Outline the procedures for resolving or investigating incidents or complaints.
- Describe how information about potential risks will be communicated to employees.
- Commit to providing support services to victims of violence.
- Offer a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to allow employees to seek help.
- Commit to fulfilling the prevention training needs of different levels of personnel within the organization.
- Commit to monitoring and regularly reviewing the policy.
- State applicable regulatory requirements.



A written policy will notify staff of the following:

- What types of workplace behaviour (e.g., aggression, intimidation, bullying, harassment, etc.) are considered improper and unacceptable by management?
- What to do in the event of an occurrence covered by the policy.
- Contact information for reporting any occurrences.
- When an event is reported, this is the method that will be followed.
- It will also encourage employees to report such instances. Moreover, a written policy demonstrates that management is serious about dealing with incidences of violence, harassment, and other undesirable behaviour.



## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

There are quite a few preventive measures that organizations and employers can apply to ensure safety in the workplace. Most of the preventive measures fall under the category of workplace design, work practices or administrative practices.

Workplace Design considers factors such as workplace layout, signs, locks or physical barriers, lighting, and electronic surveillance. Building security is one instance where workplace design issues are fundamental.

Administrative practices are decisions you make about how you do business. For example, certain administrative practices can reduce the risks of handling cash.

Work practices include all the things you do while doing the job. They may consist of management functions such as ensuring the performance evaluation process is fair and transparent or “checking in” with employees to determine their workload or stress level.

While most companies have a good idea of identifying what work and administrative practices work best, they often struggle with workplace design. Fortunately, Celayix has excellent experience in providing features that can be part of your workplace design. Let’s look at the features that Celayix delivers that can help you improve your workplace design and reduce violence in the workplace.



Celayix features that can help improve workplace design.

## Instant Communication with Schedule Xpress

Effective communication is essential in the prevention of workplace violence. Suppose your workers have access to a workplace communication network. In that case, it can help them comprehend, recognize, and report early signals of possible violence rather than brushing them under the rug and returning to work. Giving children access to options for dispute resolution makes them feel more accountable for communicating. Additionally, maintaining an open line of communication with management, H.R., and other essential members of your firm can assist in establishing an environment in which workers can ensure that their concerns are heard and effectively addressed.



Celayix's Schedule Xpress messaging provides an easy and quick form of communication between the administration and the workforce. Because this technology is so direct, it allows the administrator to communicate with the employee in real time about any updates or modifications to the schedule.

## Security Monitoring with Geofencing

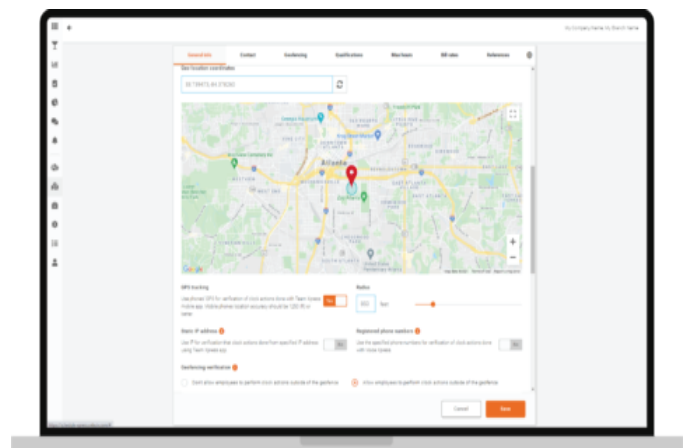
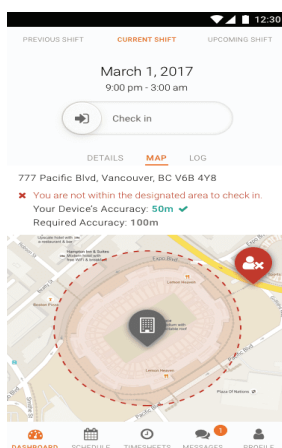
Geofencing is a virtual perimeter for a geographic area in the real world. Essentially, you use geographic coordinates to define an area that can be tracked with a GPS-enabled device. While there are many uses for geofencing in general, when it comes to employee safety, there are two main uses.



### GEOFENCED CHECK-IN/OUT

One of the most challenging aspects of managing workers who work at different locations is ensuring that they arrive and leave safely. Managers are rarely present on-site, and employees frequently work in locations alone. So, how can you ensure that staff get on-site safely? By establishing a geofence, employees can only check in once they get on site. This ensures that personnel are safe and fit to work their shift.

The same is true while checking out or concluding a shift. Employees will be allowed to check out of a shift only if they are within the geofenced boundary. This proves to management that the employees were safe throughout their shifts and stayed on site.



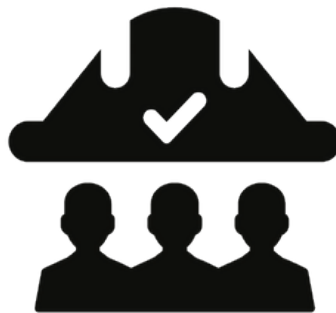
## SAFETY CHECKS

The most practical application of geofencing in employee safety is for safety checks. As an employer, you might request that staff do frequent safety inspections. You may request them as often as you like, hourly, daily, or at specific intervals throughout the day. These safety checks may only be performed within the geofence.

Generally, these safety inspections will include several measures to guarantee employee safety. These safety checks for a security guard could include ensuring gates/doors are secure and lowering the chance of accidents and threats. The GPS tracking provided by geofencing will indicate to employers that the inspections are being carried out thoroughly.

These safety checks are beneficial when managing multiple employees across various sites. Without these geofenced safety inspections, management struggles to assure the safety of both personnel and client locations.

The beautiful thing about these geofenced safety checks is that they allow employees to connect with employers safely and securely. If a facility is breached or a guard is involved in an incident, the safety checks give management a chance to convey critical information. This communication is safe and immediate, providing management with all they need to respond to the issue as required.



### Field Reporting and Use of EVV

Shift Tasks & Field Reporting, designed with all industries in mind, will allow Team members to report to Managers the fulfilment of tasks and status updates, including image and video uploads, electronic signature capture, and more. Field reporting will better understand your company's operations, boost staff responsibility, and deliver better customer service.

Without a manager present on-site, important updates can be missed or miscommunicated due to a lack of appropriate tools. The ability for employees to report back to management from the field is a huge benefit to most organizations. With Celayix's field reporting feature, employees can:



### PROVIDE INCIDENT REPORTS EASILY

In the event of a workplace mishap or accident, management will undoubtedly want to know. Reports may not be made unless applicable rules, protocols, and locations are in place. With Field Reporting, employees go to their mobile app and produce a report with all the information management needs. These reports will include a timestamp so that management can observe the sequence of events. Making this easy and accessible for the employee is the priority and exactly what Celayix's field reporting does.





## CAPTURE PHOTO AND VIDEO REPORTS

Depending on the nature of the task, management may need a photo or video report from a shift. This is frequently used in the security sector to demonstrate that a site has been adequately protected. As previously noted, photos and videos can also be utilized in incident reports to provide critical information to management.

Managers may see field reports from any device as soon as they are created. These can be exported and sent to clients as needed. This is also an excellent strategy to obtain a competitive advantage while seeking new clients. Trust and transparency are areas of weakness for many companies. Field reporting and shift duties reduce these flaws and offer clients comfort when they need it the most.



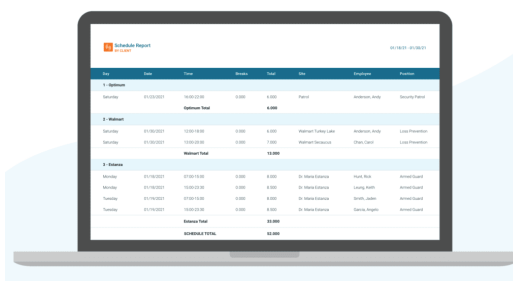
## FULFIL EVV MANDATE

If you work in home healthcare, you've probably heard about EVV and the mandate's requirements. Shift tasks and field reporting collect all the information required for EVV data exports and can generate the file precisely as needed. Home healthcare professionals can use shift tasks to guarantee that every patient receives the same quality of care. Field reporting can then be utilized to document any additional significant information from each visit.

Celayix can assist you in implementing the EVV mandate. How?

Celayix has worked hard to develop shift tasks and field reporting to be beneficial to employers and accessible to employees. With easy access directly from the Celayix mobile app, these simple tools allow employees to sign off on tasks. Echoing the importance of a paper trail, Celayix will keep a record of these shift tasks and field reports, so you don't have to.

Most states and agencies opt for mobile solutions because they are less expensive than biometric scanners. They are also more reliable than landline phones, which many people no longer have. Celayix represents a perfect solution to the EVV problem. It acts as a simple, easy-to-use approach to accommodate EVV requirements.



Task	Date	Time	Hours	Rate	Site	Provider	Location
<b>1 - Medicare</b>							
Medicare	01/20/2021	10:00:00	0.00	0.00	Home	Andrew Smith	Denver, PA
<b>Summary Total</b>							
			0.00	0.00			
<b>2 - Medicaid</b>							
Medicaid	01/20/2021	10:00:00	0.00	0.00	Home - Long Term	Andrew Smith	Long Beach, CA
Medicaid	01/20/2021	10:00:00	0.00	0.00	Home - Short Term	John Doe	Long Beach, CA
<b>Summary Total</b>							
			0.00	0.00			
<b>3 - Private</b>							
Private	01/20/2021	07:00:00	0.00	0.00	St. Michael's Hospital	Mark Ross	Atlanta, GA
Private	01/20/2021	10:00:00	0.00	0.00	St. Michael's Hospital	Larry Smith	Atlanta, GA
Private	01/20/2021	07:00:00	0.00	0.00	St. Michael's Hospital	John Jones	Atlanta, GA
Private	01/20/2021	10:00:00	0.00	0.00	St. Michael's Hospital	James Brown	Atlanta, GA
<b>Summary Total</b>							
			0.00	0.00			
<b>SCHEDULE TOTAL</b>							
			0.00	0.00			

## Final Thoughts

Violence in the workplace is a huge deal, and it will continue to be unless employers don't start acting on it. We hope this ebook helped you understand how difficult it is to identify violence in the workplace and show the current trends of workplace violence in different industries. We also hope that this ebook provides you with the leading causes and consequences of violence in the workplace. Lastly, while it is challenging to prevent workplace violence, our ebook hopes to show readers that there are effective ways to manage it, which include using various Celayix features that can enable instant and secure employee communication. The Graphics below very nicely summarize the issue of workplace violence.

All in all, the ebook is a call for action for organizations to take appropriate measures that ensure employee safety at work, whether it's from cybercrime or any form of physical violence.

# Workplace Harassment and Violence

Any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness

**Workplace harassment and violence does not discriminate. It can happen to any worker, in any industry.**

It can include:

- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviours
- intimidating actions
- physical attacks

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or messages of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that can cause offence or humiliation.

**RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Commit to a workplace that is free of harassment and violence**

	<b>Assess</b> the internal risks like workplace culture and activities, and external risks like family violence.		<b>Educate</b> everyone on harassment and violence, including where they can go for help.
	<b>Implement a policy, along with the procedures</b> to respond to incidents of harassment and violence. Outline and assign responsibilities and communicate the policy to all workers.		<b>Provide workers with resources for support</b> , including any medical or psychological services.
			<b>Encourage a respectful workplace</b> by being cooperative, inclusive and respecting boundaries.

**All workers** have the right to a safe workplace that is free of harassment and violence.

**Employers** should know the legal requirements for their jurisdiction regarding workplace harassment and violence, and are responsible for creating a safe workplace.

It is your duty to resolve or investigate, as well as record and report all incidents of harassment and violence as required.

**If you are being harassed, think you might have been harassed, or have witnessed harassment, report it.**

**CCOHS.ca**  
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

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