Prevention and Handling of Workplace Violence – Experience of the Hong Kong Police Force

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Definition

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

(Including internal / External workplace violence)

(ILO, 2003)
Who are the Most Frequent Victims of Workplace Violence?

- Taxi Drivers: 3
- Health Care Workers: 2
- Police Officers: 1
Health Care Workers are often Victims of Assault

• People who are fearful, in distress, in pain or desperate may have an increased tendency to commit violence. Workers in the health care sector are quite likely to have face-to-face contact with such people

• In UK, three-quarters of all occupational injuries experienced by nurses are violence-related

• In old-age nursing wards in Sweden in 1993, 75% workers exposed to threats, 93% to minor physical violence and 53% to severe physical violence during the previous 12 months

( ILO, 2006)
Workers’ Perception of being Assaulted (UK Experience)

• 9% of workers with face-to-face contact with the public thought it very or fairly likely that they would be assaulted at work in the next year

(European Commission)

• Violence is so common among health care workers in contact with people in distress that it is often considered an inevitable part of the job

(ILO, 2006)
Overall Strategies in Handling Workplace Violence

(P.25, Prevention of Workplace Violence, OSHC)
Risk Prevention

Safety Policy and Employee assurance

• To address: “Violence is so common among workers in contact with people in distress that it is often considered an inevitable part of the job”

• Policy statement to reassure employees that workplace violence will not be tolerated and to emphasis on the organization’s commitment to preventing workplace violence
### Allocation of Policy Responsibilities in HKPF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Managers</th>
<th>Superintendents and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety risk assessors</td>
<td>Inspectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety executors</td>
<td>Junior Police Officers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Risk Assessment

- Frontline staff to contribute information and views

- Risk is a combination of hazard consequence and likelihood of happening

- Help to understand how injury is materialized

- Provide a common base to prioritize

- First element to safety: Safe act

- Second element to safety: Safe condition
Risk Control

• Workplace environment improvement

• Standard operation procedures to prevent escalation of risk situation
Employees’ Competence Building thro’ Training / Mentoring

• Ability to identify potentially violent situations

• Capacity of event appraisal and problem solving

• Interpersonal / communication skills to defuse a potentially violent situation

![Figure 8: Escalation of risk situations](image)

(P.43, Prevention of Workplace Violence, OSHC)

• Self-defense skills

• Supervisor’s intervention ability at different stages
Risk Remedy

• Medical treatment of injured employees

• Supporting and counseling

• Incident investigation

• Security / emergency response system review
Monitoring and Evaluation

- Sustain the effort

- Review current risk assessments for new situations

- Review current control measures for improvement

- Continue to assure employees that the management treats the matter seriously
Thank You