



Minimize the risk and impact of workplace violence

Use Nationwide’s LIMIT approach to develop an effective WPV prevention program.

Workplace Violence (WPV) is defined by OSHA as, “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. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers, and visitors.” No employer is immune from WPV. The risk of WPV is present every day and it is the obligation of each employer to provide a workplace free of recognized hazards. Developing a WPV prevention program is essential to reduce this exposure and may be a legal requirement based on your state or type of business. One of the first steps toward developing an effective WPV prevention program is to understand the scope and source of WPV.

The scope of WPV:

- The Department of Justice reports that two million people are victims of non-fatal violence in the workplace annually.¹
- Per OSHA, acts of violence and other injury is currently the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the United States.²
- It is estimated that 25% of workplace violence goes unreported.³

The source of WPV typically falls into one of the following types:

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| <p>Type 1</p> <p>From someone with no legitimate relationship to the business or its employees—usually in conjunction with a crime.</p> | <p>Type 2</p> <p>Directed at employees by customers, clients or others with a relationship to the business.</p> |
| <p>Type 3</p> <p>Between present or former co-workers.</p> | <p>Type 4</p> <p>From a person who has a relationship to the victim outside of work and the violence spills into work - such as an abusive spouse or partner.</p> |

LIMIT: An effective strategy to control WPV

Controlling WPV is complex. It involves evaluating and understanding the risk factors for the different types of WPV, gaining insight from workers, developing a plan to manage risk and respond to an event, training management and employees, and evaluating the program for effectiveness.

These steps are captured in Nationwide’s LIMIT approach for safety program development: Learn, Involve, Manage, Inform, and Track.

Learn—The first step is to become aware of WPV in your industry, in your community, and specifically related to your operations and workplace. Each workplace has unique risks. You should conduct an assessment of risk factors for WPV, similar to completing a Job Hazard Analysis. This will allow you to identify and evaluate your specific risk factors, such as the nature of the work, location of the employee’s worksite(s), and interactions with the public. Sample assessment tools are available through Nationwide, and some states have specific checklist for evaluations.

Involve—Consulting with supervisors and employees is key to ensuring a complete understanding of the risks involved in the workplace, developing control measures, and successful implementation of the WPV prevention plan. Employees offer valued insight and knowledge of key exposure and are instrumental in the implementation of controls. Failure to involve these key stakeholders can result in hazardous oversights, and documented employee involvement is a requirement for some state plans.

Manage—With the knowledge of the assessments and with employee involvement, an effective WPV program can be developed to mitigate the risk exposures and establish procedures for a response should an event occur. A WPV prevention program should be in writing and include elements, such as: roles and responsibilities for implementation, reporting procedures, training requirements, ongoing hazard assessments, WPV emergency response procedures, and post-incident investigations and corrective measures. State requirements may specify required program elements.

Inform—This goes beyond initial and ongoing training about the written WPV prevention program. It includes verifying that employees know how to report concerns or incidents and that they understand there will be no retaliation for reporting. It involves ensuring that training materials on the program and WPV prevention techniques are easy to understand and match the workers’ education, reading skills, and language. It includes posting information, providing opportunities to ask questions, and ensuring they know how they can get additional information.

Employees are typically on the front line of the WPV exposure, so their knowledge and comfort with the program and how to respond to a WPV threat is essential.

Track—While incident logs and recordkeeping are a key part of tracking and plan review, tracking means ensuring the WPV prevention plan is working as intended through routine evaluations and assessments in order to allow for corrections and continuous improvement of the plan. This can be done at set intervals or after a report is filed, or it can be triggered by changes in operations. Incident logs should be used to record incident details and corrective actions. As with the other areas, state requirements may detail a method of reporting and the nature of the information to be obtained.

Understanding responsibilities

Developing a WPV Prevention Plan with the LIMIT approach should provide a clear outline of the responsibilities that employer and the employees have in effective implementation.

Employer responsibilities with WPV prevention plans:

- Establish, implement, and maintain an effective written WPV prevention plan that is actively supported by management.
- Create a culture where employees feel supported reporting incidents of WPV.
- Conduct risk assessments that consider the employer's unique vulnerabilities.
- Involve workforce champions when developing, implementing, and training with WPV.
- Ensure proper WPV training for all employees.
- Take reports seriously and conduct thorough investigations. If necessary, involve law enforcement.
- Ensure completed training, established protocols and routine review of WPV risk with documentation of all steps.
- Review and update prevention plans regularly.
- Ensure ongoing training or retraining of a deficient WPV prevention plan.
- When dealing with a dissatisfied employee, support the supervisors in addressing the issues. For employees facing disciplinary actions, establish a de-escalation and safety plan.
- Establish and document WPV emergency response procedures. Also include a WPV incident log.

Employee responsibilities with WPV prevention plans:

- Participate in evaluations, development, and feedback for the final WPV Prevention Plan.
- Attend safety training, including WPV training.
- Promptly report any WPV concerns to a supervisor.
- Cooperate in investigations into WPV.
- If you or if you know an employee fears WPV by a perpetrator outside of work and fears the violence could come to their workplace, notify a supervisor for support.
- Understand WPV emergency response procedures.

There is no workplace that is immune from WPV; however, there are effective ways to minimize the risk and impact of WPV in the workplace with LIMIT. Several states have regulations on the development and implementation of WPV prevention programs and it is recommended to check state regulations to ensure compliance with specific state laws. By using the LIMIT approach, a comprehensive prevention plan can be implemented to empower each responsible party, from an owner to an employee.

References and resources to consider:

- [Workplace Violence Prevention: Security Assessment](#)
- [Sample Workplace Self-Inspection Security Checklist](#)
- [NIOSH Workplace Violence](#)
- [OSHA Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool](#)

State-specific resources:

- [Link to Model Written WPV Prevention Plan for General Industry from CAL OSHA](#)
- [CAL OSHA WPV Fact Sheet](#)

¹ [osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/factsheet-workplace-violence.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/factsheet-workplace-violence.pdf)

² [injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/work-overview/top-work-related-injury-causes/data-details/#:~:text=While%20transportation%20incidents%20are%20the,restriction%20or%20transfer%20\(DART\).](https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/work-overview/top-work-related-injury-causes/data-details/#:~:text=While%20transportation%20incidents%20are%20the,restriction%20or%20transfer%20(DART).)

³ [cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/Preventing%20Workplace%20Violence%20Security%20Awareness%20Considerations%20Infographic_508.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/Preventing%20Workplace%20Violence%20Security%20Awareness%20Considerations%20Infographic_508.pdf)



For assistance with risk management services or safety resources, contact us at RMSolutions@nationwide.com or 1-800-260-1356.