

ACAPMA FACTSHEET

Safe Systems of Work Aggression & Violence

About this Factsheet

ACAPMA Factsheets are simple references for businesses in fuel wholesale, fuel transport and fuel and convenience retail to refer to when building, reviewing or modifying their systems. The ACAPMA Factsheets provide a snapshot, while the ACAPMA Guides provide more detailed information, case studies and templates.

Safety Controls

Broadly safety controls fall into two categories; Physical Controls and System Controls.

The System Controls, often referred to as a Safe System of Work, typically include; staff training and instructions, business policy, incident response and review and continual industry and incident scanning. Depending on the workplace it may also include contact and communication flows, workplace design and product stewardship.

What is a System of Work?

Work systems and procedures are administrative controls and should be part of the overall work health and safety prevention strategies.

They are insufficient on their own to reduce the risk and should be used together with control measures relating to the physical work environment and security.

Workplace differences

There will be different levels of system and physical interventions that will be appropriate depending on the nature of the work, the co-located businesses, the staff demographic and experience, the community demographic, the customer demographic as well as local crime statistics and even the products offered.

Ideally a very broad list of system elements is drawn initially and then tailored to the specific workplace as required.

Safe System of Work for Aggression and Violence

Work systems and procedures may include the following:

- Have procedures for working in isolation and in uncontrolled environments,
- A policy states appropriate action will be taken to protect workers and others from violence,
- Responsible service of alcohol policy and practices is used as appropriate,
- Have procedures for opening and closing the business,
- A system to map and record areas of concern for safe access and egress,

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• Regular handover of information
• Work practices are evaluated to see if they contribute to aggression,
• Behaviours and their triggers are identified, and strategies to address them are implemented,
• Identification system is in place eg workers and authorised visitors are clearly identified.

These system elements have to be supported by detailed training, review and industry and incident scanning.

Training

Training should not be viewed as the main way to control the risk of work-related violence, but rather part of an overall approach.

Training could be provided in:
• violence prevention measures eg part of the induction training package before starting work,
• workplace policy and procedures, including emergency response,
• de-escalating aggression eg identify signs of aggression, verbal and nonverbal communication strategies, encourage reasoning, listen carefully, acknowledge concerns,
• communication skills,
• positive behaviour strategies and managing behaviours of concern.

Reviewing risk control measures

A review of risk controls should occur:
•at regular intervals eg annually,
•when worker or HSR feedback indicates risk control measures are ineffective or not as effective as they should be,
•when an HSR or HSC requests a review,
•when there have been significant changes in the work environment or work tasks,
•after incidents.

A review of risk control measures can include an examination of:
•the physical work environment,
•work functions and tasks,
•consultation processes,
•prevention measures,
•issue resolution procedures.

Improving the effectiveness of risk control measures can arise with:
•changes to the physical work environment,
•new working procedures,
•additional training.

Responding to workplace violence

Responses to work-related violence will vary depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

Systems should be in place that document what to do at the time of, and immediately after, an incident.

At the time of an incident

During an incident, a range of actions may be taken which include (where appropriate):
•setting off the duress alarm,
•calling the police,
•implementing the internal emergency response,
•implementing the external emergency response
•using calm verbal and non-verbal communication,
•using verbal de-escalation and distraction techniques,
•seeking support from other staff,
•asking the aggressor to leave the premises,
•retreating to a safe location.

Immediately after an incident

Immediately after an incident, a range of actions may be taken which include (where appropriate):
•ensuring that everyone is safe,
•providing first aid or urgent medical attention,
•providing individual support where required, including practical and emotional support,
•reporting what happened, who was affected, and who was involved,
•calling the police.

Notification to Regulators

The incident must be notified to Regulators if the incident results in:
•a fatality
•someone requiring immediate hospital treatment
•Amputation
•a serious head or eye injury
•a serious burn
•de-gloving or scalping
•a spinal injury
•loss of a bodily function
•serious lacerations.

Incident management

A response system should address immediate safety issues, medical treatment, internal reporting and notifications required by external agencies, such as the police and regulators.

Incident management policies and procedures must be developed and implemented in consultation with HSRs and workers who are likely to be directly affected by work-related violence. These policies and procedures should include:
•emergency and evacuation plans,
•reporting procedures and incident investigation,
•worker supervision and monitoring,
•sanctions against aggressors,
•guidelines on communicating with other agencies eg police, ambulance,
•testing and maintenance of communication and duress equipment,
•regular emergency drills,
•training, to ensure workers are familiar with incident management processes,
•site preservation requirements.

Incident investigation

When investigating an incident, all contributing factors should be identified. The investigation will help determine how to prevent an incident recurring and how to respond to future incidents. Investigators should be impartial and have appropriate knowledge and experience in work health and safety issues.

Industry and Incident Scanning

A key part of managing any risk is understanding actual incidents in similar workplaces, the identified root causes and the controls that others are implementing to address the risks. This process of keeping up to date with real world incidents, causes and control developments is referred to as scanning and is an important part of any safe system of work.

More Information and Assistance

ACAPMA Factsheets are provided to the whole industry as general information.

ACAPMA Members can access more detailed information, guidance and support including the ACAPMA Safe Systems of Work - Aggression and Violence GUIDE.

ACAPMA members can access resources and receive advice, guidance and support from the ACAPMA employment professionals via employment@acapma.com.au , it is free for members. ACAPMA Membership delivers this and more benefits, see; https://acapma.com.au/membership/ for more information.

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