

## Amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act: Violence in the Workplace

*Amendments to Ontario's Occupational Health & Safety Act regarding violence in the workplace will come into effect June 15, 2010. The following information has been taken from the Ministry of Labour publication "Workplace Violence and Harassment: Understanding the Law."*

- **All employers** must prepare a workplace violence policy and a workplace harassment policy, to be reviewed at least once per year.
- Employers with **five or less employees** are not required to put these policies in writing unless requested to do so by a Ministry of Labour inspector.
- Employers with **six or more employees** must put their policies in writing and have them prominently displayed in the workplace.
- Workplace violence and workplace harassment policies can be combined as a single policy or combined with existing policies related to occupational health and safety.
- Employers must assess the risks of workplace violence in their workplace.
- All employers must develop and maintain programs to implement their workplace violence and workplace harassment policies.

The government requires that workplace violence and workplace harassment policies should:

- show an employer's commitment to protecting workers from workplace violence and/or addressing workplace harassment;
- address violence and/or harassment from all possible sources (customers, clients, employees, supervisors, workers, strangers and domestic/intimate partners);
- outline the roles and responsibilities of workplace parties in supporting the policies and programs; and
- be dated and signed by the highest level of management at the workplace.

The workplace violence program must include:

- measures and procedures to control the risks identified in the assessment as likely to expose a worker to physical injury;
- measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur;
- measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace violence to the employer or supervisor;
- how the employer will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints of workplace violence; and
- any other elements prescribed in regulation.

The workplace harassment program must include:

- measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace harassment to the employer or supervisor;
- how the employer will investigate and deal with incidents and complaints of workplace harassment; and
- any prescribed elements that may be included in regulations made under the act.

*For specific examples of these policies and programs, see pages 41-45 of the document found at the link below.*

**For the full report, visit [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/wpvh\\_gl.pdf](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/wpvh_gl.pdf)**