

Domestic Violence: A Workplace Issue

Costs to your Business

- Domestic violence costs businesses nearly \$6 billion in healthcare expenses and lost productivity every year
- Nearly 8 million paid workdays are lost - the equivalent of 32,000 full time jobs
- In a Maine Dept. Of Labor study, 78% of domestic violence offenders used workplace resources to contact or harass the victim
- Employers have been held liable for failing to adequately address domestic violence in the workplace. Recent jury awards to victims, co-workers and their estates have ranged from \$25,000 to several million dollars

Impact on Productivity

- 64% of domestic violence victims say their ability to work is affected by violence
- Domestic violence caused 56% of these women to be late for work at least 5 times a month, 28% had to leave early at least 5 days a month, and 54% missed 3 full days of work
- The Maine labor study found domestic abusers lost 15,221 hours of work



Domestic Violence Doesn't Stay at Home When Victims Go to Work

Domestic violence occurs between people of all racial, economic, educational, religious backgrounds, in heterosexual and same sex relationships, living together or separately, married or unmarried, in short or long-term relationships.

- In Vermont, at least 4 domestic violence related homicides have occurred in connection with the victim's employment.
- 1 in 5 employed adults is the victim of domestic violence.

- 1 in 4 employees reports working with a co-worker who has been a victim of domestic violence.
- 74% of employed battered women say they are harassed by their partner at work.
- 94% of corporate security directors and 78% of Human Resource professionals consider domestic violence a critical workplace issue.
- 4 out of 5 employees believe workplaces can make a difference by addressing domestic violence in the workplace.

A Safe and Secure Workplace

Security measures can play a critical role in protecting all employees at work. Consider these changes to your workplace:

- Provide front desk or security staff copies of court orders and abuser identifying information, including photographs and description of car, if available.
- Relocate employee to safer workplace or work station.
- Install buzzer system, panic button or other security devices.
- Limit access to building and if feasible, use one entrance.
- Provide escorts to employee's parked car.
- Install lighting in parking lots, additional fencing and cameras.
- Arrange priority parking spaces.
- Adopt phone security measures.
- Document harassing or abusive behavior.
- Assist in a safety plan course of action for employee. Call local domestic violence program for more information.
- Work with your security and/or local law enforcement to develop a response plan.

Protocols, Policies, Laws

Employers can play an important role in providing clear guidelines and a supportive and productive workplace by implementing model practices and policies that respond to domestic violence:

Protocols and Policies: Adopt a protocol and implement leave, benefit and referral policies addressing domestic violence in the workplace. Sample protocols and policies can be found at the Vermont Attorney General's web site: www.atg.state.vt.us/issues/criminal-law/domestic-violence

Train: Trainings for managers and supervisors raise awareness and sensitivity and make the workplace safer and more productive.

Educate: Educate staff through brown bag lunches, workshops, and newsletters. Post and distribute resource and referral information in areas of high visibility and on web pages. 68% of offenders in a Maine survey said that domestic abuse posters

and brochures in the workplace would help prevent abuse from impacting the business.

Create a work environment where it is safe to talk about domestic violence and where victims are supported and perpetrators are held accountable.

Consider Security: Review worksite security measures to protect all employees.

Connect: Standing up against domestic violence is not always easy, but we can end the violence when we stand together. Connect with local domestic violence service programs and other local resources. Join or donate to an organization working to prevent violence against women.

Be aware of state laws such as: the *Survivor Transitional Employment Benefit Program* at the Department of Labor at www.labor.vermont.gov; and statutory protections preventing discharge or discipline if an employee or their family are subpoenaed at *13 VSA Section 5313*.

Resources

Local domestic violence programs provide: safety planning, help accessing protection orders, counseling, support groups, shelter, advice and legal assistance:

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

www.vtnetwork.org / 802-223-1302

Find model workplace policies, trainings, and educational materials:

Vermont Attorney General's Office
atg.state.vt.us/issues/criminal-law/domestic-violence / 802-828-5520

Love is Not Abuse

loveisnotabuse.com

Family Violence Prevention Fund

endabuse.org/section/programs/workplace

Peace at Work

peaceatwork.org

Safe at Work Coalition

safeatworkcoalition.org

State and national programs and organizations:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799- SAFE

Vermont's Safe At Home Program

sec.state.vt.us/otherprg/safeathome/safeathome.html / 802-828-0586 / 800-439-8683 Vermont only

Vermont Domestic Violence Hotline

800-228-7395

Vermont Sexual Violence Hotline

800-489-7273

United Way Information and Referral

211

Vermont Commission on Women (see resource guide)

women.vermont.gov / 800-881-1561

Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services

ccvs.state.vt.us / 802-241-1250

Responding to Domestic Violence is Good Business

This brochure is a collaborative effort of Vermont's Attorney General's Office, Commission on Women, Council on Domestic Violence, and the Domestic Violence in the Workplace Council Workgroup.

