

Getting Help: Workplace Guidelines for Domestic Violence

There are 60,000 incidents of on-the-job violence each year, and most victims know their attackers intimately. (*Chicago Sun Times*, 9/30/96)

What to Do . . .

If you are experiencing domestic violence:

- Notify your supervisor and the human relations manager about the circumstances regarding your situation.
- Discuss options available to you, e.g., scheduling, safety precautions, employee/family assistance benefits.
- Submit a recent photo of the perpetrator to your safety manager in the event of a confrontation at work.
- Request that all information be treated with confidence to provide for your safety and well-being.

If you are the co-worker of someone experiencing domestic violence:

- If you suspect a co-worker is suffering abuse, do not directly confront her/him since it is important for an individual to self-disclose for her/his own safety and well-being.
- Express concern and a willingness to listen and be supportive if needed.
- Offer support by listening and assisting; when an individual is ready, she/he will confide.
- If a co-worker confides in you, encourage communication with the human resources manager and her/his supervisor.
- If you witness an incident at work, contact your safety manager or law enforcement immediately. Make sure that the incident is documented.

If you are the supervisor or manager of an employee who is experiencing domestic violence:

- Be aware of unusual absences or behavior and take note of bruises or emotional distress.
- Contact the human resources manager to discuss concerns, resources available and ways to support the employee, e.g., safety planning, employee assistance counseling, family resource referrals, flexible scheduling, security measures.
- Be familiar with community resources and referrals.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times; be sensitive to the seriousness of the situation.
- Discuss who is appropriate to speak with the employee; agree on all forms of communication, e.g., providing the safety manager with a photo if there is a risk at work.
- Assist the employee in documenting all incidents with the batterer that occur in the workplace.
- Take action against domestic violence by encouraging employees to volunteer and by providing financial or in-kind support to your local domestic violence programs.

Adapted from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

<http://www.ncadv.org/gettinghelp/workplace.htm>. Retrieved 12/09/02