

Individualized Workplace Domestic Violence Safety Plan Template

What is an Individualized Workplace Domestic Violence Safety Plan?

An Individualized Workplace Domestic Violence Safety Plan is for any employee who may be experiencing domestic violence. This type of safety plan explores a variety of options and work arrangements that aim to increase the protection of the employee. It is to improve an employee's personal safety and security when at work, including when the employee is working from home.

Why Should the Workplace Help to Create an Individualized Safety Plan?

The workplace is an environment where employees are to feel safe. Employers are responsible for providing a safe and secure work environment. Developing a personal safety plan for any employee who discloses they are experiencing domestic violence will help to facilitate safety for the affected employee and everyone else in the workplace.

How do I Create an Individualized Safety Plan?

The employee who is experiencing domestic violence will require a safety plan for their life at home and in the community as well as the workplace. We recommend that you refer an employee who is experiencing domestic violence to a community-based expert, like a Shelter Worker, to develop a safety plan for all aspects of her life. The employer is only responsible for the safety planning in the workplace, but it is important that the actions taken in the workplace complement the measures taken to ensure safety at home and in the community. If the employee is working from home, then safety planning for home and work will intersect and overlap. It is best if you, the supervisor/manager, and the employee work together with a community-based expert on this plan.

Decisions about the relationship are the employee's, not yours. The measures outlined in the workplace safety plan should balance respect for the right of the affected employee to make decisions regarding their relationship and the need to ensure everyone, including the affected employee is safe in the workplace. Review this plan often and make changes as safety concerns change.

Remember!

The employee is going through a potentially stressful time. They could be experiencing many emotions such as fear, embarrassment and shame, along with worries about children, housing, and other financial concerns. Be supportive, compassionate, encouraging and nonjudgmental.

Balancing Safety and Confidentiality

It is important to protect the privacy of the affected employee as much as possible. However, it is not possible to guarantee confidentiality to an employee when they are experiencing domestic violence. Sometimes it is necessary to share information in order to implement safety measures. You can assure the employee that information will only be shared with those who need to know for safety reasons.

Risk Screening

A safety plan should be based on an assessment of the risks of the specific situation of an employee experiencing domestic violence. The DvatWork site provides a risk screening tool. If the results indicate that you need to do a more in-depth risk assessment, you can work collaboratively with a community-based expert like a Shelter Worker (<https://www.sheltersafe.ca>) or with a domestic violence risk assessment professional (<https://www.dvatwork.ca/sites/default/files/2020-08/List%20of%20Prof%20Threat%20Assessors.pdf>) to conduct a professional risk assessment.

Before starting the safety plan		
Guideline	Tips for Implementing Guidelines	Actions Taken
Collaboration		
Choose a community-based expert or a risk assessment professional to work with you on the Workplace Safety Plan. Start with a risk screen. Pay attention to workplace related risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link to Risk Screening Tool - Link to Shelter Net - Link to professional risk assessors 	
Organize a time and place that is suitable for the expert, your employee and you to meet.		
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Preparing for the discussion		
<p>Secure a quiet space where you will not be interrupted.</p> <p>Explain your legal and policy obligations to ensure a safe workplace to the affected employee and to the expert you are collaborating with.</p> <p>Agree on what information will be collected and who will collect it.</p> <p>Explain limits to confidentiality and your commitment to only share information on a need to know basis.</p> <p>Explain what supports are available to the affected employee through your workplace domestic violence policy and program.</p> <p>Identify who will be responsible for the coordination of information related to the situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the workplace representatives responsible for ensuring safety and providing support have appropriate training - Express concern for the employee’s safety without judgment, blame or shame - Explain plan is a flexible, changeable document that outlines how to keep the employee safer at work - Supports might include workplace provided supports such as EAP, benefits available through the workplace policy and/or collective agreement, community-based crisis lines and counselling services and internet-based resources - The community-based expert will be able to offer information about supports 	
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Documentation		
<p>Establish where the risk assessment and safety planning documentation will be stored. This information should be stored in a secure location separate from the affected employee’s HR file.</p> <p>Establish who will have access to the information in the file and under what circumstances.</p>	<p>Possible actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up a secure physical or electronic filing space just for documents related to domestic violence safety planning - Identifying a person or a team who will be responsible for the management of these files 	

<p>Establish what documentation will be collected at work and by who. Establish who will be responsible for gathering the documentation and ensuring that it is stored in the secure location.</p> <p>Establish who will be responsible for review of the documentation and the schedule for review.</p> <p>Consult with the domestic violence experts to determine when a case can be considered 'closed' and no longer subject to ongoing review.</p> <p>Establish how the affected employee will have access to the information in the file.</p>		
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<p>Communications</p> <p>Consider how an abusive (ex)partner could contact an affected employee through workplace communication channels including phone messages, text messages, email and social media platforms.</p> <p>Consider how to protect the affected employee from harassment and threats via organizational communication channels.</p>	<p>Possible actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing work phone numbers and email addresses - Having someone else answer the affected employee's phone - Letting all calls go to voice message - Blocking - Having location detection disabled on the affected employee's cell phones – especially work phones - Collecting abusive messages left via phone recordings, emails, texts and/or social media in case they are needed for future legal proceedings - 	
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Restricting access to the workplace		
<p>Consider how an abusive (ex)partner could gain access to information about the affected employee.</p> <p>Consider how an abusive (ex)partner could have physical access to the affected employee through the workplace.</p>	<p>Possible actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removing the affected employee's name and reference to location, including phone extension and e-mail address from workplace internet and intranet and schedules - Limiting social networking associated with the employee's name, upcoming events, or photos of them - Moving the affected employee away from areas that are accessible to the public - Moving the affected employee's workstation away from windows or areas that are visible to the public - Preventing physical and/or electronic access to the affected employee while at work if the abusive (ex)partner works in the same workplace 	
Notes		
Entering and exiting the workplace		
<p>Consider how an employee can safely enter and exit the workplace</p>	<p>Safer entrance and exit practices can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing a well-lit parking space, adjacent to an entrance - Providing a parking space monitored by camera - Having a travel-by-buddy system or a security escort where possible 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning for how to move quickly to an area with more people If sensing a hazardous situation - Entering via a guarded access door if available - Having a phone pre-programmed with an emergency # for the police 	
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Alternative Work Arrangements		
<p>Consider how to make it less predictable when and/where the affected employee will be at work</p>	<p>Alternative work arrangements can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving the affected employee flexible work hours, a change in start and finish times, or changing shifts - Changing the work site or office location of the affected employee - Changing the department where affected employee works 	
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Security measures		
<p>Consider how to implement security protocols to increase safety for the affected worker and the workplace.</p> <p>Consider what role the security force for the workplace and/or the police can play in preventing or responding to an incident.</p>	<p>Security measures can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing a photo or description of the abusive (ex)partner to Security, front desk staff, and/or entire workplace where appropriate to limit their access to the workplace - Notifying security and the police if the abusive (ex)partner has firearms or access to firearms 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advising reception, security and/or co-workers not to give out any personal information or information on the whereabouts of the affected employee - ensure that the affected worker and others, where appropriate, have Security's number on speed dial – on all work phone - Inquiring whether a restraining order, no contact order, or other emergency intervention orders is in place and whether or not the workplace is named 	
<p>Notes</p>		
<p>Check-In Protocol</p>		
<p>Develop a check-in protocol if the employee is absent from work without notice</p>	<p>A check-in protocol can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtaining permission for a supervisor to check in with the affected employee in the case of unexpected absences - Establishing a code word/phrase the employee can use to indicate they are in danger or need help when an employer calls, texts or emails to check-in - Obtaining permission for a supervisor to call and check with a trusted person in the case of unexpected absences <p>Name and phone number of trusted person:</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Tel. _____</p>	

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Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design		
Consider how the design and physical layout of the workplace can prevent an incident of physical violence at the workplace.	<p>Possible actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installing bright security lighting, using motion detectors in areas where unauthorized persons could approach the workplace - Removing/trimming decorative shrubs and trees that may seeing if an unauthorized person is on workplace property - Installing solid-core doors and secure locks on all exterior doors - Securing all outbuildings, making sure they are visible from the central workplace - Installing fencing/gates/locks/key cards to limit unauthorized access to areas of the workplace - Installing panic buttons/alarms - Ensuring that computers and other devices face away from the public so that personal information is not visible and/or use security screens on computers so that information is not visible to anyone who does not have a direct view of the screen <p>See https://www.cptedontario.com/ for more information</p>	
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Working from Home		
<p>Carefully review all measures in this safety planning template and consider which ones can be adapted for a situation where an employee is working from home.</p> <p>Maintain regular contact with the employee and be prepared to call for emergency help if there is a need to do so.</p>	<p>Possible actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing code words or phrases to indicate when the employee is able to speak freely and when they are being monitored - Establishing code words or phrases to indicate that the employee is in immediate danger - Checking in regularly with the employee, both through formal work meetings and informal check-ins - Storing a copy of the safety plan in a password protected space that only the affected employee and those who are supporting them can access - Asking the employee to come into the workplace for 'mandatory' work meetings if they are being constantly surveilled at home - Allowing the employee to meet with domestic violence experts during 'mandatory work meetings' - Providing a VPN service to cloak the employee's internet use - Providing guidance on tech safety - Providing accommodations such as flexible hours - Consulting with internal IT experts regarding additional security measures 	
Notes:		
Leave Provisions		
	<p>Affected employees can use leave for many reasons, including making arrangement to leave, consulting a lawyer, accessing counselling support for themselves or</p>	

	<p>their children, seeking medical attention or taking time to rest and regroup. Leave provisions can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislated domestic violence leave - Other leave options as outlined in workplace policy - Going beyond minimum provincial standards and providing pay for the duration of a leave or a portion of it that is not already a requirement - Requesting permission to call employee while on leave 	
<p>Notes</p>		
<p>Notification</p>		
<p>Consider if other employees need to be notified about the potential for violence in the workplace.</p>	<p>The decision to notify other employees includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determining who needs to be notified and how they will be notified - Determining what information should be shared - Determining how to respect confidentiality to the extent possible - Sharing information in a concise, factual manner to facilitate safety without causing unnecessary alarm 	
<p>Notes</p>		
<p>Additional Measures</p>		
<p>Consider if there are any other measures that you can take to ensure your employee's safety</p>	<p>Possible actions include:</p>	

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