

Types of Workplace Violence

When examining the circumstances associated with workplace assaults in California, acts of workplace violence events include four major types. However, workplaces may be subject to more than one type.

TYPE 1: VIOLENCE BY STRANGERS

"Type 1 Violence" means workplace violence committed by a person who has no legitimate business at the worksite and includes violent acts by anyone who enters the workplace or approaches workers with the intent to commit a crime.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

1. Retail robberies (product, merchandise, equipment or materials)
2. Workplaces where employees or proprietors have face-to-face contact and exchange money with the public
3. Robberies of delivery, taxicab, and ride-hailing drivers
4. Janitors/maintenance workers
5. Threats and acts of violence directed at security guards

TYPE 2: VIOLENCE BY CUSTOMERS OR CLIENTS

"Type 2 violence" means workplace violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, students, inmates, or visitors.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

1. Transportation service providers, such as, municipal bus or railway operators
2. Social welfare service providers in unemployment offices, welfare eligibility offices, homeless shelters, probation offices, and child welfare agencies
3. Social welfare service providers while onsite and during visits at residences
4. Teaching, administrative, and support staff in schools where students have a history of violent behavior
5. Other types of service providers, e.g., justice system personnel, customer service representatives, and delivery personnel.

TYPE 3: VIOLENCE BY CO-WORKERS

"Type 3 violence" means workplace violence against an employee by a present or former employee, supervisor, or manager. The primary target of a Type 3 event can be a co-employee, a supervisor, domestic partner, or manager of an individual who may be seeking revenge for what they perceive as unfair treatment at the workplace.

NOTES:

1. Any workplace can be at risk of violence by a co-worker.
2. In committing a threat or assault, the individual may be seeking revenge for what is perceived as unfair treatment
3. Fatalities related to violence by co-workers receive much media attention, but account for only a small proportion of all workplace violence related fatalities. Strangers cause most workplace violence fatalities.

TYPE 4: VIOLENCE BY PERSONAL RELATIONS

"Type 4 violence" means workplace violence committed in the workplace by a person who does not work there but has or is known to have had a personal relationship with an employee.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

1. Incidents of domestic violence at the workplace by an assailant who confronts an individual with whom he or she has or had a personal relationship outside of work.
2. Incidents of personal relations include current or former spouse, lover, relative, friend or acquaintance.
3. Incidents where the assailant's actions are motivated by perceived difficulties in the relationship or by psycho-social factors that are specific to the assailant.

Multiple Types of Workplace Violence Events

Most occupations and workplaces are at risk of more than one type of workplace violence event.