Workplace Violence – Restaurants Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Workplace violence at a restaurant can take many forms, including physical violence, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying. Dealing with workplace violence is a serious matter and it is important to take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of all employees.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE HAZARDS

Physical harm: Workplace violence can cause physical harm to employees and customers. This can include injuries such as bruises, cuts, and broken bones, as well as more serious injuries like gunshot wounds.

Emotional harm: Workplace violence can also cause emotional harm, such as anxiety, stress, and trauma. Employees and customers who witness or experience violence may require counseling or other forms of support.

Increased risk of further violence: Workplace violence can increase the risk of further violence, particularly if the perpetrator is not apprehended or if employees and customers do not feel safe.

Damage to property: Violence can also cause damage to property, such as broken windows, damaged equipment, and other property damage.

Disruption of operations: Workplace violence can disrupt normal restaurant operations, leading to lost revenue and decreased productivity.

Legal and regulatory issues: Workplace violence can also lead to legal and regulatory consequences, such as fines, lawsuits, and regulatory sanctions.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

EMPLOYEE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE STRATEGIES FOR WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Be aware of potential warning signs: Be aware of the warning signs of workplace violence, such as aggressive behavior, threats, or a pattern of bullying or harassment. If you notice any of these warning signs, report them to your supervisor or HR immediately.

Know your workplace violence prevention policy: Familiarize yourself with your restaurant's workplace violence prevention policy and procedures. This should include information on reporting incidents of violence, how to seek help if you feel unsafe, and what steps the restaurant will take to protect employees.

Be aware of your surroundings: Pay attention to your surroundings and be aware of potential risks, such as areas of the restaurant that are poorly lit or have limited visibility. If you feel unsafe in a particular area, report it to your supervisor or ask to be reassigned.

Use safe work practices: Follow safe work practices when working with equipment or handling potentially hazardous materials. This can help reduce the risk of workplace accidents or injuries.

Practice conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques: Learn and practice conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques, such as active listening and using calming language. These techniques can help defuse tense situations and prevent them from escalating into violence.

Seek support if you experience workplace violence: If you experience workplace violence, seek support from your supervisor or HR. This can include counseling services, medical attention, or legal assistance.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

If an employee experiences or witness's workplace violence at a restaurant, they should take the following steps:

Ensure immediate safety: If there is an immediate threat to safety, employees should call 911 or the appropriate emergency services. They should also remove themselves from the situation if possible.

Report the incident: Employees should report the incident to their supervisor or manager as soon as possible. They should provide a detailed account of what happened, including the date, time, location, and any other relevant details. If the supervisor or manager is involved in the incident, employees should report the incident to someone in a higher position or to human resources.

Seek medical attention: If an employee has been physically injured, they should seek medical attention immediately. They should also inform their supervisor or manager of any injuries sustained.

Document the incident: Employees should keep a record of the incident, including any injuries sustained and any communication with the employer or law enforcement.

Seek support: Workplace violence can be traumatic and can have lasting effects on employees' mental health. Employees should seek support from a counselor, therapist, or employee assistance program (EAP) if needed.

Cooperate with the investigation: If an investigation is conducted, employees should cooperate with the investigation and provide any information requested. They should also follow any policies or procedures put in place by the employer to address workplace violence.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE CHECKLIST

- Learn how to recognize, avoid, and diffuse potentially violent situations with co-workers and customers.

- Inform management of any concerns or safety and security issues—verbally and in writing.
- Avoid being alone when personal security may be an issue.
- Carry only small amounts of cash.
- Contribute to the development of procedures that address safety and security concerns.
- Comply with the workplace violence prevention program and safety and security measures established by your employers.
- Report violent incidents promptly and accurately.
- Participate in safety and health committees or teams that receive reports of violent incidents or security problems, participate in facility inspections, and respond with recommendations for corrective strategies.

FINAL WORD

It is important to have a workplace violence prevention plan in place, including training for employees on how to respond to incidents of violence. By taking proactive measures to prevent and respond to workplace violence, restaurants can help ensure the safety and well-being of their employees and customers.