INFORMATION FOR WORKERS EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence can take many different forms including intimidation, coercion or isolation, emotional, physical, sexual, mental, financial and spiritual abuse. If you feel scared of a partner, ex-partner or a family member, you may be experiencing domestic violence.

Domestic violence can also occur between people in an intimate relationship who do not live together, between people in same-sex relationships, between carers and the person in their care and between people in relationships. Men can also be victims of domestic violence.

The violence tends to increase over time, becoming more serious and more frequent. It harms both the victim and others including children who witness the abuse.

Data collected by the world health organization and amnesty international show that one out of three women has experienced violence and that violence is the leading cause of death amongst women aged 16 to 44. It is estimated that 70% of this violence occurs in the family. Around 60% of affected women are scared and ashamed, and suffer in silence, without taking any steps to break the circle of violence. This has a negative impact on their health, their self-esteem, and their productivity at work.

Domestic violence is a complex problem of large dimensions which affects people from all regions, professions, and social backgrounds around the world. It is about power and control.

IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE A WORKPLACE ISSUE?

It can be. Work may be where you feel safe and respected and what is happening at home has no impact on your performance or safety - it is a private matter. But domestic violence can impact on you at work in the following ways:

• being prevented or delayed from getting to work
• being harassed or intimidated at work
• distressed or crying at work
• struggling to manage your workload and deadlines
• covering up what is happening

Domestic violence can be stressful, upsetting and distracting. It can make it hard to perform your duties and can also be a workplace safety risk.
Domestic violence impacting at work
If domestic violence is affecting your attendance, performance and safety at work then it is important that you get legal protection as soon as possible [and that the workplace is included as a protected place – amend if this is not the legal arrangement in your country].

Legal position
Insert here the legal position in your country.

Should I tell my employer (supervisor/manager) about what is happening?
You only need to tell your workplace about things that directly affect or impact on your work.

Is the abusive person:
• constantly calling, emailing or texting you at work
• following you to or from work
• making threats to harm you or your co-workers at work
• threatening to tell your boss embarrassing personal information
• coming into or hanging around your workplace to intimidate you

If any of these things are happening, you should tell your workplace. Your job and your safety might be at risk.

Another thing to consider is whether you need to negotiate time off to organise temporary safety measures such as changes to your working times and patterns, or attend appointments with support services, your child's school, your bank or to go to court.

Telling your workplace may be difficult, but being upfront about your situation may make it easier if the abusive person tries to cause trouble for you at work.

The capacity to stay financially independent is very important in surviving domestic violence and so remaining employed is vital.

Attitudes to domestic violence vary: some workplaces are supportive, providing paid leave and flexible working arrangements. Others are less supportive or not supportive at all or may not be aware of the issue.
Generally it's better to get advice from your union before raising the issue at work. Your union representative or the medical staff at the workplace may also assist you in raising the issue.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS NOT YOUR FAULT AND YOU SHOULD NOT FEEL ASHAMED. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AT HOME AND SAFE AT WORK.
Keep Records
Make a record of how the family violence is affecting you at work: dates, times, details (where, what happened, what was said, any witnesses). This will help you if you decide to report any incidents to the police and would provide evidence to a court if necessary.

SAFETY AT WORK
Workplaces have a duty to ensure health and safety. Workers have a duty to take reasonable care to protect their own safety.

You can talk to your workplace about what it can do to assist you to be safe and keep doing your job. Safety planning can include things like:
• having someone walk you to your car or transport when you leave work
• asking your workplace to notify relevant staff not to tell anyone information about your location or movements
• making sure you’re not left alone at a work location with public access
• providing a photo of the abusive person to front desk staff, so that they can identify them and call the police if necessary

Check your workplace health & safety policy: many workplaces have one. Your workplace may also have a policy on workplace violence.

Abusive calls, texts and emails
A supportive workplace can assist in protecting you from abusive calls and emails. Your workplace may already have policies and procedures on this. Options include:

• report calls or text messages containing threats of harm to the police (and workplace security) immediately. Note the time, date, length and content
• screen calls and voicemail – can someone else answer your phone?
• block or divert emails so you don’t have to see them. Some email software (such as outlook) allows you to create ‘rules’ to automatically divert or block emails from any email address
• notify the abusive person’s workplace if they are harassing you from their workplace as they are misusing work time/resources
• don’t respond to abusive messages from your work email account or phone. This could be a breach of your work contract or workplace communications policy
• save abusive emails and text messages.
What can i do if my employer treats me unfairly at work or sacks me?

• try to stay calm and polite in dealings with co-workers and management
• take detailed notes during the meeting
• can have a support person present and for time to prepare
• if management ask you to have a ‘chat’ or meeting about your work, ask whether you
• keep a copy of workplace policies and procedures, such as disciplinary policies. Keep
• ask for copies of any performance reviews (if relevant)
• get managers to put their concerns and issues in writing
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• these records in hardcopy at home or in your car, don’t leave them at work (just in case
• you do lose your job, and can’t access the workplace).
• if management ask you to have a ‘chat’ or meeting about your work, ask whether you
• can have a support person present and for time to prepare
• discuss the meeting with the union in advance of the meeting so you are prepared
• take detailed notes during the meeting
• try to stay calm and polite in dealings with co-workers and management

What can i do if my employer treats me unfairly at work or sacks me?
If your employer treats you unfairly or tried to sack you because of your experience of
domestic violence, contact the union immediately.
Where can I get support and advice?
The workplace is often the safest place from where to access advice and assistance as you can gather the information without fear of discovery or interruption.

Your union representative should also have a list of the support services offered in your area and can refer you to appropriate organisations that deal with family violence.

Your union representative may be trained in assisting members with domestic violence issues.

Any medical staff at the workplace could also provide additional support.

Your employer may have a policy on domestic violence. That would provide further information and, ideally, name trained contact people who can assist.

Again, your union representative can advise you on these matters.
What can I do if my employer treats me unfairly at work or sacks me?

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- Discuss the meeting with the union in advance of the meeting so you are prepared.
- Can have a support person present and for time to prepare.
- Keep a copy of workplace policies and procedures, such as disciplinary policies. Keep these records in hardcopy at home or in your car, don’t leave them at work (just in case).

Taking these steps may also be helpful:

If you have received a warning about performance issues, or you think you could lose your job.

Attend, you should speak to the union first.

It’s important to keep good records of any abusive phone calls, text messages or emails.

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Save and print out copies of Facebook (and similar social networks) messages (in case of family violence at work).

You only need to tell your workplace about things that directly affect or impact on your job and your safety.

The workplace has specific rights and entitlements for workers experiencing family violence and so remaining employed is vital.

The capacity to stay financially independent is very important in surviving domestic violence and so remaining employed is vital.

If any of these things are happening, you should tell your workplace. Your job and your safety might be at risk.

Telling your workplace may be difficult, but being upfront about your situation may make things easier.

It can be. Work may be where you feel safe and respected, and what is happening at work.

Domestic violence can also occur between people in same-sex relationships, including intimidation, coercion or isolation, and so are family members.

The violence tends to increase over time, becoming more serious and more frequent. It harms both the victim and others including children who witness the abuse.

The workplace is often the safest place from where to access advice and assistance as well as financial and domestic support.

Your employer may have a policy on domestic violence. That would provide further protection.

Any medical staff at the workplace could also provide additional support.

Your union representative should also have a list of the support services offered in your region.

The workplace is often the safest place from where to access advice and assistance as well as financial and domestic support.

A supportive workplace can assist in protecting you from abusive calls and emails. Your workplace may already have policies and procedures on this. Options include:

- Providing a photo of the abusive person to front desk staff, so that they can identify them.
- Making sure you’re not left alone at a work location with public access.
- Asking your workplace to notify relevant staff not to tell anyone information about your abuse.
- Having someone walk you to your car or transport when you leave work.
- Being allowed to take certified leave to attend court.
- Being able to make any other reasonable adjustments, such as changing your shifts.

You can talk to your workplace about what it can do to assist you to be safe and keep your job.

Abusive calls, texts and emails

Abusive calls, texts and emails can be a workplace safety risk.

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- Being allowed to take certified leave to attend court.
- Being able to make any other reasonable adjustments, such as changing your shifts.

You can talk to your workplace about what it can do to assist you to be safe and keep your job.

Abusive calls, texts and emails
Domestic violence, contact the union immediately. If your employer treats you unfairly or tried to sack you because of your experience of domestic violence it can have a support person present and for time to prepare. If you do lose your job, and can't access the workplace.

• keep a copy of workplace policies and procedures, such as disciplinary policies. Keep • ask for copies of any performance reviews (if relevant) • try to stay calm and polite in dealings with co-workers and management • take detailed notes during the meeting

Taking these steps may also be helpful:

What if my job is being threatened (performance management)?

If you have to miss work or are late due to domestic violence, you should call to tell your workplace. If I tell my workplace, will it be kept confidential?

Attitudes to domestic violence vary: some workplaces are supportive, providing paid temporary safety measures such as changes to your working times and patterns, or security) immediately. Note the time, date, length and evidence to a court if necessary.

Another thing to consider is whether you need to negotiate time off to organise safety might be at risk.

You only need to tell your workplace about things that directly affect or impact on your workplace has specific rights and entitlements for workers experiencing family violence it is important that you get legal protection as soon as possible [and that the workplace is included as a protected place – amend if this is not the legal arrangement in your country].

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence can also occur between people in relationships. Men can also be victims between carers and the person in their care and emotional, physical, sexual, mental, financial and experiencing domestic violence.

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Should I tell my employer (supervisor/manager) about what is happening? It is important to keep good records of any abusive phone calls, text messages or the sender deletes their account)

• save and print out copies of facebook (and similar social networks) messages (in case

• making threats to harm you or your co-workers at work
• following you to or from work

Telling your workplace may be difficult, but being upfront about your situation may make it easier if the abusive person tries to cause trouble for you at work.

Legal position

Around 60% of affected women are scared and ashamed, and suffer in silence. Generally it's better to get advice from your union before raising the issue at work. Your union representative should also have a list of the support services offered in your local area. Where can i get support and advice?

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS NOT YOUR FAULT AND YOU

Your union representative may be trained in assisting members with domestic violence issues.

Your union representative should also have a list of the support services offered in your local area. AGAIN, YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE CAN ADVISE YOU ON THESE MATTERS.

Legal position

The workplace is often the safest place from where to access advice and assistance as it's important that you get legal protection as soon as possible [and that the workplace is included as a protected place – amend if this is not the legal arrangement in your country].

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Web: www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au

Safe at home, safe at work

Project Manager