

## Violence

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation, section 4.27, defines **violence** as “the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker.”

Violence also includes “any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury.”

Incidents of violence may not necessarily occur on the job site. Incidents are considered workplace violence if they arise out of the worker’s employment.

## Caring for a living, together

Across BC, HSA represents more than twelve thousand health care and social services professionals in acute care, long-term care and community health facilities, including child development centres and transition houses.



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# What is VIOLENCE?

preventing violence in the health care workplace

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**Threats** generally involve any communication of intent to injure that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe there is a risk of injury. A threat against a worker's family arising from the worker's employment is considered a threat against the worker.

Examples of threats include:

- Threats (direct or indirect) delivered in person or through letters, phone calls, or electronic mail
- Intimidating or frightening gestures such as shaking fists at another person, pounding a desk or counter, punching a wall, angrily jumping up and down, or screaming
- Throwing or striking objects
- Stalking
- Wielding a weapon, or carrying a concealed weapon for the purpose of threatening or injuring a person
- Not controlling a dog menacing (for example, growling at) a worker

**Assault** involves any act, gesture, or attempt to apply force that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe there is a risk of injury, whether or not an injury (physical or psychological) occurs. Examples of assault include:

- Kicking, hitting, biting, grabbing, pinching, scratching, or spitting
- Injuring a person by using an object such as a chair, cane, or sharps container, or a weapon such as a knife, gun, or blunt instrument
- Verbal hostility and abuse

information courtesy of the workers' compensation board of bc publication  
"preventing violence in health care: five steps to an effective program"

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## WCB resources

### WCB Prevention Information Line

604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland  
1 888 621-SAFE (7233) toll-free in B.C.

### WCB Publications

The following WCB publications may be helpful:

- Health Care Industry: Focus Report on Occupational Injury and Disease
- Coping with Critical Incident Stress at Work (pamphlet)
- Gently into the Night: Aggression in Long-Term Care (by Neil Boyd)

These and other publications can be ordered from the WCB:

Phone: 604 / 276.3068  
Toll-free: 1 800 / 661.2112, local 3068  
Fax: 604 / 279.7406  
E-mail: [pubvid@wcb.bc.ca](mailto:pubvid@wcb.bc.ca)

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