



# DFV Work Aware

when domestic & family violence comes to work

## **Domestic and Family Violence Safety Planning Guide**

## What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is a pattern of abusive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship where the person who uses the violence is motivated by a desire to dominate, control or oppress the other person in a way that causes fear. DFV can take many different forms including intimidation, coercion or isolation, emotional, physical, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse. DFV can happen to anyone and occurs in all socio-economic and cultural settings.

DFV usually increases over time, becoming more serious and more frequent. It harms not only those who are targets of the abuse but others including children who witness the abuse. **If someone is fearful or feels scared of a partner, ex-partner or a family member they may be experiencing DFV.**

**Two thirds of women experiencing DFV are in paid employment** and maintaining employment is important for economic independence to be able to address the violence. However sometimes the violence can continue at work creating safety risks not only to the employee but also to co-workers. Creating opportunities for employees to be more comfortable discussing DFV can help prevent it from entering a workplace and in dealing with it if it does.

There are important things workplaces can do to support employees and to help prevent DFV. Employers, supervisors, managers, unions and co-workers as well as human resources (HR), and workplace health and safety (WHS) representatives can all play a role.

**DFV is a complex issue** with the potential for serious harm and sometimes death, so paying attention to risk factors is important for safety and risk management in workplaces. It is important that responses in the workplace are based on best practice for both prevention and harm minimisation. It is recommended that, if not already in place, workplaces should develop and implement a Domestic and Family Violence Policy and provide regular training and support regarding the policy and related procedures to all employees.

## Developing an effective domestic and family violence workplace safety plan

Your workplace's DFV Policy should emphasise access to safety and flexible options for employees experiencing abuse. This policy should include a *Workplace Safety Plan* (the Plan) and a *Workplace Safety Checklist* (the Checklist). This will enhance general safe at work strategies, while targeting specific risk factors associated with DFV. The Plan and Checklist are to be completed by the manager or HR Representative together with the employee concerned.

The effectiveness and acceptability of this Plan is greatly enhanced through the involvement and full support of relevant staff. Participation in training on how to use this guide will assist in ensuring the most effective Plan and will enhance the acceptability and efficiency of any necessary general monitoring or surveillance measures. Individual measures **must** be developed with the full informed consent of the employee.

Typically, the focus is on:

- planning responses to an immediate threat or crisis; and
- identifying ways the employee can increase their safety in the workplace and/or that of their co-workers, students, volunteers and others in the workplace.

Once developed, this Plan should be reviewed at predetermined intervals for appropriateness or as circumstances alter to ensure the risk is appropriately managed.

A discussion with the employee who is affected by DFV must clarify where and how the Plan and Checklist is kept and stored. The conversation must also include questions such as what will happen to the Plan and Checklist if the responsible manager resigns or is on leave.

The questions and considerations contained in this Workplace Guide are drawn from the experiences of a range of different workplaces. Not all of them will be necessary or appropriate in your workplace, and some may already exist as part of your workplace safety protocols in relation to dealing with the public, requiring only minor modification.

## **Every workplace is different**

Workplace safety plans reflect the general safety measures that can be introduced, as well as specific plans tailored to the needs of individual employees experiencing DFV, according to the nature of the workplace and individual employee's circumstances.

This Plan and Checklist is to be completed by the manager when responding to the disclosure of DFV by an employee, or if the manager or co-workers have recognised that the employee may be experiencing DFV. If your workplace has a HR unit, managers should work in conjunction with HR representatives and the employee concerned to establish a Plan and to identify suitable flexible work arrangements, reasonable adjustments, leave, transfer or relocation, if required.

Everyone in the workplace has a role to play in helping to prevent DFV. Below are some safety planning suggestions which may assist the workplace in determining how best to plan and prevent DFV in the workplace and provide the affected employee with support to actively address their situation.

## **What to do next**

1. Appendix 1 contains general questions regarding contact details for the employee, their manager, the HR Representative assigned to the work team/matter (if relevant), and the employee's emergency contacts. The emergency contacts must be kept up-to-date and the employee's manager/HR Representative should confirm these details with the employee at least every 6-12 months.
2. Appendix 2 contains a range of questions/suggestions to help open conversation between you and the affected employee. The questions provide a guide, and dependent on the situation, you may not need to complete all. Considerations will be given in accordance with the level of risk determined and the organisation's capacity to action.
3. Appendix 3 is a checklist that will assist managers and employees to identify the most suitable supports and safety measures. When implementing control measures, consideration needs to be given to the individual circumstances of the workplace, which may include location, budget, costs and availability of resources.
4. Ensure that you refer to the list of referral organisations entitled Safety is Everyone's Right. These organisations can assist with safe housing, counselling, legal issues etc. Specialist domestic and family violence services are the experts in this area and are appropriately prioritised over generalist services. If you are unsure where to refer contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732).

Be alert, understand DFV, and **recognise** the possible signs and impacts of DFV in the workplace.

Listen if an employee discloses DFV, show empathy, and maintain confidentiality.

Believe the employee and reassure them that the workplace is committed to assisting them.

**Respond** appropriately and reinforce the internal and external supports available to them.

Provide information, support and appropriate **referrals**, and check in with the employee regularly.

Keep **records** of discussions, incidents, safety plans and other documentation and **review**.

## Appendix 1: Workplace and Emergency Contact Details

### Employee Details

Title  Mr  Mrs  Ms  Other

First Name  Last Name

Email (Wk)  (Home)

Phone (Wk)  (Home)  (Mob)

Employee No.  Position / work team

Employment Status  Full-time  Part-time  Casual  Job share  Volunteer/student

New bank account details (if required)

Other notes

**If any of the above contacts are not safe for the workplace to contact the employee through – please delete or mark as UNSAFE.** If job share, consider impacts on person sharing role, including additional responsibilities/pressure, impact on own wellbeing, etc.

### Manager's Details

Full Name

Email

Phone (Wk)  (Home)  (Mob)

### HR Representative Details (if applicable)

Full Name

Email

Phone (Wk)  (Home)  (Mob)

### Employee Emergency Contacts (including trusted co-worker, if applicable)

(1) First Name  Last Name

Email

Phone (Wk)  (Home)  (Mob)

Relationship to employee

(2) First Name  Last Name

Email

Phone (Wk)  (Home)  (Mob)

Relationship to employee

(3) First Name  Last Name

Email

Phone (Wk)  (Home)  (Mob)

Relationship to employee

## Appendix 2: Workplace Safety Plan



**DFV Work Aware**

when domestic & family violence comes to work

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
<b>Imminent Safety Risk</b>			
<p>Are you in imminent danger?</p> <p>Who else might be in danger (e.g. children, other family members, friends/colleagues, pets)?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If employee or anyone else is in imminent danger, encourage contact with the Police via 000.</li> <li>• For police assistance other than emergencies call 131 444.</li> <li>• Encourage contact with a local specialist domestic and family violence service or 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732).</li> </ul>	
<p>Does the person who is using violence have access to weapons?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the person using violence has access to weapons, list the types of weapons, whether they have a firearm and if they are licenced.</li> <li>• Report this situation to the Police and seek advice.</li> </ul>	
<p>Do you have a personal safety plan?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If not, provide referrals to a local specialist domestic and family violence service to assist with formulating a personal safety plan if necessary.</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
<b>Domestic Violence Protection Orders</b>			
<p>Do you have a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVO) in place?</p> <p>If yes, does it cover the workplace?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If a DVO exists</b>, clarify the terms of the Order and if the workplace is specified in the Order. If workplace is included, request a copy of the Order.</li> <li>• Consider requesting a copy of the Order even if the workplace is not listed, and/or encourage the employee to seek legal advice regarding a variation of the Order.</li> <li>• If the employee is going to apply for an Order, encourage them to seek independent legal advice about including the workplace.</li> </ul>	
<p>Has the person using violence ever been charged with breaching the DVO?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If the person using violence has breached the Order</b>, seek advice from security or Police, HR or legal and encourage the employee to seek independent legal advice.</li> <li>• <b>If the person using violence is the subject of an Order</b>, they are not required to advise the workplace. However, if the person using violence is charged or engages in criminal behaviour (stalking, assault, wilful damage to property), this should be reported to the Police, and HR if applicable.</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the person using violence is a public service employee and is charged, convicted or acquitted (such as being charged for being in breach of an Order), the person using violence must report this to their employer under the Public Service Code of Conduct (section 17).</li> </ul>	
<b>Work and Social Support</b>			
<p>Who are your contacts in case of an emergency, specific to this matter?</p> <p>Do you have a support network, family or friends you can speak to about the violence?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check emergency details are up-to-date in personnel records and in Appendix 1 of this Workplace Safety Plan.</li> <li>Contacts must be safe for workplace to use – check each method of contact and delete/note any unsafe contact methods.</li> <li>Clarify point and method of contact in the event the employee will be late or absent from work.</li> </ul>	
<p>If there is no immediate safety risk, encourage employee to access counselling through a local specialist domestic and family violence service, the Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) or a private counsellor.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If counselling is required, provide contact details and referrals, and allow employee to access safely during work time.</li> </ul>	
<b>The Person Using Violence</b>			

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
Does the person using violence work at the same workplace?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it possible to separate employees to address any safety concerns?</li> </ul>	
Has the person using violence used work resources or conducted the behaviour within the workplace?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the person using violence has used work resources or conducted the behaviour within the workplace, the matter should be reported to HR (if applicable), as it may constitute a breach of the workplace Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>	
Does the person using violence have access to the workplace?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for a recent photo or description of the person using violence.</li> <li>• Obtain consent from the employee to share photo with security and reception so they know who to look for or screen.</li> <li>• Consider/review how visitors access the workplace, including public areas (e.g. toilets, lunch areas).</li> <li>• If the employee works at front reception, consider relocation/change of duties.</li> </ul>	
<b>Employee Movements and Surrounds</b>			
Can you talk me through a typical work day for you?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm the employee's daily work/child care arrangements, including standard start times, finish times etc.</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reiterate that the employee contact the workplace if they are going to be late or not coming in to work.</li> </ul>	
Which parts of the workplace do you frequently attend?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the employee visible within the workplace?</li> <li>• Can visitors access and leave the workplace with ease?</li> <li>• Do they need swipe cards?</li> <li>• Is there a reception, front desk or security?</li> <li>• Are there visitor's logs or sign in and sign out procedures? If not, consider implementing some.</li> </ul>	
Are there any times you work alone?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce or eliminate the risk of the employee working in isolation from others.</li> <li>• Ensure the employee is aware of the location of a fixed duress/panic button if available.</li> <li>• Identify a safe place for the employee to go to if in danger and how they will get there.</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
<p>Are there any circumstances in which you would be more vulnerable (e.g. walking to a meeting or forum – internal or external workplaces)?</p> <p>Are you available to the public (e.g. reception, calling the work number)?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the employee does not work in areas visible and easily accessible to visitors (e.g. reception, near windows).</li> </ul>	
<p>Are there any personal hazards associated with the employee's work uniform if relevant?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss possibility of not wearing work uniform if this will increase safety for employee.</li> </ul>	
<p>Are there any circumstances in which other employees might be put at risk?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss options to address any other circumstances and seek permission from employee to speak to other employees that may be involved and/or at risk.</li> </ul>	
<b>Travelling To and From Work</b>			
<p>How do you travel to and from work?</p> <p>If you drive, where do you usually park?</p> <p>If you take public transport, where is the nearest stop/station?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a plan for safe travel to and from work, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– where to park (if driving)</li> <li>– how best to exit the building</li> <li>– whether employee should be accompanied to their car or public transport</li> <li>– the most appropriate person/s to accompany them (ensure other employees are not placed at risk).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If possible, provide the employee with a well-lit, priority parking spot nearby.</li> <li>• Consider providing the employee with a mobile duress device or similar.</li> <li>• Identify a co-worker to keep track of the employee's start/finish times.</li> <li>• Ensure commitments have been clearly identified and communicated to ascertain routine aspects of an employee's day-to-day routine (e.g. school drop off, childcare arrangements etc).</li> </ul>	
<b>Access to Employee Information at the Workplace</b>			
<p>What methods could the person using violence use to contact you while at work (e.g. by work/person phone, work/person email, social media, in person, via mutual friends/colleagues)?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the employee with a new work phone number and/or email address if deemed appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure all records and directories that the public can access do not include the employee's contact information (e.g. workplace website).</li> <li>• Offer to have a co-worker screen their calls.</li> <li>• Do not list employee's phone number on external resources, and mark phone</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
		<p>number on any internal resources (e.g. workplace intranet) as 'confidential'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with IT to address options for safe work communication (eg blocking emails).</li> </ul>	
<b>Work Impacts and Performance</b>			
<p>Is the violence impacting your current work performance?</p> <p>If so, what can we do to support you?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the employee to advise their manager/HR representative of work impacts the violence might be causing.</li> <li>• Consider providing additional support to assist with work commitments if required.</li> <li>• Check with co-workers to determine if their work is being impacted and provide support if required.</li> </ul>	
<b>Flexible Work Practices / Reasonable Adjustments</b> <i>(follow up and check on progress and well-being at regular intervals so that flexible working arrangements can be modified)</i>			
<p>Are there any reasonable adjustments the workplace can offer you to support you in managing your safety?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a flexible schedule or flexible work arrangements where possible (e.g. changed start/finish/break times, staggered or changed shifts, remove shifts where employee is likely to be working alone or in an isolated location).</li> <li>• Consider any additional support that may assist (i.e. specialist domestic and family violence service, the Employee Assistance</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
		Provider (EAP), 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) or a private counsellor.	
Do you need time off from work (either full or part days) to attend medical, legal, or court appointments, attend to childcare, school, accommodation or financial issues).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss whether the employee needs to access paid leave. If the workplace has a DFV Policy, DFV leave should be accessed first. If there is no DFV Policy or DFV leave allowances are exhausted, provide employee with options to access personal/annual leave and/or unpaid leave.</li> </ul>	
<p>Is there a need to transfer or relocate you to another office/work location?</p> <p>Are there any accommodation or financial issues associated with relocation (refer to DV services)?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss whether the employee requires or desires a temporary or permanent transfer or relocation (if possible).</li> <li>• If relocating, be aware that the employee may be isolated from support networks.</li> <li>• If the person using violence works at the same workplace, that person should be relocated.</li> </ul>	
<b>Information Sharing</b>			
What information has already been shared with other employees?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may need to check with these employees to reinforce privacy and confidentiality.</li> <li>• Is anyone else in the team in need of the EAP (e.g. counselling)?</li> <li>• Does the support person, HR professional or manager require counselling services?</li> </ul>	

Questions to assess level of risk	Employee's comments	Considerations in determining control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions	Control measures, reasonable adjustments, actions agreed upon
		<p><b>Note:</b> Information is only to be provided with the approval of employee concerned and shared only where health and safety of the employee concerned or other employees is at risk.</p>	

## Appendix 3: Checklist



### Domestic and family violence – Workplace safety checklist

This checklist will assist managers and employees in identifying the most suitable supports and safety measures if domestic and family violence (DFV) has been identified. The roles of employees, managers and co-workers, and individual employee circumstances, will differ in each workplace.

It is recommended that specific actions be documented in the *DFV Workplace Safety Plan* and shared with relevant employees, with permission. This checklist should be completed on a regular basis (e.g. at least annually) and a plan implemented to improve safety in the workplace, particularly if 'no' responses are provided below.

#### ***The following issues have been addressed (where necessary) to mitigate any risk to the employee:***

Yes  No  N/A

Up-to-date contact and referral information for Police, DV Connect, specialist DFV services, legal services and counselling services is readily available at the workplace.

Yes  No  N/A

The employee has been encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and/or seek advice from specialist DFV, legal and counselling services.

Yes  No  N/A

The employee's regular movements in the workplace including start/finish times and childcare arrangements have been ascertained.

Yes  No  N/A

Point and method of contact in the event the employee is late or absent from work has been ascertained.

Yes  No  N/A

Any times when the employee is at greater risk, such as after hours/early in the morning, or quieter/busier times of the day have been ascertained.

Yes  No  N/A

Any locations where the employee is at greater risk, such as in isolated/public locations/reception areas have been ascertained.

Yes  No  N/A

The employee's travel arrangements to and from work and car park location have been ascertained.

Yes  No  N/A

Appropriate security is in place in the workplace, including the employee's access to and from the workplace and car parking/public transport.

Yes  No  N/A

The workplace has the capacity to respond to emergencies and undertakes regular evacuation and emergency lockdown drills.

Yes  No  N/A

The workplace contains a 'safe area' or staff only area

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Possible actions to support employee safety at work:***

Yes  No  N/A

Contact information for emergency services and specialist DFV, legal and counselling/EAP services have been provided to employee and relevant staff members.

Yes  No  N/A

Employee's contacts in the case of an emergency have been obtained, are safe to contact and up-to-date.

Yes  No  N/A

A copy of the employee's Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVO), where one exists, has been provided to the employer and is stored securely.

Yes  No  N/A

Is the workplace listed on the DVO? Discuss need for this, if not listed.

Yes  No  N/A

Use of locked entries/exits or provision of cards, keys or security codes to access staff-only areas.

Yes  No  N/A

Use of reception desks and a sign-in procedure for visitors.

Yes  No  N/A

Installation of door chimes or other means to notify workers when someone enters the workplace.

Yes  No  N/A

Installation of personal or fixed alarms (either audible or silent).

Yes  No  N/A

Use of video surveillance, including posting signs to inform people of the surveillance.

Yes  No  N/A

Emergency plan has been developed, with processes for contacting the police when workers observe threatening behaviour.

Yes  No  N/A

Steps to be taken once aware of an emergency incident or potential incident are well known, easily available and are rehearsed regularly.

Yes  No  N/A

Regular security patrols and alarm checks are implemented.

Yes  No  N/A

Staff are trained in non-confrontational questioning techniques in the case of an intruder's presence in the workplace and the importance of not revealing information such as location and movements of the employee.

Yes  No  N/A

Abusive phone calls are screened, records of calls retained where possible, and any incidents reported to Police.

Yes  No  N/A

There is a clear reporting process to the Police for incidents of violence, stalking or threats.

Yes  No  N/A

Provision of safe parking spaces (well-lit, close to the entrance and secure if possible), and co-workers to escort the employee to their car or public transport.

Yes  No  N/A

If a work uniform is in place, discuss whether it is safe for employee to wear (consider visibility/hazards).

Yes  No  N/A

IT has been consulted to change employee's work contact details and removal of information from websites, internal directories and databases if possible.

Yes  No  N/A

Employee has been provided with work mobile phone or other communication or monitoring/tracking device.

Yes  No  N/A

Shorten or vary start and finish times for the employee, if required.

Yes  No  N/A

Ascertain if the employee needs short- or long-term leave to address issues arising from the violence (financial, medical, legal, child care, accommodation).

Yes  No  N/A

There are clear sightlines to the employee (examine landscaping, layout and buildings that might restrict view).

Yes  No  N/A

Relocate employee to a more secure area of the workplace. Ensure employee is not isolated from others.

Yes  No  N/A

Is there a need for employee to work temporarily or permanently from another location to provide safety?

Yes  No  N/A

Where the employee is located on the same site as the person using violence, examine relocation and transfer options for the person using violence.

Yes  No  N/A

If there is a DVO in place, do the terms preclude the parties from working in proximity to one another? Is so, this must be complied with.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Employee Considerations:***

Yes  No  N/A

Do you believe you or anyone else in the workplace is in imminent danger?

Yes  No  N/A

Have you got existing supports e.g. friends, family, co-workers, specialist DFV, legal and counselling services?

Yes  No  N/A

Is the violence impacting on your current work performance? If so, discuss with your manager possible actions to support you.

Yes  No  N/A

Are there any reasonable adjustments/flexible conditions that can be implemented to support you in managing your safety and/or accessing supports?

Yes  No  N/A

Have you advised your manager, security and/or HR representatives about your situation and worked collaboratively to develop a *DFV Workplace Safety Plan*?

Yes  No  N/A

Have you established with your manager who will need information about your circumstances to ensure your safety and the safety of others?

Yes  No  N/A

Have you agreed on the level of information and detail required by co-workers, front office, security, HR etc?

Yes  No  N/A

Have you provided your employer with a copy of your DVO, if you have one in place?

Yes  No  N/A

If you believe you are being stalked at the workplace, have you advised your manager and Police?

Yes  No  N/A

Have you provided a photo or description of the person using violence and details about their car to the workplace?

Yes  No  N/A

Can you provide your manager with as much information as possible about the person using violence, e.g.:

- Does the person have access to your workplace?
- Is there a concern about the person presenting at or contacting you at the workplace?
- Does the person work at the same workplace?
- If the person works at the same workplace, have they used violence at work or using work resources?
- Is there a DVO in place? If yes, is the workplace named?
- Has the DVO been breached?
- Is the person likely to be a safety risk to others?
- Does the person have access to any type of weapon or firearm? If so, advise the Police.

Checklist completed by  
(name/team/department):

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Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_