

Violence at Work Policy Standard

CAG/STAN/D5

Issue Date:

1st January 2006

Authority:

Chief Executive, Serco Group

Applicability:

Serco Group covering all business divisions, operating companies and business units throughout the world

Executive Summary

Serco believes that, regardless of the reason, violence is an unacceptable behaviour in any form and that no member of staff should consider the suffering of violence to be an acceptable part of their employment.

This policy standard sets out the minimum requirements for eliminating the acceptance of any type of violence in the workplace. It specifically addresses requirements around risk assessment; reporting recording and local investigation; training and support to staff involved in an incident.

Any assault on a member of staff will be treated extremely seriously and the company will actively pursue criminal charges and support victims in civil proceedings wherever appropriate.

I Introduction

Serco expects all staff to be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times. Serco believes that, regardless of the reason, violence is an unacceptable behaviour in any form and that no member of staff should consider the suffering of violence to be an acceptable part of their employment. This policy standard sets out the minimum requirements for eliminating the acceptance of any type of violence in the workplace. It supports Serco's commitment to its people as detailed in the Serco Management System.

I.1 Definitions

Violence is defined as "incidents where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health". Violence at work may include assaults or verbal abuse by members of the public or other staff. Examples of violence include:

- verbal abuse, offensive language
- racist or sexist remarks
- obscene gestures
- threatening behaviour
- stalking
- physical attacks including spitting and throwing objects.

Employees whose job requires them to have contact with the public can be at particular risk from violence. These include:

- providing a service
- cash transactions
- any form of controlling
- representing authority.

2 Objective and Commitment

As an organisation Serco's intention is to prevent incidents of violence and verbal abuse occurring. However, in recognising that this may not always be possible, the risk will be assessed and all reasonable steps taken to ensure the personal safety of each and every member of staff whilst going about their duties.

Serco will encourage Police intervention and offer support to staff that have suffered mental and/or physical trauma. Any assault on a member of staff will be treated extremely seriously and the company will actively pursue criminal charges and support victims in civil proceedings wherever appropriate.

3 Principles

This policy standard has been developed with the aim of eliminating the acceptance of any type of violence in the workplace. Working with our customers and other key stakeholders (eg police, Trades Unions) we will endeavour to reduce the risk of violence to all staff, including temporary and agency staff, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience.

Serco recognises that violence against staff is likely to lead to:

- a direct effect on the recipient's health and safety and a variety of psychological and physical symptoms
- a direct effect on the standard of work performance
- the creation of a hostile or fearful working environment and a breakdown in working relationships
- a direct effect on staff confidence and morale and an indirect impact on serco's reputation and ability to recruit staff
- influencing staff to leave Serco.

This policy standard should be read in conjunction with Serco's Equal Opportunities Policy Standard (CAG/Stan/D1), which states that employees should not receive less favourable treatment because of their race, sex, religion/belief, disability, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, trade union activity, political belief, pregnancy or maternity leave, caring responsibilities, social origin or irrelevant medical or criminal records.

4 Requirements

4.1 Risk Assessment

The exposure of staff to violence and aggression must be assessed in respect of each workplace, and supported, if necessary by management of violence plans for high-risk areas.

Staff must be fully involved in the assessment procedure and local safety representatives consulted and invited to participate.

Workplace assessments must be reviewed regularly and remain appropriate. A review must take place immediately if affected by any changes in the working environment, service provision or policy.

Issues that should be considered as part of the risk assessment process include the identification of:

- Identification of staff vulnerability due to age, gender, ethnic origin, disability etc.
- Identification of jobs/tasks that are particularly vulnerable
- Identification of vulnerable locations

- Identification of vulnerable times of day, days or week, seasonal variations or special events
- Identification of all practicable control measures, and an assessment of how reasonable they would be for the circumstance. These may include:
 - means of avoiding risk completely
 - physical controls (e.g. secure premises, CCTV monitoring, lighting, communication equipment)
 - procedural controls
 - numbers of staff deployed
 - training requirements
 - recruitment procedures
 - publicity material
 - working with Police and other interfacing organisations
 - providing information regarding offenders/offender profiles
 - Assisting with preparation of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
 - identification of mitigation measures to minimise the impact should violence occur (eg debriefing or counselling)

4.2 Reporting, Recording and Local Investigation

All cases of violence must be reported to the appropriate manager and logged on the ASSURE™ database. In some cases the incident may need notification to the enforcing authorities.

Following an incident of violence, the manager will meet with the staff involved to examine the actual incident, the consequences of the incident and identify and implement any action that may be necessary to prevent recurrence.

Managers are responsible for undertaking trend analysis of all reports of violence and pursue any actions considered necessary.

4.3 Training

Training will be given as appropriate in various aspects outlined below to those identified as being at risk:

- threat awareness, using all senses
- understanding fear and anger
- recognising vulnerability
- managing confrontation
- the escalating process of violence/aggression
- evasion planning
- avoiding danger and defusing anger
- managing unpredictability

- importance of body language in managing situations
- day to day personal safety

All new staff as part of their induction will receive information regarding security, personal safety and the procedure for reporting incidents of violence and aggression in the workplace.

4.4 Support for Staff Involved in Incidents

Staff injured as a result of violent incidents must be advised of the need to seek medical attention.

Managers will ensure that no blame attaches to the victim and agree time off work to seek medical care and obtain debriefing if necessary.

Staff, whether injured or not, may be affected emotionally. Staff must be offered support and debriefing where necessary.

Immediate counselling should be sought from Serco's Occupational Health provider who will also give long term counselling as necessary.

5 Responsibility and Authority

The Policy Standard is issued under the authority of the Chief Executive, Serco Group plc. Responsibilities for implementation of this policy standard is set out below:

- The Chief Executive is responsible for:
 - making sure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with violence and aggression at work
 - providing resources for putting the policy into practice
 - making sure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents of violence and aggression and that the Board regularly reviews the effectiveness of the policy
- Senior and line managers are responsible for:
 - making sure that all staff are aware of the policy
 - making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
 - putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of violence and aggression
 - making sure that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training (including training at induction, updates and refresher training when necessary)
 - making sure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident of violence and aggression
 - monitoring the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents
- All staff are responsible for:
 - taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions
 - co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working
 - reporting all incidents involving verbal abuse, threats and physical assault

- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy
- reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they may have about potentially violent situations or the environment in which they work

6 Evidence of Compliance

To demonstrate compliance with this Policy Standard, the following documentation is to be available for audit:

- Serco Group plc
 - Violence at Work Policy Standard (This document)
 - internal audit reports
- Divisions/operating companies
 - procedures
 - audit/review records
- Business units/operating contracts
 - audit/review records

7 Guidance & References

Further guidance is available from divisional and Group Human Resources departments and the Corporate Assurance Group.

The following regulations provide additional guidance:

- In the UK it is covered by Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Specific guidance is available from the Health and Safety Executive “Violence At Work - A Guide for Employers”.
- In the United States, there is a "General Duty Clause" in the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The General Duty Clause would include recognised threats of violence.
- Most Canadian and Australian jurisdictions have a "general duty provision" in their Occupational Health & Safety legislation, which requires employers to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of employees.
- New Zealand – The Occupational Safety and Health Service publication – Violence at Work, A Guide for Employers and Employees