

ATTACHMENT 4

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Incident response and evaluation are essential to an effective violence prevention program. In accordance with existing statutes, all workplace violence programs should provide comprehensive assistance for victimized employees and employees who may be affected by witnessing a workplace violence incident.

Victims of workplace violence may suffer a variety of consequences in addition to their actual physical injuries. These could include short and long-term psychological trauma, fear of returning to work, changes in relationships with co-workers and family, feelings of incompetence, guilt, powerlessness, and fear of criticism. Consequently, a strong follow-up program for these employees will help them to deal with these problems.

There are several types of assistance that could be incorporated into the post-incident response. For example, trauma-crisis counseling, critical incident stress debriefing, or employee assistance programs may be provided to assist victims. Certified employee assistance professions, psychologists, psychiatrists, clinical nurse specialists, or social workers could provide this counseling; or the employer can refer staff victims to an outside expert. In addition, an employee counseling service, peer counseling, or support groups may be established.

In any case, persons assigned to respond to incidents of violence must be well trained and have a good understanding of the issues and consequences of assaults and other aggressive, violent behavior. Appropriate and promptly rendered incident debriefings and counseling should reduce psychological trauma and general stress levels among victims and witnesses. In addition, appropriate response educates staff about workplace violence and positively influences the workplace.