

# Workplace Violence Policy

The overarching framework for staff<sup>1</sup> safety

## DOC's aim

DOC aim is to provide staff with a safe workplace.

Our workplace violence policy communicates to staff what we consider is workplace violence and our policies for keeping staff safe from violence

## What is workplace violence?

Workplace violence refers to physical acts of violence or threats to harm a person or property, and also to abusive behaviours – verbal, psychological, sexual, and racial.

- Verbal abuse uses unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening, or degrading language.
- Psychological abuse provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem.
- Sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical sexual assault.
- Racial abuse denigrates on the basis of a person's colour, descent, nationality, ancestry, or ethnic background.

Workplace violence may be instigated by a staff member or by a member of the public.

### **There are various forms of workplace violence**

Examples include:

- Physical assault
- Destructive or sabotaging actions against company or personal property
- Abusive language
- Aggressive behaviour that creates a fear of injury or emotional distress – in person, on the phone, or online
- Concealing or using a weapon
- Sexual or racial harassment

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<sup>1</sup> Staff in this policy means employees, contractors, and volunteers

## Our policy is zero-tolerance

**DOC has a zero-tolerance policy to violence and threatening behaviour.**

Members of the public can sometimes become increasingly agitated when talking with staff. This can occur:

- During one interaction or over a number of interactions
- In the field, in or around an office, or out of the work environment when a staff member is targeted by a member of the public

Staff must not accept any violence or abuse. They should respond professionally, withdraw, and report incidents before they become serious to their manager and to the Director, Safety: 027 691 5107.

Proactive measures will be taken to minimise the potential for violence. It's best to avoid confrontation if possible, but DOC will support staff as best it can if they're assaulted or threatened.

## Specific policies

Specific policies that sit under this overarching policy are:

1. Handling Difficult Customers
2. Building Security
3. Security training and competency
4. Online threats and vilification
5. Incident reporting and investigating
6. Supporting staff who are assaulted or threatened

Lou Sanson, Director-General

## **Handling Difficult Customers**

*Handling Difficult Customers* - <https://doccm.doc.govt.nz/wcc/wccproxy/d?dDocName=DOC-5413780>

*Trespassing Customers from DOC Workplaces* -

<https://doccm.doc.govt.nz/wcc/wccproxy/d?dDocName=DOC-5413787>

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