

# Working in Risky Neighborhoods



## **Under the general duty clause, section 5 (a) (1) of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Act of 1970:**

**Employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment that is free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees. This duty includes inspecting the workplace to discover and correct potentially dangerous conditions or hazards in the workplace and to give adequate warning of its existence.**

## What creates “Risk” within a neighborhood?

- Gang Activity
- Graffiti, Tagging / General Vandalism
- Illicit Behavior (Drugs, Loitering, etc.)
- Stray Dogs
- Abandoned Homes and / or vehicles
- Environmental Events (Storms, Winds, Fires, Floods, etc.)

## Recognizing Suspicious Persons:

- People going door-to-door in a residential area and one or more of the subjects going into the back or side yard.
- Someone waiting in front of a house when the homeowners are absent.
- Someone forcing entrance to or tampering with a home or vehicle.
- A person running carrying items of value. (TV or stereo)
- A person concealing something under their clothing.
- Persons offering items for sale at a very low price.

### Recognizing Suspicious Persons:

- A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical behavior (person may be injured, under the influence of drugs, or otherwise needing medical attention).
- A person who appears highly aggravated, agitated, angry, etc.
- Heavy traffic to and from a residence, (especially if it occurs on a daily basis).
- Someone looking into windows or parked cars.
- A person or persons loitering on your street or around parks.
- Someone running frantically, especially at night, could be leaving / headed toward a crime scene.
- Person or persons wearing clothing, bandannas, caps, or other attire that might identify them as a gang member.

## **Recognizing Suspicious Vehicle Activity:**

- Vehicles moving slowly and without lights or following an aimless or repetitive course.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle.
- Abandoned vehicles parked on the street.
- Objects thrown from a vehicle, especially while traveling at a high rate of speed.
- Vehicles parked or occupied, containing one or more persons, especially at an unusual hour.

### *Assessment for Specific Risk: Working In High-Crime Areas (Risky Neighborhoods)*

**This assessment is provided as an example that can be used by workplaces. However, use of this particular assessment is not required under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.**

**Employers choosing to use this assessment are encouraged to reproduce and/or customize it to meet the particular needs of their workplace.**

This assessment may help workplaces determine the risk of workplace violence where workers perform services in a fixed location in a high-crime area. A high-crime area is identified by police and insurance and real estate broker statistics. Examples of activities include:

- Working in areas where there is a high potential for assault, sexual assault, or robbery, based on police statistics
- Working in areas where there is a high potential for theft and/or property damage, based on insurance and realtor/broker statistics

**You are not required to use all or any of the examples of controls.** There may be other controls that are more suitable to the circumstances of your workplace and to controlling the risks of workplace violence that you identify.



Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates, if possible)
1. Have you surveyed the outside of the building and parking lots for possible hiding places?				Eliminate or minimize hiding places (cut shrubbery, change the design of garbage bins, etc.). Set up routine facility checks to ensure the security of the property. Position security cameras in high-risk locations and continuously monitor them. Utilize Security guards to patrol the property and monitor ingress / egress.		
2. Are there designated, well-lit, monitored walkways for workers?				Identify/designate safe entrance and exit walkways for workers.		
3. Can workers call for immediate help when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur?				Measures and procedures could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ providing equipment to summon assistance, such as individual or fixed alarms (sounding or silent) or cell phones (pre-programmed to call an emergency number)</li> <li>§ providing GPS tracking devices or other locating devices</li> <li>§ providing internal and external numbers for workers to call                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ at all hours of operations</li> <li>○ posted or otherwise readily available</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		





Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates, if possible)
4. Is public access to the workplace restricted?				Restrict public access to the workplace by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ providing a single entrance for clients or other visitors and controlling access to other doors</li> <li>§ installing security alarms on outside doors</li> <li>§ installing door chimes or other means to notify workers when someone enters the workplace</li> <li>§ posting signs about worker-only areas</li> <li>§ using cards or keys to access worker-only areas</li> <li>§ using reception desks and sign-in procedures</li> <li>§ requiring and enforcing company identification to be displayed at all times while working.</li> <li>§ accompanying non-workers in restricted areas</li> <li>§ using video surveillance and posting signs to inform people of it</li> <li>§ locking the public entrance and providing a bell</li> </ul>		
5. Is there a system to verify the identity of persons delivering goods and services?				Measures and procedures could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ conducting a visual (camera, window) and audio check before opening the receiving-area door</li> <li>§ requiring and enforcing company / vendor identification to be displayed at all times while working.</li> <li>§ scheduling deliveries</li> </ul>		



Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates, if possible)
6. Do workers work at times of increased vulnerability, such as late at night, early in the morning, or at very quiet times of day?				Assess higher-risk times and the need for additional measures to protect workers, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ having workers leave the building in groups</li> <li>§ Scheduling more than one worker to a job site within a pre-determined risky area</li> <li>§ arranging for security patrols</li> <li>§ joining with neighbouring businesses to coordinate security</li> </ul>		
7. Do workers work in remote and isolated areas inside the building?				Maintain regular contact with workers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ providing cell phones, walkie-talkies, or other communications or monitoring devices</li> <li>§ establishing regular contact times</li> <li>§ designating a person to monitor contact with workers, and to follow up if contact is lost</li> </ul> Consider the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Avoiding having only one worker on shift, if possible, or having a buddy system during opening and closing hours</li> <li>§ Shortening the business hours in remote or isolated areas, if possible</li> <li>§ Joining your building or neighbouring businesses to coordinate security</li> <li>§ Positioning cameras in high-risk locations and continuously monitoring them</li> </ul>		
8. Have you surveyed the interior of the building for possible hiding places?				Consider the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Locking storage rooms, washrooms, etc. to limit client/visitor access</li> <li>§ Continuously monitoring potential hiding places (stairwells, etc.)</li> </ul>		

Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates, if possible)
9. Do you have procedures to identify, evaluate, and inform workers about specific high-risk clients, situations, or locations?				<p>Develop and implement procedures to identify, evaluate, and inform workers about risks of violence related to specific situations or clients.</p> <p>Provide Safety Awareness meetings helping employees understand the signs of possible risk within a neighborhood (graffiti, loitering, suspicious activity).</p> <p>Reinforce with employees the importance of removing themselves from unsafe situations immediately when they have been identified, and reporting the situation immediately to supervisor and/or proper authority.</p> <p>Invite local Law enforcement and internal Security Department representatives to Safety Committee meetings to enlist their help, share best practices and keep them informed of problems your employees may have encountered.</p>		
10. Do you have procedures for workers to follow when dealing with strangers or intruders?				<p>Develop and implement procedures, which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ how to question strangers or intruders about the appropriateness of their presence in a non-confrontational manner</li> <li>§ recommended actions and responses</li> <li>§ when to call for help or go to a safe area</li> </ul>		

Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates, if possible)
11. Do you have procedures for workers to follow when dealing with aggressive or violent clients or members of the public?				Develop and implement procedures, which could include: § recommended actions and responses § when to call for help or go to a safe area (remove themselves from an unsafe condition or situation).		
12. Have you developed a working relationship with community crime-prevention groups?				Consider participating in community efforts to reduce crime (attend meetings, participate in awareness campaigns, volunteer for community activities or fund raisers, etc.). Invite neighborhood watch representatives to a portion of your Safety Committee meetings to enlist their help.		
13. Do you provide safe transportation home very early or late at night?				Develop and implement procedures for providing safe travel home when workers are working very early in the morning or late at night (taxi service to worker's door, etc.).		
14. Are there other measures and procedures that would protect workers from the risks of working in high-crime areas?				Measures and procedures will depend on the specific workplace.		

Physical Environment	Yes	No	N/A	Examples of Controls	Existing Controls	Recommended Controls (identify person(s) responsible and expected completion dates, if possible)
15. Are workers trained in safety routines for parking, and for leaving and returning to their vehicles?				Training could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ being observant – look and listen</li> <li>§ not slinging purses or bags over the shoulder or around the neck</li> <li>§ carrying keys in hand</li> <li>§ walking around the vehicle and checking the back seat before unlocking the vehicle</li> <li>§ locking doors and keeping windows up</li> <li>§ how to carry and store valuables</li> <li>§ the dangers of reading or writing in parked vehicles</li> <li>§ maintaining a full gas tank or filling up at well-lit and busy gas stations</li> <li>§ how to choose a safe parking spot</li> <li>§ looking for adequate light from street lamps</li> </ul>		
16. Are workers trained in safety routines for using public transportation?				Training could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ being observant – look and listen</li> <li>§ not slinging purses or bags over the shoulder or around the neck</li> <li>§ carrying keys in hand</li> <li>§ looking for adequate light from street lamps</li> </ul>		
17. Are workers and supervisors trained in all relevant measures and procedures for protecting them from workplace violence associated with high-crime areas?				Information, instruction, or training could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ risks of workplace violence arising from their job or location</li> <li>§ relevant measures and procedures</li> </ul>		

### **If a Non-Violent situation occurs, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Remain calm, don't put yourself in a position where you could be injured.
2. Call corporate security. Security will do a preliminary assessment of the situation and determine the appropriate subject matter expert(s) within Security, Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program, Safety, Health & Environment, and Labor Relations to work with you in resolving the situation.

### **If a Violent, Life Threatening situation occurs, the following actions are recommended:**

1. Remain calm, don't put yourself in a position to be injured.
2. Call 911 for local police assistance if there is an immediate threat to self, others, property or emergency assistance is required.
3. Notify Corporate Security, as soon as possible after calling 911.
4. Security will do a preliminary assessment of the incident and determine the appropriate subject matter expert(s) within Security, Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program, Safety, Health & Environment, and Labor Relations to work with you in resolving the incident and providing additional assistance (counseling, medical attention, etc.).

## Management Responsibilities:

### Document the Incident

- o Document their observations of the incident
  - . Discuss the incident and provide recommendations to resolve problem(s)
  - . Administer workplace violence requirements and any corrective action as appropriate
  - . Contact organizations available to assist when appropriate (Employee Assistance, Human Resources, etc.)