

Workplace Policy

Where Do I Start?

- Establish Company Position
- Developing Guidelines
- Training Employees
- Approaching Victims of Violence
- DV Checklist: Threat Assessment
- Implementing Safety Procedures
- Generating Awareness
- The Role of the Union

DV Policy Links

- Generic DV Policy Sample
- Altria Group, Inc. Policy
- Liz Claiborne DV Policy
- Mintz Levin DV Policy

The Role of the Union

Unions can and do play a positive role in preventing and addressing domestic abuse through training and intervention. Domestic abuse is part of a union agenda because it is a family issue, a public health issue, a workplace issue, a community issue and a social justice issue.

Unions are key in helping members stay safe, healthy and employed so they can retain their dignity and remain economically self-sufficient. Stewards, delegates, business agents, union officers, staff and activists can do the following:

- Understand that fear and embarrassment can make a member reluctant to talk despite on-the-job problems
- Respect the member's right to confidentiality and ability to make personal decisions
- Let the member know that the union is there to provide confidential, non-judgmental support and assistance
- Discourage workplace gossip about the situation
- Consider job reassignment, relocation, phone screening, change in work hours and and/or location, escort to/from transportation, job leave options
- Refer members who may be abusive to the appropriate union or community resource
- Recognize that retirees may also be victims of elder abuse and may need help
- Make public statements about the union's stand against violence and reinforce its position on safety as a primary concern
- Distribute palm cards, posters and pamphlets with community resources and emergency numbers
- Include information about domestic violence as part of all union education and in steward/delegate safety and health trainings
- Develop union resolutions and support political action agendas to address the issue
- Negotiate contract language that is supportive to victims of domestic violence, including leaves of absence, transfers, worksite security, paid time to attend court hearings, employer paid legal assistance
- Sponsor workshops about domestic violence and partner with local service providers either independently or jointly with management

Link to Cornell University's sponsor site for the New York Labor Union Coalition Against Domestic Violence: http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/extension/institutes/home.html?dept_id=105

This Web site is provided as an informational resource only and is not intended to be legal or professional advice. If you have questions about the application of issues raised to your particular situation, seek the advice of a competent attorney or other professional.