



Principle 1



Principle 2



Principle 3



Principle 4



Principle 5



Principle 6



Principle 7

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**This domestic violence Policy and Procedure Template aims to assist WEPs signatories in recognizing and assessing the risks of workplace-related domestic violence, and spot signs of domestic violence. It also aims to help signatories establish clear guidelines for supporting employees who are victims and survivors of domestic violence. The text can be used as is or customized according to your company's requirements.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Company recognizes that in all organizations, there is a risk of domestic violence in the workplace or involving a worker. This Policy is intended to set out the Company's guidelines for recognizing and assessing the risks of workplace-related domestic violence (To explore UN Women resources for WEPs signatories, please visit the WEPs [website](#)).

- The Company is a signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) since 20\_\_.
- Signing the WEPs was part of our overall goal to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community.
- As part of this commitment, we believe strongly in safety and security of all our employees whether at work or at home.

## II. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Company workers as well as the Company's agents, guests, customers, vendors, and other third parties. This Policy applies to conduct in the workplace and in any work-related settings outside the workplace, such as during business trips, tours and Company-sponsored or authorized social events and other functions. This Policy applies to the Company worldwide, except where compliance with this Policy would cause an operating unit or divisions to violate any law in the country in which it is located.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**Bystander** is a person who is aware of, present at/a witness of an incident of domestic violence involving a worker, or domestic violence in the workplace, but does not take part.<sup>1</sup>

**Domestic violence** includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, patrimonial, property, and economic violence. Domestic violence can occur within intimate relationships, including marital, non-marital, same sex and non-cohabiting relationships, as well as between individuals with family relationships and members of the same household.<sup>2</sup>

**Worker** includes employees, independent contractors and consultants who provide services to the Company.

**Workplace** means any land, premises or location in or for which a worker works.

## IV. WORKERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Workers are entitled to work free from domestic violence. Workers who are aware of a risk of domestic violence to themselves or to a worker, shall bring it to the attention of the Company.

Workers shall complete all workplace violence or harassment training required of them by the Company, including any training provided in relation to recognizing and dealing with issues of domestic violence.

## V. MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Management must ensure, as much as reasonably possible, that no workers are subjected to domestic violence. Management will investigate all concerns brought to its attention, and work with impacted individuals to try to reduce risk.

Management will ensure that all workers are aware of the risks of domestic violence in the workplace as well as domestic violence to workers outside of the workplace, and may undertake training in relation to same. Management will ensure that all workers are aware of assistance which may be provided to workers who may be subject to domestic violence.

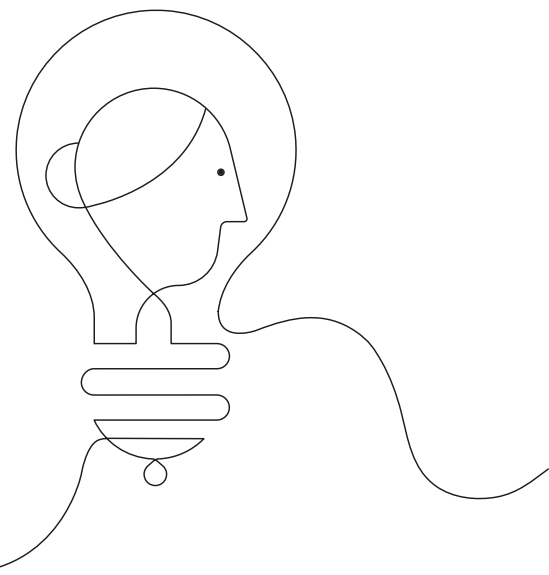
## VI. POLICY

1. In the event that a worker is subjected to actual or threatened domestic violence, whether within or outside of the workplace, the worker is strongly encouraged to immediately report same to any of the following:
  - I. a trusted manager or supervisor;
  - II. human resources;
  - III. a trusted individual on the senior management team;
  - IV. a joint health & safety representative or committee, if applicable; or
  - V. a trade union, if applicable. In addition, nothing in this policy prohibits the worker from making a report or complaint directly to the police or any applicable external administrative body that has jurisdiction over domestic violence issues within the workplace or involving workers.
2. Any worker who is determined to have engaged in domestic violence, even if that domestic violence involves a non-worker, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension without pay and/or termination of employment. Records of all disciplinary action will be retained in the worker's personnel file. In addition, the offender may be required to participate in appropriate training or counselling.
3. Concerns about actual or threatened domestic violence may be reported in writing or verbally and made in person, by email, by telephone, to a company hotline, or other means. Every concern will be reviewed as expeditiously as possible, having regard to such things as the nature of the concern, and whether it involves someone within or outside of the workplace. Where the conduct complained of is extremely serious, or where the conduct is alleged to have been made by senior management, an external and independent investigation will be preferred. In the event that there were witnesses to the complained about behavior, witnesses will be interviewed. Every effort will be made to prevent disclosure of confidential and/or sensitive information, while at the same time ensuring that each incident is carefully and completely investigated. In particular, any party interviewed during an investigation will be reminded in writing prior to their interview of the need to keep the investigation and their evidence confidential, as well as the fact that retaliation is strictly prohibited.

4. Subject to the laws of the jurisdiction where the alleged conduct takes place, consideration may be given to shifting the burden of proof to the alleged perpetrator.
5. The individual raising the concern and/or any worker who may be at risk due of domestic violence in the workplace, will be provided with updates from time to time as the concern is reviewed and the company strives to both:
  - I. protect its workers from domestic violence; and
  - II. determine a way to potentially deal with the perpetrator. It must be understood that while the Company will do all that it can to support workers who are subject to actual or threatened domestic violence, if that domestic violence takes place outside of the workplace, there may be limits upon actions that the company can take with respect to a non-worker.
6. In the event of a threat of workplace violence against a worker which has the potential to impact other workers (i.e. a threat of domestic violence that may be carried out in the workplace by a non-worker), the Company will work together with the worker to determine a plan of action to best protect both the worker as well as other workers who may be impacted. In such a situation, workers may need to be advised of the risk of a domestic violence episode in the workplace and the steps being taken by the company to protect against same; however the identity of the targeted worker will be kept confidential unless it is not possible, in which case the targeted worker will be advised of same in advance.
7. In the event of domestic violence against a worker, the Company will inform the worker about all available support during and after the complaints process, including trade unions or worker representatives, if applicable, EAP (Employee Assistance Programs), or other internal or external resources (including community services).
8. The Company will provide training to all managerial and supervisory workers with respect to understanding how to handle issues of domestic violence in the workplace or involving workers.
9. This Policy does not affect the rights of workers to pursue complaints under the relevant laws of the appropriate jurisdiction.
10. A concern can be raised at any time. There is no statute of limitations.
11. In the event of any questions in relation to this Policy, please contact **[Human Resources]**.

## V. IMPLEMENTATION

See Appendix A, which provides a sample workplace domestic violence procedure.



# APPENDIX A

## TEMPLATE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROCEDURE

### 1. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

If management becomes aware of a domestic violence situation that has the potential to occur in the workplace and that might expose workers to physical, sexual, psychological, or economic injury, every reasonable precaution will be taken to ensure the protections of workers.

Workers should report to management any concerns regarding domestic violence if they perceive that domestic violence may impact them or others in the workplace. Management will work closely with the targeted worker, while striving to maintain confidentiality to the extent consistent with protecting the targeted worker and co-workers against any risks of domestic violence in the workplace. Together, management and the targeted worker will develop an individual safety plan, working with law enforcement, courts or other organizations that may already be involved as necessary.

In addition, Management should take steps well before the reporting of any domestic violence concerns, to create a general plan for addressing domestic violence, having regard to the following:

#### Consultations and awareness raising

- Conduct broader awareness raising about domestic violence within the company and with its business partners and suppliers
- Disseminate regular messaging from leaders about the Company's commitment to supporting employees affected by domestic violence, confidentially and without recrimination
- Engage in wider, multinational corporate awareness raising, funding and networks of influence
- Consult women workers and listening to ideas, experiences and suggestions
- Regularly conduct domestic violence and security training for all management and staff, and particularly for managers, training on 'non-judgmental listening skills'.

#### Communication

- Communicate regularly with all employees and team members, stay in touch and build trust
- Encourage survivors to seek help, stressing that this will be without recrimination from their manager or the company

- Keep contact up through regular company-wide and one-to-one communications, and find safe ways for a survivor to contact a manager or domestic violence support service. Ask employees if there is a specific platform or app they prefer to use – or if they prefer an instant message or text over a call
- Give reassurance and support to survivors in their own safety planning.

### **Spot the signs of domestic violence**

- Be attentive to potential signs of domestic violence, for example, if someone is being distant, withdrawn and does not fully participate in calls or online meetings; if they are tired, worried, distracted or anxious; or if they are called away or interrupted by a partner when on the phone or in an online meeting.<sup>3</sup>

### **Measures**

- Put in place measures for attempting to ensure the safety of an impacted employee transiting through any Company parking lot or garage to and from the workplace, including security escorts
- Ensure added security to enter the workplace (i.e. keypads or swipe cards), as well as added security to enter the impacted employee's office or workspace
- Institute special measures for victims and survivors of domestic violence, including paid time off, flexible working arrangements, reorganization or work tasks and work location, and financial support and / or advanced payment of salaries or loans in circumstances of financial abuse.
- Adopt case-specific assistance measures, including personal alarms, Company-provided cell phones for victims and survivors, and flexible work schedules
- Put in place workplace support and safety measures in situations of remote working, for example, by introducing a safety code or hand signal for victims and survivors of domestic violence to ask for emergency help through co-workers or their manager during video-assisted meetings.<sup>4</sup>
- Establish company hotline/dedicated email monitored by a health and safety team that can offer support and information about available services.

### **Support system**

- Offer advice about a protection/restraining order and about contacting the police if the order has been breached.
- Decide who in the workplace should be aware of incidents or threats of workplace domestic violence
- Create a network of trained workplace advocates / champions who provide confidential advice and information for survivors

- Establish a list of up-to-date resources for victims and survivors of domestic violence, including counselling, helplines and shelters
- Ensure that survivors have access to emergency contact numbers and that they are safely stored on a mobile phone

Management should also be aware that for workers whose workplace is a home office (for example, during COVID-19 remote work actions), there is often a legal duty to also try to assist workers who are suffering from domestic violence in their home workspace. In situations where all workers are working remotely, it can be good practice to ask employees to complete a home workplace occupational health and safety questionnaire dealing with a number of health and safety issues (e.g. ergonomics, hazards in the home workspace), which also includes questions about the possibility of domestic violence in the home office. Doing so may give employees an opportunity to reach out for assistance which they were unaware existed. Bringing the employee back into a non-home workplace should be considered in cases such as this, in order to provide greater protection to the employee during the workday.

## 2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO A WORKER, OUTSIDE OF THE WORKPLACE

Management should be aware that workers who suffer domestic violence are more likely to suffer from absenteeism. This can result from such things as a violent episode which leaves the employee physically or mentally injured, as well as the inability of the employee to get to work due to financial abuse. If management has reason to suspect that a worker may be suffering from domestic violence outside of the workplace, there may be a professional, moral or even a potential legal obligation (the legal obligation is most likely to arise in situations where a worker suffers from domestic violence while working from home, in a situation where home might also be the workplace) to reach out to the worker and / or facilitate safe means for survivors to contact a manager or support services, in order to try to clarify the situation and provide whatever assistance may be possible. For employees who miss work due to domestic violence, accommodation and support should be provided, rather than a cessation of the work relationship or other forms of recrimination.

Where relevant, such support might include, for example:

1. Provide paid leave for victims and survivors of domestic violence, and offer financial support, advanced salary payment and/or loans in situations of financial abuse.
2. Establish flexible work arrangements, reorganization of tasks or work location, as necessary, for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
3. Provide temporary protection against dismissal or other forms of recrimination for victims and survivors of domestic violence, as appropriate.
4. Provide necessary work-related protections to victims and survivors of domestic violence (for example, facilitating the victim to change work-related telephone numbers or work from alternative sites).
5. Provide information about available support services, free training and assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence.

To ensure that victims and survivors of domestic violence feel secure in reporting on instances of domestic violence to their employers, supervisors or HR representatives (as appropriate) and that reported instances are not missed, management should also consider:

1. Linking this policy and procedure back to the global commitment to the Women's Empowerment Principles and to advancing gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community
2. Regularly messaging from leaders about commitment to supporting employees affected by domestic violence, confidentially and without recrimination
3. Including domestic violence in broader workplace risk assessments
4. Consulting women workers and listening to ideas, experiences and suggestions
5. Running awareness-raising campaigns and regular training sessions for management and employees about the effects of domestic violence
6. Creating a network of trained workplace advocates / champions who provide confidential advice and information for survivors
7. Encouraging everyone to take a stand against domestic violence, including employees at all levels, their family and friends to act as active bystanders who report their concerns if someone is in danger.
8. Setting up a dedicated email monitored by a health and safety team for support and information about available services.



## ENDNOTES

1. Read more about bystander interventions in: UN Women, 2019. What Will it Take? Promoting Cultural Change to End Sexual Harassment. Available [here](#).
2. UN Women, 2012. Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women, page 23. Available [here](#).
3. UN Women, 2020. The COVID-19 Shadow Pandemic: Domestic Violence in the World of Work - A Call to Action for the Private Sector, p. 4. Available [here](#).
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## DISCLAIMER:

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the European Union, UN Women, International Labour Organization or the United Nations and their Member States.








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# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

 [weps.org](http://weps.org)  
 [@WEPrinciples](https://twitter.com/WEPrinciples)  
 [empowerwomen.org](http://empowerwomen.org)  
 [@Empower\\_Women](https://twitter.com/Empower_Women)

- Principle 1  Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Principle 2  Treat all women and men fairly at work- respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
- Principle 3  Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Principle 4  Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Principle 5  Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Principle 6  Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Principle 7  Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

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