

Managing the Regulatory Environment

ADA's Guidelines for Practice Success™ (GPS™)

ADA Tip Sheet on Employee-on-Employee Violence

It's a good rule of thumb for dental practices to include a written statement on workplace violence in the office's employee policy manual. That manual should also include information on the rules of operation, responsibility and behavior in your practice. More information is available in the American Dental Association's (ADA) Guidelines for Practice Success™ module on [Managing the Dental Team](#) and in the [ADA Practical Guide to Creating and Updating an Employee Policy Manual](#). Basic information workplace violence is also available in the [ADA Tip Sheet on Workplace Violence](#) that is part of this module and in the ADA's Council on Dental Practice's [Emergency Planning & Disaster Recovery in the Dental Office](#).

An Emergency Action Plan should address workplace violence by communicating that:

- ✓ every employee has a responsibility to help maintain a safe work environment
- ✓ a safe work environment is one that's free of acts of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior
- ✓ workplace violence can take many forms, including worker-related violent incidents and incidents caused by non-employees who perpetrate acts of violence upon employees in the workplace
- ✓ all team members are required to report any violence that takes place in the practice to the dentist
 - this would include harassment and language that is threatening, insulting or vulgar

Demonstrate your commitment to preventing violence in the workplace by:

- ✓ being prepared to remedy any situation in which an employee violates what is maintained as acceptable behavior
 - appropriate remedies could include discipline and possibly even termination
- ✓ being aware of early warning signs that might indicate an employee could be at risk of violent behavior in the workplace
 - Watch for signs like:
 - severe mood swings
 - detachment from others
 - erratic behavior
 - changes in work habits
 - blaming others for the individuals' problems
 - veiled or open threats
 - signs of anxiety, irritability or depression, including talk of suicide
 - encourage employees who need help to seek professional services, such as counseling to deal with emotional stress, family dysfunction, debts, drug or alcohol abuse
 - contact the well-being department of your state or local dental society if the individual needing support is a dentist
 - another option is to contact the American Dental Association's (ADA) Dentist Health and Wellness staff at 312-440-2622
- ✓ assuring employees that no reprisals will be taken or allowed against employees who report violence
- ✓ whenever possible, obtain the facts regarding any complaint immediately
 - remain impartial when considering the information

- address and resolve the issue appropriately
- consult consulting an attorney or human resources professional if there are questions about a situation and how to resolve it
- document any instances appropriately and maintain the information in confidential files

Resources: [ADA Practical Guide to Creating and Updating an Employee Policy Manual](#)
[ADA Tip Sheet on Workplace Violence](#)
ADA's [Emergency Planning & Disaster Recovery in the Dental Office](#)

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