

Violence and Harassment in the Workplace

Violence and Harassment in the Workplace - Parking Lot Safety

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Why worry about personal safety in a parking lot?

Depending on its location, design and the time of day, parking lots can present a risk of workplace violence.

What should workplaces do?

Parking lots are typically considered part of the workplace. As such, the employer is responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace. Always check with your local [jurisdiction](#) responsible for occupational health and safety for specific requirements that may apply.

Organizations should conduct a [risk assessment](#) to determine the hazards related to where and when staff park their vehicles, or areas that they may use to access the parking lot.

When developing procedures for parking lot safety, consider the tips below as well as:

- installing security cameras to monitor every area of the parking lot
- implementing a safety procedure to follow if valuables are carried between vehicles and the building (such as money or equipment)
- maintaining the lighting of the parking area, walkways, stairwells, etc.
- keep plants, trees, and shrubs pruned to allow for good visibility

- providing education and training on parking lot safety
- providing security personnel, as necessary

Please refer to the following OSH Answers documents for information:

- [Bullying in the Workplace](#)
 - [Internet Harassment or Cyberbullying](#)
 - [Violence and Harassment in the Workplace](#)
 - [Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Family \(Domestic\) Violence](#)
 - [Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Legislation](#)
 - [Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Dealing with Negative Interactions](#)
 - [Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Warning Signs](#)
 - [Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Working Late](#)
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What are some tips when using a parking lot?

Always:

- Park near the building in a highly visible and well-lit area.
- Park near the parking attendant, if there is one, or near the stairs or a well-lit exit in an underground lot.
- Use the main building entrance - avoid rear or secluded exits.
- Keep your valuables, including purses and recent purchases, out of sight. Always lock them in the trunk if you have to leave them in the vehicle.
- Hide papers and other items that show personal information (such as your home address) from view.
- Lock the doors and roll up all windows when you are in the vehicle.

Individuals should have a plan ahead of time. Know where you can go for safety and how to call for help.

DO NOT:

- Do not use more than one parking spot as it may anger another person.
- Do not park next to large vans, trucks, or other vehicles as they will block the line of sight.

- Do not have a personal identification tag on your key ring. If your keys are lost or stolen, a thief will be able to find your workplace, vehicle, or home.
 - Do not approach someone if they are loitering near your vehicle. Walk to a safe place such as a lighted store, house, or building. Call the police.
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What are some tips when walking to and from the car after dark or in a high-risk neighbourhood?

Always try to walk with a friend, co-worker, or security officer. Give the person who escorted you a ride back to the main entrance so they do not have to walk back alone.

If you have to walk alone:

- Have a co-worker or security watch you from a window.
- Wave to them on the way to your vehicle.
- Wave even if no one is watching to give the illusion that someone is watching you.
- Stay on well-lit streets, and in the centre of the sidewalk. Stay away from spots where individuals can hide such as bushes, doorways, alleys, and parked cars. Cross the road if necessary.

Always be alert to your surroundings. Walk with confidence. Keep your head up and look around. Look directly at people but do not stare at them. Trust your instincts when you feel something is not right.

Do not

- Do not dig in your purse or bag.
 - Do not wear headphones or be distracted by a cell phone.
 - Do not carry heavy briefcases or bags that may reduce your ability to respond to sudden situations.
 - Do not carry any type of weapon, including pepper spray. Weapons can just as easily be used against you and are illegal in some jurisdictions.
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What should you do as you approach your car?

Be prepared when you leave your workplace or vehicle.

Have ready:

- Your keys to unlock the vehicle.
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- Your keys, fob, or card key to unlock building doors.
- A whistle or other personal alarm.

Have the keys ready to unlock the door as you get near the vehicle or door. As you approach your car, look around, inside, and even glance underneath for people who may be present. If you are suspicious, walk away. Go to a safe place and call for help.

Report suspicious behaviour to the parking lot attendant, security, or the police.

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