

Suggested Responses

Please consult the *Selection of Suggested Actions* and *Applying a Quality Framework* documents to help you select suggested actions to undertake for Protection of Physical Safety.

PF13: PROTECTION OF PHYSICAL SAFETY

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where management takes appropriate action to protect the physical safety of employees.

PF13: Survey Results
(check rating, if applicable)

Serious Concerns	Significant Concerns	Minimal Concerns	Relative Strengths
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PF13: Organizational Review Results
(check rating, if applicable)

Serious Concerns	Significant Concerns	Minimal Concerns	Relative Strengths
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Serious Concerns = 5 to 9 Significant Concerns = 10 to 13 Minimal Concerns* = 14 to 16 Relative Strengths** = 17 to 20

* Although this is a Minimal Concern, it is important to attend to it and review the Organizational Review Results and the Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

** Although this is a Relative Strength, it is important to review the Organizational Review Results and the Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

The list below contains actions that you can take to respond to actual or potential concerns related to **Protection of Physical Safety**. Many of these actions have been found to be effective in research studies, have been recommended as best practices, or have been found valuable in applied settings. Some have been informed by emerging case law and regulatory requirements. The actions are drawn from diverse industries and sectors, and not all may be applicable or feasible in your particular workplace. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Rather, these are suggestions for possible courses of action.

If **Protection of Physical Safety** has been flagged as a **Relative Strength** in your workplace, it is important not to overlook this finding. You can do this by developing policies that protect this relative strength and engaging staff in discussions of how this strength can be enhanced by implementing the suggested actions below.

If **Protection of Physical Safety** has been flagged as an area of concern in your workplace, consider which of these actions might be appropriate. In making your decision, it can be helpful to keep the following six key quality dimensions in mind: Appropriateness, Acceptability, Accessibility, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Safety (see *Applying a Quality Framework* for more information).

The actions below fall into four main categories: (1) norms, values and practices of the work environment; (2) training and development initiatives; (3) communication strategies and approaches; and (4) formal policies and programs. You may have already initiated some of the actions – but consider the others. You may also have other ideas for actions you could implement – there is a space for writing these down at the end of this document. Remember, not every action that might enhance **Protection of Physical Safety** in your workplace is listed here. Implementing the following actions, however, will provide a strong foundation for building a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.

Work Environment (Norms, Values & Practices)

- Review work-scheduling practices to ensure they do not impose undue risk of psychological harm
- Review and, if needed, revise job descriptions to include identification of physical hazards (with particular attention to those that may be hazardous to psychological health)
- Respond promptly and effectively to incidents, work-related illnesses and accidents
- Document all incidents and accidents, as well as responses
- Ensure that timely and effective supports are available following a critical incident (e.g., defusing, debriefing, Employee and Family Assistance Programs, psychological treatment)
- Provide additional supports and services for employees working in high-physical-risk positions and/or environments
- Ensure staff have sufficient opportunities and facilities for rest (particularly individuals working shifts or extended hours)

Training & Development

- Provide training on how to minimize exposure to, and impact of, physical hazards
- Train staff to understand how physical hazards can affect psychological health and safety
- Provide equipment to reduce the impact of physical risks on psychological health (e.g., proper lighting, noise reduction, panic alarms, ventilation)
- Train staff on the identification, reporting and investigation of physical hazards
- Provide employees with clear guidelines on the identification of physical hazards to encourage safe, timely and effective reporting
- Provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to help cope with the psychological impact of incidents and accidents

Communication

- Ensure that health and safety programs and policies are clearly communicated to, and understood by, all staff, including new hires
- Make health and safety committee reports public and accessible to all staff (e.g., via posting on intranet, newsletter, staff room, bulletin boards)
- Communicate relevant provincial, territorial or federal legislative or regulatory changes in the area of health and safety to all staff
- Communicate organizational and industry safety policies to all staff

Formal Policies & Programs

- Maintain up-to-date protocols for monitoring, reporting and responding to physical hazards
- Include protection of employee physical safety in organizational vision and values
- Implement policies to protect and support employees who report physical risks

Additional resources have been created to help you take action, including: presentation slides and supporting materials (freely available at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/ota) and a new resource - *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*, developed on behalf of the Mental Health Commission of Canada Workforce Advisory Committee, that is a practical tool designed to help employers develop implementation plans on the basis of Guarding Minds at Work findings (freely available at www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf).

We encourage you to review these resources for additional suggested actions.

Other Actions:

There won't be a perfect set of actions – often it's a matter of choosing the actions most likely to accomplish positive outcomes while generating the fewest potential problems.

Once you have selected one or more actions to undertake, enter them into the corresponding *Action Planning Worksheet*, pick your start date, identify who will be involved – your Action Team, and get started!