

DEFINITION AND STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

SOMEBODY'S FRIEND

SOMEONE'S RELATIVE

Violence and aggression towards State Service employees is not OK.

What is Occupational Violence and Aggression?

Any incident, irrespective of the intent or harm, where an employee is verbally, physically or psychologically abused, harassed, or threatened by members of the public including:

- Patients (or their friends and relatives);
- Customers and clients;
- Parents (or relatives and guardians);
- People in custody or detention; and
- People undertaking activities regulated by the State (eg licensing).

WHERE CAN IT OCCUR?

Occupational violence and aggression can occur within the workplace while employees are doing their job. The workplace may include offices, customer service centres, clients' homes, social events, courts, schools and hospitals.

It can also occur outside of the workplace, for example when a client or customer approaches an employee at the supermarket, a football game or when walking down the street.

WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?

Occupational violence and aggression includes:

- **Verbal abuse** such as swearing, shouting, insults and condescending language;
- **Physical abuse** such as hitting, spitting, kicking, pushing, scratching, throwing objects and sexual assault;
- **Psychological abuse** such as intimidating body language, glaring at people, and threats to inflict harm;
- **Harassment** such as bullying (including cyber), stalking and humiliating behaviour; and
- **Damage to property** such as vandalism, arson, throwing items and theft.

The intent or ability to carry out the threat is not relevant. The important issue is that the behaviour creates a risk to the health and safety of employees.

Occupational Violence and Aggression: Statement of Principles

In the Tasmanian State Service we provide a wide range of services to the Tasmanian community including patients, students, prisoners, licence holders, business stakeholders and the broader public. The safety and wellbeing of our employees and the community is our priority and we are committed to:

- Providing a safe working environment;
- Valuing equally the safety and wellbeing of employees and the public; and
- Promoting a culture where there is no tolerance of violent and aggressive behaviour.

Our employees have the right to feel safe at work. We will not tolerate any form of violent or aggressive behaviour towards our employees from customers, clients or the general public.

We aim to provide a high standard of service, however we understand that sometimes clients may feel their needs aren't met. We encourage clients to talk to us if they have feedback on their experience.

We will not tolerate any form of violent or aggressive behaviour. There will always be consequences for violent and aggressive behaviour.

TASMANIAN STATE SERVICE EMPLOYEES EXPECT THAT THE PUBLIC WILL

- Act in a manner that is not violent or aggressive
- Treat them and other stakeholders with respect
- Use calm and appropriate forms of communication
- Be open and honest and provide accurate information
- Be cooperative
- Act in a way that is non-discriminatory
- Take an active role in creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone

TASMANIAN STATE SERVICE EMPLOYEES WILL

- Provide courteous and professional service
- Be open, accountable and respectful
- Keep the client well informed and communicate clearly
- Provide accurate and timely advice and services
- Work cooperatively to understand clients' needs
- Act in a way that is non-discriminatory
- Take an active role in creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone

FACTORS THAT WE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN DETERMINING CONSEQUENCES INCLUDE:

- The service the client is seeking;
- The circumstances that led to the aggression;
- The environment the incident has happened in; and
- Whether the behaviour is repeated.

TO SUPPORT OUR EMPLOYEES, WE WILL:

- Build employee knowledge and skills by providing appropriate guidance and training;
- Develop service specific responses to incidences and consequences from perpetrators;

- Increase internal reporting of incidences;
- Increase awareness of expected and appropriate behaviour by both employees and clients;
- Provide physical work environments that minimise the opportunity for violent or aggressive behaviours;
- Support employees who decide an incident should be reported to the Police;
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are developed and enforced;
- Provide support networks; and
- Support employees who require medical or other professional assistance because of an incident.

These consequences will depend on the facts of each case. The consequences will range from recording the incident to denying service and calling the Police.