

THE TURNING POINT

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The Vision of the Turning Point

This newsletter is to inform you of recent changes and trends regarding health and safety. The Turning Point is a monthly newsletter covering topics from various industries and sectors. The Turning Point will respond to your inquiries and inform you of current services and updates regarding Raising the Standard Consulting Inc. (RTSC).

Handling Aggressive/Violent People

By Andrea Pitts, Feb 13, 2002

Have you ever been in a situation where you've had to deal with an aggressive or violent person? Workplace violence is a growing concern and with recent economic downturn, job layoffs and terrorism concerns the potential for violent situations in the workplace has increased.

The three stages of aggressive behavior are agitation or distress, aggression or mounting vulnerability, and finally, violence or chaos. These stages require different interventions. A successful intervention will ensure the situation doesn't escalate. The following will look at these three different stages and identify what physical characteristics to look for and most importantly, what actions to take.

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Past Newsletters

Please feel free to pass our newsletter to anyone you feel may benefit from the information.

Also, if you are receiving *The Turning Point* for the first time, you may be interested in our last newsletters on Machine Guarding Safety and Legislative Changes in WSIB Policy, Construction Safety Regulations and Workwell, Ergonomics, Emergency Response Plans or JHSC Certification Part 2. Please contact us for a copy.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR UPDATE

WEYERHAEUSER COMPANY LTD. FINED \$100,000 FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY VIOLATION

February 12, 2002

DRYDEN, Ont.--Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd., a Vancouver, B.C.-based forest products company with a pulp and paper mill in Dryden, was fined \$100,000 today for a violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* that resulted in an arm injury to an employee.

On June 26, 2000, a worker was sweeping sawdust from a floor near a pulley on a conveyor system when the worker's broom became caught in the pulley. The worker's arm was pulled into a pinch point in the conveyor and was cut causing nerve damage. The incident occurred at Weyerhaeuser's mill on Duke Street in Dryden.

Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd. pleaded guilty, as an employer, to failing to provide information, instruction and supervision to the injured worker on how to safely sweep in the area near the pulley. This was contrary to Section 25(2) (a) of the act.

The fine was imposed by Justice of the Peace Marjorie Pasloski of the Ontario Court of Justice in Dryden.



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Stage 1: Agitation or Distress

At this stage, the person moves away from normal behavior and shows non-verbal signs of agitation or distress such as:

- clenched fists, flared nostrils, restlessness
- loud speech, flushed face
- aggressive gestures etc.

What To Do:

The goal is to identify what is the cause of their behavior and empathize with their feelings. This can be achieved by:

- Meet with the individual in a private but safe place.
- Ask if you can approach them and do so with confidence, maintaining eye contact and aware of your body language. Don't enter their personal space.
- Speak to them calmly, softly and slowly and listen to them actively.
- Empathize with them using statements like "You seem to be upset".

Stage 2: Aggression and Mounting Vulnerability

At this stage, the person becomes defensive, protective and/or on the verge of losing control. They are feeling helpless, powerless and vulnerable. Physical characteristics may be that the individual takes a threatening stance, raises their voice, slams a door, throws things or exhibits signs of increased activity level.

What To Do:

The goal at this stage is to support their defense and direct the person to do something that will stop the behaviour.

- Before approaching them, arrange for back-up. Stay at a safe distance.
- Use a directive approach: give a clear, simple directive such as, "Please sit in the chair." You may have to repeat it.
- If they show signs of regaining control, offer positive reinforcement.
- As they begin to talk, acknowledge their feelings of anger and keep them focused on the issue. Don't try to analyze. Clarify your understanding.
- Set limits or enforce boundaries.
- Evaluate their response to your intervention and document the intervention and its results.

Stage 3: Violence or Chaos

At this stage, verbal intervention is ineffective. To protect yourself you must:

- Leave the area and/or make noise to ensure help is coming

COURT IMPOSES \$250,000 FINE AGAINST BOMBARDIER INC. FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY VIOLATION

NORTH BAY, Ont.--The Ontario Court of Justice on February 6, 2002 imposed a \$250,000 fine against Bombardier Inc., a Montreal-based company which operates an aerospace assembly plant in North Bay, Ont. The fine was for a violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* that resulted in the death of an employee.

On June 8, 2000, a worker fell about 4.6 metres (15 feet) from an elevated work platform to a concrete floor below while the scaffolding was being moved from one location to another. The worker had been on top of the scaffolding to ensure the upper portion of the moving platform did not strike the delicate tail fin of an airplane. The worker died later that day in hospital. A Ministry of Labour investigation found there were guardrails with footboards around three of the four sides of the elevated platform. The fall occurred on the open fourth side as the worker, who was not wearing any fall protection, attempted to move from the upper to the lower platform. The accident occurred in an airplane hangar at Bombardier Inc.'s aerospace assembly plant on Airport Road in North Bay.

On Nov. 6, 2001, Bombardier Inc. pleaded guilty to failing to ensure there was a guardrail on the open side of the elevated platform, as required by Section 13(1)(b)(i) of the Regulations for Industrial Establishments. This was contrary to Section 25(1)(c) of the act.

Both the Ministry of Labour and defence counsel made a joint submission to Justice of the Peace Ben Sinai, of the Ontario Court of Justice in North Bay, to impose a fine of \$250,000. Instead, the Justice of the Peace fined the company \$100,000.

The Ministry of Labour appealed the sentence to the Ontario Court of Justice. Justice Joseph Wilson, of the court in North Bay, allowed the appeal and imposed a fine of \$250,000.



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- If you are unable to leave the area, protect yourself.

What To Do:

- Ensure help is on the way (security and police).
- Maintain a safe distance between you and the individual.
- Stand sideways to the person. This stance is less intimidating, provides a narrower target, and reduces exposure of vulnerable body parts.
- Find and use shields; know your environment.
- If the individual has a weapon:
 - Stay calm.
 - Avoid rushing the individual.
 - Focus on the individual, not the weapon.
 - Step back and increase distance.
 - Buy time.

Successful intervention at the earlier stages of aggression will ensure that this latter, more violent confrontation will never occur.

In addition to assessing the stages of aggression, there are also some basic body language and verbal communication tips for dealing with potentially violent situations. These include the following:

- Stand outside of their personal space, on an angle and on their non-dominant side
- Keep near a clear exit
- Position yourself at the same physical level
- Keep hands open, calm facial expression and stance
- Don't point, make sudden moves or take a challenging stance (hands on hips, arms crossed)
- Avoid touching them or staring
- Be neutral and ask how you can help
- Do not glare, stare or become angry
- Active listening, don't interrupt
- Confirm your understanding and acknowledge their feelings, focus on the issue at hand
- Speak simply, slowly and quietly, using silence as tool
- Be honest, accept criticism and be prepared to apologize
- Ask for their recommendations

For additional assistance in preparing a workplace violence prevention program or receiving training on workplace violence issues, please contact RTS Consulting.

References:

1. Health Care Health and Safety Association (HCHSA) Workplace Violence Prevention Program, 2001 (www.hchsa.on.ca)
2. www.workplaceviolence.ca
3. "Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide",

CCOHS (Canadian Centre for Occupation Health and Safety), 1999.

4. CCOHS Web Site (www.ccohs.ca)

"Managing Assaultive Patients", California Department of Mental Health, 1 facility.

UPCOMING TRAINING COURSES:

Machine Guarding

March 25, 2002

\$120.00 +GST

WHMIS

March 26, 2002

\$80.00 +GST

The President of RTSC, Stanford Brown, has a B.Sc. from the State University of New York - Empire State College, a Diploma in Safety Engineering Technology and a Certificate of Occupational Hygiene and Safety from Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology. He is also one of the only safety professionals in Canada that holds the Canadian Registered Safety Professional designation (CRSP), the Certified Health and Safety Consultant designation (CHSC) and the international Certified Safety Professional designation (CSP) from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals in Savoy, Illinois.

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc. has a proven record of excellence in providing cost-effective solutions in a spectrum of EH&S issues through the development of exceptional policies and programs. We have attained excellence in various industries including retail product distribution, food industry, construction, dry chemical manufacturing and, mining and steel manufacturing over the last 10 years. We have managed over TWENTY Workwell audit compliance projects in the last year. We have maintained a 100% pass rate in businesses ranging from educational institutions to steel manufacturing plants.

We have received recognition from various businesses such as: The Document Company Xerox, Ingram Micro, Canpar, Industrial Accident Prevention Association, Kaneff Group of Companies and Ford.

We would be honored to assist you in "raising the standard" of the EH&S systems in your organization.

For assistance in 'raising the standard' of environment, health and safety in your organization contact us at (905) 840-1918.

Stanford R. Brown, B.Sc., CRSP, CSP, CHSC
President

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc.
Environment, Health & Safety Specialist