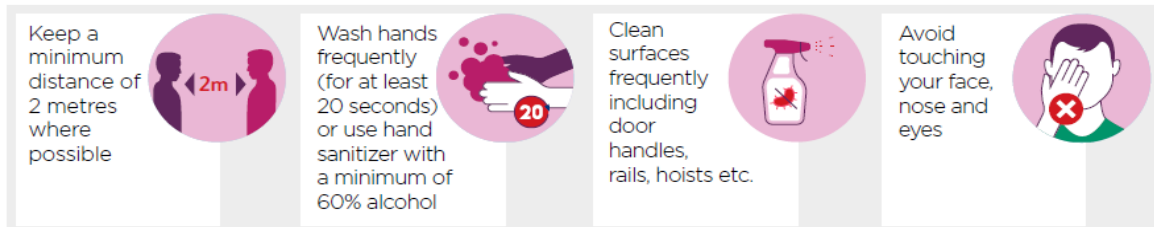


Health and Safety Toolbox Talk No: 140 (Covid-19) Abuse & Aggression



There are times where we may face aggressive or violent behavior in the workplace. Staff are sworn at, threatened or even attacked. This may be particularly so in times of national uncertainty e.g. Covid-19 coronavirus.

During such periods, wherever we are involved in any activity which may impact on the public's everyday life, our teams may be subject to an increased level of abuse. That includes abuse over the phone as well as being face to face with the aggressor. Even travelling to and from work may trigger acts of aggression against our staff.

Regardless of whether this abuse is through ignorance, fear or anger – it is unacceptable, and should not be tolerated.

If you are out and about, you may find yourself being 'challenged' - in a potentially violent and stressful situation. If possible:

- Let them know you are going about your legitimate business
- Remain vigilant and assess the situation – can you get away?
- Never underestimate a threat, but do not respond aggressively.
- Walk away
- Do not try to intimidate the aggressor
- You should only react physically if it necessary for self-defence.

If the level of threat is escalating, and the abuse has become unacceptable - you may have only one choice;

- **Get away as fast as you can** and move towards a safer
- If you genuinely believe that there is an immediate threat of unlawful personal violence towards yourself or others, you may need to dial 999 (police)

If you are on the phone and the other person in the conversation is getting aggressive or abusive: remain professional but ask them to calm down. If they continue, inform them that you will terminate the call and that the incident will be reported to your manager.



Incidents of aggression or abuse towards employees should be reported on Cascade (under Accident Reporting screen) and select the relevant Category / Causative Factor for aggressive behaviour. This will allow us to investigate, review existing controls, liaise with relevant third parties and hopefully prevent the incident from re-occurring.

COVID 19 update

To help contain the virus, office workers who can work effectively from home should do so over the winter. Where an employer, in consultation with their employee, judges an employee can carry out their normal duties from home they should do so.

Public-sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary.

Anyone else who cannot work from home should go to their place of work.

The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if [COVID-secure guidelines](#) are followed closely. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

Those classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) can go to work as long as the workplace is COVID-19 secure, but should carry on working from home wherever possible.

There is no limit to group size when you are meeting or gathering for work purposes, but workplaces should be set up to meet the COVID-secure guidelines.

You should continue to:

- follow social distancing rules
- travel to venues or amenities that are open, for work or to access education, but aim to reduce the number of journeys you make

Information on local COVID alert levels, including what they mean, why they are being introduced and what the different levels are can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions>

