Assault and Antisocial behaviour

Abuse and assault against employees can occur in a variety of settings such as public facing roles, lone working or driving. Incidents may involve verbal threats, intimidation, physical attacks, or harassment. These incidents can be unpredictable and may arise due to:

* High-stress situations (e.g. service delays, denied access, enforcement of rules or policies)
* Disputes over money or goods (especially for employees handling cash or delivering items)
* Lone working where staff are more vulnerable due to isolation
* Challenging individuals including those affected by drugs, alcohol, or mental health issues
* Driving or mobile roles where road rage or disputes can escalate quickly

No employee should accept abuse or assault as

“part of the job”

Legal Duty of Care

Employers have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees, including protection from violence and abuse. Employers must also assess risks under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and implement suitable control measures.

**How Employers Protect Against Assault and Antisocial Behaviour:**

**Risk Assessments**

As with any other hazards, risk assessments are used to Identify job roles or settings where there is a risk of abuse or assault. This calculates both the severity and likelihood of this happening and establishes the control measures required to manage this risk. This will be particularly relevant for lone working conditions, public interaction and the handling of cash or valuable goods.

**Preventative Measures**

There are several preventative measures that are used by many employers to protect their employees from abuse and assault:

* Training in conflict resolution and de-escalation where

it is appropriate to do so

* The use of protective layouts such as barriers, screens, CCTV and the securing of cash and other valuable items
* Establishing safe systems of work, such as buddy systems or regular

check-ins for lone workers

* Displaying signage making it clear that abuse of staff will not be tolerated.

**Clear Reporting Procedures**

As with any other hazard or incident, all kinds of abuse and assault, whether it be verbal or physical, need to be reported and recorded promptly. This document provides several tools for specific instances of abuse and assault. This process includes any concerns an employee may have (for example about working in certain areas or the nature of the work) and needs to include near misses.

**Support for Victims**

Abuse and assault can require both physical and emotional support following an incident. As an employer it is important to offer immediate support such as medical care, time off, or counselling as they would with any other incident. The response should be appropriate to the severity of the incident and be included in the processes for abuse and assault as outlined in the risk assessment. A follow up review meeting to ensure affected staff are not pressured to return to duties before they are ready is also key with abuse and assault as the psychological impact can be long-lasting.

**Investigate and Learn**

As with any other health and safety incident, it is the responsibility of the employer to investigate all reports thoroughly. This enables them to use findings to improve practices, training, or physical controls.

**Work with Other Agencies**

If appropriate, involve the police and support prosecutions. This document includes forms and guides that include references to police incident numbers and collar numbers so employees can feel confident if they need to involve the police or other emergency services.

# Employees should know that:

# Your safety is a priority

# All incidents — including verbal abuse — should be reported

# You are not expected to place yourself at risk to protect property or resolve conflict.

**Assault without injury**

Assault without injury such as being threatened, spat at, or physically intimidated — can still be distressing and serious. It’s important to respond appropriately and follow clear procedures to ensure your safety and support any investigation.

✅ **Do:**

* Press the emergency button (if available) to raise an alert and get help quickly
* Take a DNA swab (if relevant, such as in cases involving spitting), following training or guidance
* Secure the sample properly to avoid contamination or tampering
* Return the sample to the designated location within 3 hours (e.g. the office or depot) and place it in the correct storage (e.g. fridge) as per procedure
* Inform the designated contact so they can obtain a crime number from the police
* Complete all required paperwork as soon as possible, ideally upon returning to base
* Request access to CCTV footage promptly to preserve evidence
* Report the incident to your organisation’s designated contact, such as an Assault Support Officer
* Get witness statements if others were present during the incident
* Seek support if you feel distressed or shaken — emotional impacts are valid and support should be available
* Cooperate fully with investigations by providing honest, clear details.

❌ **Don’t:**

* Leave your work area or vehicle until you are sure it is safe to do so
* Contaminate the DNA or evidence sample — handle everything with care, and wear gloves if instructed
* Forget to report the incident — every incident, no matter how minor it seems, should be logged
* Antagonise or engage with the assailant — remain calm and prioritise your safety
* Delay your report — time-sensitive evidence like CCTV and DNA may be lost if reporting is not immediate
* Discuss the incident on social media or with anyone not authorised to be involved.

**Assault causing injury**

If you experience or witness an assault that causes injury — whether physical or psychological — follow these steps to ensure your safety, support others, and preserve evidence.

✅ **Do:**

* Press the emergency button (or raise an alert using your organisation’s procedure) as soon as it is safe to do so
* Call emergency services if urgent medical or police assistance is required
* Stay calm and focus on your own safety and the safety of others nearby
* Assist others (such as colleagues, members of the public, or passengers) who may have been assaulted, where it is safe and appropriate to do so
* Take witness details (names and contact numbers) if it is safe and reasonable
* Fill in witness or incident forms as required by your organisation, either at the scene or as soon as practicable
* Report the incident formally on an incident form before the end of your shift or working day
* Request that CCTV is secured — this should be passed to your line manager or designated safety officer
* Seek medical attention for yourself or others, even if injuries appear minor — adrenaline may mask symptoms
* Inform your manager or designated contact (such as a security lead, Assault Support Officer, or Health & Safety rep)
* Access support services if you're distressed — this may include trauma counselling or an employee assistance programme (EAP).

❌ **Don’t:**

* Leave your work area, vehicle, or cab until it is safe to do so and/or police or emergency services arrive
* Leave the scene of the assault until authorised to do so by the police, unless you are in immediate danger
* Leave your vehicle or equipment unattended, especially in a public area or during a security incident
* Intervene physically in disputes between others — request help from control or emergency services instead
* Antagonise or retaliate against the assailant — stay professional and non-confrontational
* Move the vehicle, equipment, or key evidence until instructed by police or your company’s safety representative

**Reporting Damage to Company Vehicles and Equipment**

Criminal or malicious damage to company property — including vehicles, tools, and equipment — can disrupt operations, pose safety risks, and lead to significant financial losses. Whether it's graffiti, physical tampering, vandalism, or etching, it must be identified and reported promptly.

**Examples of Damage:**

* Graffiti, etching, or defacement
* Slashed seats or upholstery damage
* Broken mirrors, lights, or windows
* Damaged safety equipment
* Missing or tampered components
* Equipment that appears to have been misused or sabotaged

✅ **Do:**

* Conduct a full visual check of your vehicle or equipment before starting your shift or using any shared resource
* Report all signs of damage, even if they seem minor or have occurred previously
* Obtain photographic evidence if damage is discovered during your shift or use of equipment — clear photos can assist with investigations and insurance
* Note any distinctive tags, marks, or signatures (commonly known as "TAGs") in cases of graffiti or etching
* Check again at the end of your shift or at a terminus, especially if the equipment or vehicle was left unattended
* Request CCTV footage if damage occurred during service or while equipment was in a monitored area
* Complete the appropriate damage or incident report, including time, location, and suspected cause
* Escalate the issue if you believe the damage could cause harm, affect safety, or result in further misuse.

❌ **Don’t:**

* Forget to carry out checks at the start and end of your shift
* Ignore new or additional damage, assuming someone else will report it
* Delay reporting — time is critical to secure CCTV and follow up
* Clean or tamper with the damage before photos are taken or a supervisor has seen it
* Use damaged equipment or vehicles if it could affect your safety or the safety of others — report and seek guidance.

**Responding to Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)**

Antisocial behaviour can include aggressive language, public nuisance, substance misuse, vandalism, harassment, or any behaviour that causes alarm or distress to staff or others. Prompt reporting helps to build intelligence, identify hotspots, and prevent escalation.

**Examples of ASB**

* Verbal abuse, threats or intimidation
* Vandalism, graffiti, or littering
* Smoking or vaping in prohibited areas
* Alcohol consumption on premises or in vehicles
* Substance misuse (e.g. drug use or dealing)
* Disruptive or confrontational behaviour
* Public indecency, harassment, or loitering.

✅ **Do:**

* Use the designated ASB alert system (e.g. ASB button, radio, app, or direct contact with control) to raise a timely alert
* Complete an incident or near miss report — especially if ASB is recurring in specific locations or times
* Note and report patterns such as engine shutdowns (e.g. if used to provoke or delay services), loitering, or harassment
* Log environmental factors — such as alcohol use, feet on furniture, disruptive eating, littering, or damage
* Report any signs of substance misuse by using the appropriate reporting procedure (e.g. “substance” alert button or form)
* Record times, locations, and behaviours in as much detail as possible — this supports targeted interventions
* Inform your manager or safety team if you feel threatened or unsafe.

❌ **Don’t:**

* Leave secure work areas (such as a cab, booth, or counter) unless it is safe and necessary to do so
* Leave doors unlocked or unguarded, especially if they are meant to separate staff from the public
* Challenge or confront individuals directly — especially if they appear aggressive, intoxicated, or unpredictable
* Antagonise or escalate the situation — maintain calm and follow your organisation’s safety-first procedures
* Ignore repeat incidents — repeated minor issues can be early warning signs of escalating behaviour
* Forget to use designated reporting systems — such as pressing alert buttons for smoking, drinking, or drugs.

**Responding to Incidents Involving Cash, Coercion, or Refusal to Pay**

Some incidents may involve a refusal to pay, attempts to obtain goods or services dishonestly, or threatening behaviour involving demands for cash, sensitive information, or unauthorised services. These situations can escalate quickly and should always be taken seriously.

**Examples include:**

* A customer refusing to pay for goods or services
* An individual demanding free services or illicit access
* Threats made to obtain cash from a till, safe, or employee
* Attempts to obtain sensitive company or customer data
* Intimidation used to bypass payment or verification processes.

✅ **Do:**

* Stay calm and avoid confrontation — prioritise your own safety at all times
* Follow your organisation’s procedure for refusals to pay — this may include offering a final explanation and walking away
* Use a silent alarm, emergency button, or code word if you feel threatened or coerced
* Secure cash and sensitive items as per company policy — never place yourself at risk to protect assets
* Record details of the incident, including descriptions, time, location, what was said, and what was demanded
* Report the incident immediately to your manager, control centre, or designated contact
* Complete an incident or security report as soon as practical
* Request CCTV be secured if available
* Seek support if the incident was distressing — your organisation may offer trauma support, debriefs, or counselling

❌ **Don’t:**

* Attempt to physically prevent someone from leaving the premises — this could put you or others at risk
* Put yourself in harm’s way to protect cash, information, or equipment
* Agree to hand over anything beyond what your procedure allows — but if threatened, comply and report immediately
* Share sensitive information (such as passwords, access codes, or customer data) under pressure — report all attempts
* Dismiss coercion as "just part of the job" — all threats should be logged and investigated
* Forget to document refusals to pay, even if no threat was involved — it helps identify patterns or repeat offenders.

**Conflict Avoidance and De-escalation**

In any workplace where employees interact with members of the public, colleagues, or service users, there is always the potential for disagreement, frustration, or conflict. This could stem from misunderstandings, unmet expectations, refusal of service, enforcement of rules, or emotional distress on the part of the other person.

While not all conflict can be avoided, the way employees respond can make a significant difference in whether a situation escalates or is resolved calmly. Conflict avoidance isn’t about backing down or allowing abuse — it’s about managing interactions professionally, prioritising safety, and maintaining control of the situation.

These techniques aim to help employees:

* Communicate clearly and respectfully under pressure
* Prevent misunderstandings from becoming confrontations
* Protect themselves and others by reducing risk
* Create a safer and more positive working environment

✅ **Do:**

* Use calm, positive language — a smile, relaxed posture, and open tone go a long way
* Make appropriate eye contact and acknowledge the person, even if you can’t help them immediately
* Remain professional — speak respectfully, avoid sarcasm, and focus on solutions
* Stick to the issue at hand and keep the goal in mind (resolving the situation, not winning the argument)
* Offer support to vulnerable individuals — conflict often arises from confusion, fear, or frustration
* Say goodbye with warmth — ending an interaction positively can defuse residual tension
* Give your full attention when speaking to someone — make them feel heard, even if you're limited in what you can do
* Use active listening techniques — nodding, repeating back key points, or saying “I understand” helps lower defences

❌ **Don’t:**

* Be aggressive — physically, verbally, or in tone or posture
* Raise your voice — unless in an emergency or to call for help
* Take things personally — their anger or frustration may not be about you
* Let your body language send the wrong message — avoid slouching, eye-rolling, folded arms, or turning your back
* Ignore cultural, language, or accessibility barriers — clarify gently and don’t make assumptions
* Lose your temper or become defensive — stay focused on resolving the issue, not reacting to it
* Dismiss the person’s concerns — even if you can’t help, acknowledge their frustration.

**Witness and Victim Statements**

After any serious incident, including assault, anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, or threats, you may be asked to provide a witness statement and, if applicable, a victim personal statement. These statements help ensure a full and accurate record of what happened and may be used as part of a formal investigation or court proceedings.

**Witness Statements**

A witness statement is a factual account of what you saw, heard, or experienced during an incident.

You may be asked to complete one if:

* You directly witnessed the incident
* You were involved in any part of it
* You have relevant information about the individuals or events involved

Your statement should be:

* Clear and factual — include dates, times, locations, and a description of what happened
* Completed as soon as possible after the event, while details are fresh
* Shared with your manager, supervisor, or nominated safety officer

Witness statements may be used by your employer, the police, or other relevant authorities to investigate or prosecute an incident.

**Victim Personal Statements**

If you were directly affected by the incident, you may choose to make a victim personal statement (VPS) in addition to your witness statement. This is your opportunity to describe the emotional, physical, or financial impact of the incident in your own words.

* You are not required to give a victim statement, but it can help others understand how the incident has affected you
* Your statement can be made at the same time as your witness statement or added later, up to the time of any court hearing
* Once submitted, the statement becomes part of the case file and may be shared with the police, Crown Prosecution Service, defence lawyers, and the courts (magistrates and judges)
* If the case goes to trial, you may be asked questions in court about what you wrote, including any loss, injury, or trauma you experienced
* You cannot withdraw or change a victim statement once it's submitted. However, you can make an additional statement later to clarify or update the information.

If you're unsure about what to include or how to complete your statement, support is available through:

* Your line manager or incident support contact
* A union representative (if applicable)
* Internal safety or welfare services
* The police, if they are involved in the case

**FORMS:**

1. Assault/Abuse Incident Report Form
2. Witness Statement Form
3. Damage to Property or Equipment Form
4. Anti-Social Behaviour Report Form

**Assault/Abuse Incident Report Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Report (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |
| Time of Report (24:00) |  |
|  |  |
| Date of Incident (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |
| Time of Incident (24:00) |  |
|  |  |
| Reported by (name & role) |  |
| Location of Incident |  |

Type of incident: (tick all that apply)

Verbal abuse

Physical assault

Threat of violence

Anti-social behaviour

Theft or attempted theft

Criminal damage

Cash refusal/threats

Substance misuse

Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Was CCTV available or requested? YES  NO

Were the police notified? YES  NO

Crime Reference Number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Was medical assistance required? YES  NO

Details of medical assistance provided (if applicable)

Incident Description (Please provide a full factual account):

Witness Details (if applicable):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Contact Information |  |

Immediate Action Taken:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Witness Statement Form**

To be completed by any person who observed an incident, including employees, contractors, or members of the public.

Witness Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full Name |  |
| Contact Telephone Number |  |
| Email Address |  |
| Job Role/Relationship to Organisation (e.g. employee, contractor, visitor) |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Incident (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |
| Time of Incident (24:00) |  |
| Name(s) of Person(s) involved (if known) |  |
| Location of Incident |  |

Was anyone injured? YES  NO

Were the police notified? YES  NO

Statement (Please describe exactly what you saw/heard, in your own words) Use factual, neutral language. Include descriptions of persons involved, actions taken, dialogue (if any), direction of travel, etc.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Damage to Property or Equipment Form**

For use when any company vehicle, equipment, or asset is vandalised, damaged, or tampered with.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Report (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |
| Time of Report (24:00) |  |
|  |  |
| Reported by (name & role) |  |
| Date and Time of Damage Noticed |  |
| Location/Worksite |  |
| Type of Asset Damaged (vehicle, tool, IT equipment etc) |  |
| Asset ID or Registration Number  (if applicable) |  |
| Nature of Damage (e.g. graffiti, broken part, missing item) |  |
| Suspected Cause or Assailant (if known) |  |

**Evidence**

Photos Taken? YES  NO

CCTV Requested? YES  NO

Police Notified? YES  NO

Crime Ref Number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken (Tick if completed)

Asset isolated or made safe

Damage reported to maintenance or facilities

Supervisor/Manager informed

Replacement equipment sourced

Internal report completed

Health and safety log updated

**Anti-Social Behaviour Report Form**

To be used when employees encounter disruptive, inappropriate, or unsafe behaviour from customers, clients, or the general public.

Reporter Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full Name |  |
| Role/Job Title |  |
| Contact Number |  |
| Date of Report (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |

Incident Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Incident (DD/MM/YYYY) |  |
| Time of Incident (24:00) |  |
| Location of Incident |  |
| Name(s) and/or Description of Person(s) involved (if known) |  |

Type of Anti-Social Behaviour (tick all that apply)

Verbal abuse

Intimidation

Substance misuse

Smoking/Vaping

Refusal to follow instructions

Disorderly conduct

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Immediate Action Taken (tick if completed)

Pressed anti-social behaviour alert / emergency button

Reported via internal communication system

Attempted de-escalation

Requested police/security support

Completed near miss report (if ongoing hotspot)

Informed supervisor or manager

CCTV requested

Further notes or description of behaviour

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_