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Methodology for identifying and Assessing Risks (PR2/A1)

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1. Introduction

Workplace violence is not an exception that occurs only in individual workplaces but takes place in one form or another in virtually every organisation in the HORECA sector. However, every incident is one too many and can have massive consequences in the long run, not only for the people involved but also for the company. Therefore, to establish a Methodology for identifying and Assessing Risks of Work-related violence hazards, WEED OUT made a survey to capture the understanding of occupational violence among the HORECA staff.

2. About WEED OUT

WEED OUT project is funded by the European Commission's Erasmus + programme. The project started in November 2021 and lasts for 2 years. This project will design a unique training program and develop the relevant tools for HORECA management to prevent, identify and manage occupational violence. In the case of occupational violence, preventive measures may not eliminate incidents of violent behaviours completely but will reduce them considerably and discourage future ones. HORECA is a sector where occupational violence thrives, primarily because it is manned by people with lower formal qualifications or very little training or comes from vulnerable groups of the population such as young people, women with family responsibilities, migrants, or members of ethnic minorities. Workplace violence is a health and safety hazard. All hazards require preventive measures to minimize the risk of them occurring. It is important therefore for HORECA management to know how to effectively defuse any such threat. In business, all these hazards are identified and described within a Risk Assessment Plan which is part of a wider Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management plan. Most OHS plans, although they recognize Occupational Violence as a risk, they often offer superficial remedies that touch the awareness level. HORECA faces chronic labour shortages, and the current levels of workplace violence may demotivate people to seek employment there. Furthermore, workplace violence has a ripple effect on society, the economy, and the quality of life of Europeans. There is a need for drastic actions to defuse the situation and reverse the current negative labour conditions in the HORECA sector. People working in the HORECA sector are entitled to have safe and healthy working environments. It is time to "Weed out Occupational Violence from HORECA"!



Project Objectives:

- Enhance the role of VET in the effective prevention and management of workplace violence in HORECA.
- Increase awareness among management and stakeholders.
- Offer HORECA managements training to manage their Occupational Health and Safety management plans against workplace violence.
- Foster inclusive, healthy and safe HORECA employment.
- Improve the Occupational conditions in the sector to attract more labour.
- Manage the emotional, social and psychological stress of the victims.
- Contribute to a violence-free Tourism and Catering sector in Europe.

3. Methodology for identifying and Assessing Risks at Work

3.1. Why do we need a Methodology?

Work-related violence hazards generally arise as a result of:

- the work environment;
- the work tasks and how they are carried out;
- the way work is designed and managed.

Typical hazards that give rise to work-related violence include:

- handling cash, drugs or valuables
- working alone, working in isolation, working in the community and working at night
- providing services to distressed, angry or incarcerated people
- enforcement activities.

Sometimes, an employee may be deterred from reporting a violent incident because:

- it is thought to be 'part of the job' and nothing can be done about it
- the employee believes that only 'serious incidents' are to be reported

- there is a perception that nothing will happen if the incident is reported
- the employee believes they will be blamed for the incident
- the reporting process is time-consuming and complex
- they just want to forget about it.

Describing a methodology to identify and assess occupational violence in the workplace, will give us a path. It will help shorten everyone's learning curve in the sector, including management and staff. It will provide the minimum standard for the prevention and management of occupational violence risks across the sector to protect the health, safety and well-being of staff who have the potential to experience occupational violence.

3.2. Survey and Interviews

To define what methodology to follow for identifying and assessing risks within a HORECA establishment, the partners ran a survey among 263 HORECA employees in total in six EU countries (Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania and Germany). The purpose of the questionnaire was to project the nature and frequency of occupational violence in HORECA today and the behaviour of the sector towards it. The results of the survey in each partner country were then discussed with Health and Safety officers and responsible managers of the sector to clarify their processes for handling occupational violence incidents.

In conclusion, this activity clearly indicated that the HORECA sector is vulnerable to occupational violence. The extent of the problem can only be estimated, as what constitutes occupational violence is not very clear to its workforce. In some countries, mistreating staff may be considered the norm because neither the perpetrators nor those who are being mistreated value what occupational violence really is.

Therefore, HORECA needs structured policies and transparent reporting procedures to be developed and introduced. Staff needs to undergo continuous training on how to recognise and how to use these procedures to report such incidents. The sector needs to be open about this matter and encourage its staff to report occupational violence incidents; no matter how small or big they are, by offering incentives and ensuring a secure and transparent environment. This is the only way to discourage perpetrators from repeating their unlawful behaviour.

HORECA is a sector where labour shortages are continuous. One of the reasons that have made this labour problem chronic is occupational violence. By introducing clear and transparent procedures to manage, this problem will ensure a healthy working environment and will encourage more people to join the sector. A healthy workplace will subsequently increase production and quality and bring about a new appreciation of the services provided.

4. Prevention and Management Strategy for any Type of Violence in the HORECA Industry

4.1. Violence

The term “violence” in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aims at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm.

4.2. Scope

The violence in the world of work occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work:

1. in the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work;
2. in places where the worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities;
3. during work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities;
4. through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies;
5. in employer-provided accommodation; and
6. when commuting to and from work.

4.3. The Forms of Violence

There are four categories of occupational violence, which are defined by the person carrying out the occupational violence.

- **Violence through third parties (customer, client, guest, supplier)**

According to CDC, (Types of Workplace Violence | WPVHC | NIOSH, 2020) this type of violence considers the customer/client relationship, patients, their family members, and other visitors. It can

also be referred to as client-on-worker violence. This type of violence occurs when the violent person has a legitimate relationship with the business – for example, a customer, client, or supplier- and becomes violent while interacting with the business and its employees. (Turner, 2022)

- **Worker-on-worker**

In this case, the perpetrator is the employee or past employee of the business who attacks or threatens other employees or past employees in the workplace. (Turner, 2022) The violence can be lateral or vertical and it can include bullying, often verbal and emotional abuse, offensive/vindictive/humiliating behaviour, and homicide. This type of violence is often directed at the person that is viewed as inferior (supervisor to employee, doctor to nurse, peer-to-peer etc.)

- **Criminal intent**

In this type of occupational violence, the perpetrator has no legitimate relationship to the business or the employees. This type of violence usually happens by incidents (robbery, shoplifting, trespassing, acts of terrorism). (Turner, 2022)

- **Personal relationship**

In this case, the perpetrator does not have a relationship with the business but has a relationship with the victim. This often includes victims of domestic violence (ex. The husband of a nurse follows her to work and threatens her). Even though it may seem personal, this type of violence can have a negative influence on co-workers and clients in form of physical or emotional damage. (Types of Workplace Violence | WPVHC | NIOSH, 2020)

4.4. Identifying Hazards

Identifying hazards begins by gathering information about the work being performed, and the area in which it is being performed. Look critically at your work environment. Survey your staff to collect their observations and insights.

In Annex II, you can find a proposed Survey.

4.5. Workplace Violence Risk Assessment

When a hazard is identified, it must be evaluated to determine the degree of risk to workers. Then in the form (Annex I), considering the above the risk is assessed as a function of the probability of occurrence and its consequences. If the risk assessment requires it or if it is decided by the management, with or without the cooperation of the staff, additional measures are taken. A manager is responsible for their implementation is assigned as well as the time frame within which the additional measures will be implemented.

The risk assessment is done using tables 1, 2 and 3 below as a basis for calculations. The risk is classified considering the probability (see table 1) and the severity of its consequences (see table 2). The combination of the two parameters results in the magnitude of the risk (see Table 3).

Table 1: Probability Classification Criteria

5	Highly likely event	Risk occurs frequently.
4	Quite probable event	Risk is more likely to occur than not to occur.
3	Possible event	Risk may or may not occur.
2	Rather unlikely	Risk is more likely NOT to occur than to occur.
1	Unlikely event	Risk is not expected to occur.

Table 2: Criteria for Ranking Severity of Consequences

5	Very serious consequences	Very serious accident-causing non-reversible damage and leading to death (e.g., beating to death, suicide)
4	Serious consequences	Serious accident-causing serious injury/illness up to and including disability (e.g., beating and causing disability, amputation, cancer, 3 rd or 2 nd degree burns to a large area of the body, suicide attempt, etc.) and need hospital.
3	Moderate consequences	Injuries and illnesses that cause a small but prolonged or often recurring strain (such as bruises, scratches, simple fractures, second-degree burns to a specific part of the body etc.) and need first aid.



2	Low consequences	Bad behaviour
1	Very low consequences	No injury or illness

Table 3: Risk Assessment

		CONSEQUENCES				
		5	4	3	2	1
P O S S I B I L I T Y	5	EXTREME RISK	EXTREME RISK	HIGH RISK	MODERATE RISK	LOW RISK
	4	EXTREME RISK	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	MODERATE RISK	LOW RISK
	3	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	MODERATE RISK	MODERATE RISK	LOW RISK
	2	MODERATE RISK	MODERATE RISK	MODERATE RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK
	1	LOW RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK

The result obtained at the evaluation stage is translated into the following actions taken, depending on the level of their risk (see table 4).



RISK LEVEL	ACTIONS AND TIMELINES
25 – 20 Extreme Risk	Do not start work until the risk is reduced. If it is not possible to reduce the risk, even with unlimited resources, the ban should continue.
16 – 12 High Risk	Do not start work until the risk is reduced. It is possible to reduce the risk, but action needs to be taken immediately.
10 – 6 Moderate Risk	Actions for a reasonably feasible risk reduction within a specified period and with defined measures that will take into account the implementation costs in terms of the improvement they provide.
5 – 2 Low Risk	No additional control measures are needed. Any improvements are at the discretion of the management and the implementation costs must be considered in terms of the degree of improvement that will occur.



5. Annex

5.1. Annex I

5.1.1. Risk Assessment Form

Hazard	Who is affected	Consequences	Existing Measures	Risk Assessment			Additional Measures	Responsible Person	Timeline	Audit	Risk After Additional Measures
				Possibility	Consequences	Residual Risk					
Work Area:											
Violence	Worker	1.	✓				1.				
	Other Employee										
	Other Person 3 rd Party										



5.2. Annex II

5.2.1. Survey

ABC Hotel Violence Prevention Survey (Year 20xx)

Introduction

This survey has been designed to help evaluate and enhance the violence prevention program at ABC Hotel.

Added on to the Post Implementation Program Evaluation Survey

Your feedback will help the Work Place Violence Prevention Committee evaluate the impact of violence prevention processes implemented during the past year and determine how to enhance the program.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions about your experience related to workplace violence and violence prevention activities at this establishment.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important. **All responses are confidential**

What is workplace violence?

In the European Union Directive 2002/73/EC, workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behaviour that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide.

For more information please contact: Mr/Mrs xxxxxx, Safety Officer at safety@abc-hotel.com



Survey Content

Date ____/____/20xx

Demographics

1. Hotel Dept.:

2. Job type:

Examples of job types:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Receptionist▪ Secretary▪ Housekeeping Staff▪ Waiter/waitress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ barman/barwoman▪ barista▪ pool boy/girl▪ Animator
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3. How long have you worked at this hotel?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- Over 10 years

Employees overall experience related to WPV at the hotel

4. What does the term 'Workplace Violence' mean to you?

5. Have incidents of workplace violence increased or decreased during the time you have worked at this hotel?

(Response choice: Increased / Decreased / No Change / I don't know)

Types of violence employees have experienced and their perception of cause

6. In the last year, have you been directly involved in an incident(s) of workplace violence within this establishment? **(Response choice Yes/No)**

7. If yes, did that incident(s) include any of the following? Check all that apply.

- Physical assault – e.g. kicking, punching, spitting, biting, pushing, pulling, cutting, stabbing
- Emotional assault -- e.g. bullying, manipulation, intimidation
- Sexual assault -- e.g. harassment, stalking,
- Verbal assault -- e.g. threats, blaming, name-calling unwanted contact
- Other – please describe

.....

8. If yes, please provide examples of incident(s).

9. Rank the factors you think contribute to the problem or threat of violence, or aggression in your work area? **(Response choice: '1' is the most frequent contributing factor and '7' is the least contributing Factor)**

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Drugs and Alcohol							
Cultural Differences							
Job Pressure							
Work practices							
Poor communication							
Customer intervention							
Personal Problems							
Gender							
Sexual preferences							



Other							
.....							

The perpetrators of WPV

10. In your experience, indicate the individuals who most often commit the act of violence in the workplace violence incident:

- Managers/Supervisors
- Customers
- Employee/coworker
- Other (please explain)

Frequency of exposure to violence

11. How often do you see or experience violence at your workplace?

- At least once a day
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Once a year or less
- Never
- Other (please explain)

12. What daily work activities, if any, expose you to the greatest risk of violence?

Management support and employee awareness of WPV program efforts

13. Does management communicate information to employees about incidents of workplace violence prevention efforts at the hotel? ***(Response choice: Yes/No /Not Sure)***

Please Comment



14. Is there a written violence prevention policy at ABC Hotel? (**Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure**)

Please Comment

15. Are there clearly established procedures and expectations for violence prevention at ABC Hotel?
(**Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure**)

Please Comment

Risk assessment

16. Are you aware of any safety procedures implemented in the workplace to protect you from workplace violence? (**Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure**)

Please Comment

Education and training

17. Have you participated in workplace violence prevention training or education at your workplace?

(**Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure**)

18. If yes, what training did you participate in?



19. If yes, do you feel that this training was adequate to enable you to:

- Know what constitutes workplace violence **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Know the factors that can contribute to violence in my workplace. **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Recognise and handle threatening, aggressive, or violent behaviour. **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Ask for assistance if confronted with a violent or aggressive person **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Use verbal de-escalation techniques **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Use self-defense/restraint procedures **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Report and document incidents of violence and aggression (physical, verbal etc.) **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Know the provisions of the European Directives on workplace violence **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**
- Know what resources are available to employees for coping with threats and assaults **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**

20. Can you recommend any changes or additions to the workplace violence prevention training you received? **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not applicable)**

Please Comment

21. If No or are unsure (to Question 17 above), do you feel that you should attend workplace violence prevention training? **(Response choice: Yes/No)**

Incident response



22. Do you know what to do when you witness or are involved in a workplace violence incident?
(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)



23. Please explain why you don't know what to do or are unsure when you witness or are involved in a workplace violence incident.

24. If you are involved in a workplace violence incident and request assistance, will it be provided to you? **(Response choice: Yes/No/Not Sure)**

Please Comment

Knowledge about how to report and respond to WPV

25. What factors impact whether or not you would report a violent incident, assault, or threatening behavior at work? ***Check all that apply.***

The severity of the incident	
Which supervisor is on duty	
Whether or not co-workers are supportive	
Who is the customer (if involved)	
The reporting procedure is unclear	
The purpose of reporting is unclear	
Fear of retaliation	
Someone else reported the incident	
Other: Please explain	

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your contribution is valuable.