

# Safety response

ACT Policing advise that OV incidents that result in physical assault, sexual assault and/or threats to harm someone should be reported to and managed by ACT Policing. Call 000 if an emergency or life threatening. Call 131 444 for police assistance.

In most cases the OV Victim decides whether to provide a statement with ACT Policing. However, Police are legally obliged to investigate any known or suspected domestic and/or family violence related incident.

## De-escalation

De-escalation processes emphasise self-control, respect, and empathy, with a focus on clarifying issues and finding resolution together as the first line safety response. This promotes respect and mutually positive outcomes.

Where possible de-escalation of a potential incident is preferable to having to manage an OV incident.

Engaging additional supports early (specifically those trained in de-escalation techniques) to assist with de-escalation or management of low-risk situations, can improve outcomes and ensure timely interventions are considered or implemented. Additional supports may include healthcare workers (workers), security services, wards persons, or more senior managers.

De-escalating a situation can be a useful response whether the OV incident takes place onsite or offsite.

The organisation should ensure that managers and workers have access to appropriate training and education in de-escalation practices and techniques.

**De-escalation should only be used when there is no risk, or actual incident, of physical violence to workers or healthcare consumers (consumers) and the worker or manager has the required skills to proceed.**

When undertaking de-escalation, you should:

- Follow healthcare service procedures for responding to violence
- Use communication skills to de-escalate the situation once all parties are safe, and
- Document full details of incident for reporting.

## Safety response options

All workers (including managers) should have received education and training to help identify the appropriate responses to an OV incident and be able to follow workplace procedures for responding to OV.

## Onsite safety response options

When de-escalation attempts have been exhausted other safety response options are available. Workers and managers will need to follow local emergency response processes when choosing the most appropriate response. If the worker is unable to implement a safety response, for any reason, the manager can assume responsibility for implementing the safety response.

When choosing the most appropriate response consider the following:

- the nature and severity of the OV incident
- the safety response options available at the healthcare service
- the manager or workers ability to activate the safety response options
- the manager or workers understanding of how and when to activate a safety response option.

Not all options will be available at every healthcare service. As required follow the healthcare service emergency response processes.

Onsite safety response options would typically include the following options:

Safety Response	Contact Process	Response Action/Outcome
<b>Security</b>	<b>Call or engage Security/ Ward service Officers as per local protocols</b>	<p><b>Engaged to assist workers in situations where they have been unable to de-escalate a situation or physical injury has occurred or when a consumer is required to be removed from an area.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available for onsite response only.</li> <li>• Facilitate the best outcomes when engaged early.</li> <li>• May be located in specific wards/known areas with high OV risk.</li> <li>• Can be called by any worker or manager.</li> <li>• Require clear and concise details about the OV incident.</li> <li>• May call ACT Policing if the situation cannot be contained.</li> <li>• Will also attend a Duress call or Code Black as available.</li> </ul>
<b>Duress alarm</b>	<b>Activate duress alarm as per local protocols</b>	<b>Activated when workers require assistance to respond to a situation, where they are unable to de-escalate the situation, or an injury has occurred and:</b>

Safety Response	Contact Process	Response Action/Outcome
		<p>a) they are unable to take the steps to call security; or  b) they are unable to take the required steps to activate a Code Black; or  c) they are unable to take the required steps to engage ACT Policing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available for onsite response where available.</li> <li>Can be activated by any worker or manager.</li> <li>Typically located in workstations or interview rooms or worn as a mobile device. Location will differ per workplace, when available.</li> <li>When activated, the identified response teams at the workplace will be notified to attend. Typically includes Security +/- dedicated workers from the healthcare service.</li> </ul>
<b>Code Black</b>	<p>Dial local Code Black Number</p> <p>State CODE BLACK</p>	<p><b>Activated where a worker or consumer is behaving in a manner perceived by workers to pose an immediate threat to safety of themselves, others, or to property.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dial the number and state Code Black. The code <b><u>will NOT be</u></b> announced using the overhead communication system.</li> <li>Available for onsite response only.</li> <li>Typically activated by the worker in charge of the area or a manager. May be activated by any worker as directed.</li> <li>When activated, the identified response teams/individuals at the work site will be notified to attend. Typically includes security +/- dedicated workers from the healthcare service including department decision makers.</li> <li>May be implemented alongside any other Code, or engagement with ACT Policing.</li> </ul>
<b>Police</b>	<p>Dial 000 for emergency</p> <p>Dial 131 444 for non-urgent assistance</p>	<p><b>Activated when the OV incident is unable to be de-escalated or contained by Security, a Code Black has escalated, a healthcare consumer is engaging in aggressive/abusive behaviours or actions with the potential to cause harm or injury, or the healthcare consumers behaviours or actions have resulted in harm or injury.</b></p> <p><b>May also be required to assist with the removal a healthcare consumer from an area or assist with the physical restraint or transfer of a healthcare consumer from the community to emergency services.</b></p> <p>In most cases the OV Victim decides whether to provide a statement with ACT Policing. However, Police are legally</p>

**Safety  
Response**

**Contact Process**

**Response Action/Outcome**

obliged to investigate any domestic and/or family violence related incident.

Early engagement with ACT Policing will assist in a timely and comprehensive capture of any information and evidence related to the incident.

When it comes to making a report to police about an incident, a manager *can contact the Police on behalf of a healthcare (with their consent). However, the manager cannot make a statement on behalf of the healthcare worker.*

- Dial the number and provide the Police with as many details as required to enable them to triage their attendance.
- Available for any OV incident where Police presence is required (onsite or offsite).
- Typically activated by a manager. May be activated by any healthcare worker as directed, for example a healthcare worker in need of Police assistance offsite.
- When activated, you will be given a Police Incident Number. Make sure you make note of this.
- Police will attend the site as advised during the requesting call and will advise for the need to preserve the site or evidence.
- When the Police attend an OV incident they will take over the investigation and be responsible for providing regular updates on progress of the investigation/any related charges.
- Your role will be to support them to conduct their investigations and gather evidence.

If the OV incident has resulted in physical or psychological trauma of workers or consumers, appropriate medical treatment may also be required. Refer to the **Occupational violence psychological and physical trauma Factsheet** for more details.

## Onsite safety response options - implementation matrix

OV Incident	Psychological – no injury or threat to injure	Psychological – injury or threat to injure	Physical – no injury	Physical – injury minor	Physical – injury serious
<b>Security/Ward Service Officer</b>	As required	Required	Required	Required	Required
<b>Duress alarm</b>	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
<b>Code Black</b>		As required	As required	Required	Required
<b>Police</b>	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required

\* Response options can only be implemented as available at each healthcare service. Refer to healthcare service policy as required.

## Offsite safety response options

When an OV incident takes place with a worker who is not located within a healthcare service, the options for response are reduced as the onsite services such as Security and **CODE BLACK** will not be available. Please refer to the [Isolated or remote worker guideline \(2021\)](#) for full details on best practice management of workers working offsite.

Key elements to consider will be influenced by:

- the nature and severity of the OV incident (the degree to which the worker or consumer is injured and requiring medical treatment)
- timing and status of the OV incident (active or emergent +/- requiring ACT Policing engagement, no longer active)
- the ability for the worker to move to a safe environment.

Throughout the process of implementing a safety response for the worker, you should maintain a direct line of communication and be looking to gather as much detail as possible. This will support the worker to complete a staff incident report of the incident and as required to engage with, or report to, ACT Policing.

Your offsite safety response options would typically be as follows:

Maintain communication	Emergency Services	ACT Policing
At all times maintain communication with the worker.  Coordinate the most appropriate response and action with the worker.	Dial 000 for any injury requiring medical treatment.	Dial 000 for any OV incident that has resulted in serious injury

## Offsite safety response options - implementation matrix

OV Incident	Psychological – no injury threat	Psychological – injury threat	Physical – no injury	Physical – injury minor	Physical – injury serious
<b>Maintain communication</b>	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
<b>Emergency services</b>		As required	As required	Required	Required
<b>Police</b>		As required	As required	As required	As required

\* Refer to healthcare service policy as required.

ACT Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. ACT Health respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. ACT Health also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.

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