

## Myths About Domestic Violence

**MYTH 1:** Domestic violence is not that common and certainly isn't an issue for any of *my* employees.

**FACT:** Every 9 seconds in the US, a man beats a woman. In Oregon, crisis service hotlines annually receive more than 50,000 emergency calls and 37,000 non-emergency calls from survivors of domestic violence. In the US, 1 in 3 women experience violence by an intimate or ex-intimate partner in their lifetimes.

**MYTH 2:** Domestic violence is the result of stress due to poverty and joblessness.

**FACT:** Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families, rich and poor, urban, suburban and rural, in every part of the country, in every racial, religious and age group. 69% of women in Oregon who report being abused report being employed at the time of the abuse. 89% of batterers in Oregon report being employed.

**MYTH 3:** Domestic violence is a personal issue and simply doesn't affect the workplace.

**FACT:** In one recent study of batterers, 41% had job performance problems and 48% had difficulty concentrating on the job as a result of their abusive behaviors.

37% of women who experienced domestic violence reported that the abuse had an impact on their work in the form of tardiness, missed work, concentration at the job, keeping a job, or career promotions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence equals \$727.8 million, with more than 7.9 million paid workdays lost each year.

## OREGON BUREAU OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

# Bureau of Labor and Industries

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYERS



"...one of his favorite assaults was to choke me with my back against the wall, my feet dangling a foot or so above the floor."

"...he had cut up all my clothes so I couldn't go to work..."

"half the time I wouldn't even want to go [to work]... I feared what he'd do to me before I went. One time he beat me so badly ...I don't remember how I made it to work."

**Dan Gardner, Commissioner**

800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 1045

Portland OR 97233

971-673-0761

[www.oregon.gov/boli](http://www.oregon.gov/boli)

# The Truth about Domestic Violence and the Workplace

## What Employers Should Know

### Why Employers Should Care

#### WHY EMPLOYERS SHOULD CARE

- 69% of victims surveyed in Oregon were employed at the time of their abuse.
- abusers report using workplace resources to perpetrate their crimes.
- 14,000 violent workplace incidents are committed by current or former husbands or boyfriends.
- Domestic Violence costs businesses \$9.3 million a year in the state of Oregon.

# WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD KNOW

## 1. KNOW THE LAW.

### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Oregon law provides unemployment benefits to certain victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking if they are forced to leave a job in order to protect their safety or the safety of their children.

Employees may be eligible for unemployment benefits if:

They had to quit a job because they have been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking;

and

They believe they and/or their child are in danger of further harm if they continued to work; and

They reasonably believe that leaving their jobs would protect them or their child from further violence.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS LEAVE LAW

Oregon law requires employers to allow eligible employees to take unpaid time off to deal with issues arising from being a victim of domestic abuse, rape or stalking. Employers may need to allow an employee to take reasonable leave from employment for any of the following purposes:

°To seek legal or law enforcement assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or the employee's minor child or dependent.

°To seek medical treatment for or to recover from injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

°To obtain, or to assist a minor child or dependent in obtaining counseling from a licensed mental health professional or services from a victim services provider.

°To relocate or take steps to secure an existing home to ensure the employee's own or the children's health and safety.

## 2. BECOME A PRO-ACTIVE EMPLOYER.

Add a domestic violence policy to your employee handbook.

Know the law. Victims of domestic violence qualify for unemployment insurance and unpaid leave to address issues surrounding their abuse.

Provide trainings and educational opportunities for managers and supervisors.

Include information about the effects of domestic violence in regular company publications.

Develop a workplace safety plan that considers at-risk employees and their coworkers.

Pay attention to changes in employee work patterns including wearing long sleeve clothes in warm weather, increases in tardiness and absenteeism, or a drop in productivity.

Educate yourself.

**REMEMBER:** THE GOAL IS *NOT* FOR YOU TO INTERVENE or 'SAVE' YOUR EMPLOYEE. RATHER, THE GOALS ARE:

TO HELP YOU CREATE A SAFE WORKPLACE FOR EMPLOYEES AT RISK AND THEIR COWORKERS *and*

TO PROVIDE THE TOOLS TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF ABUSE and TO ASSIST EMPLOYEES IN GETTING THE HELP THEY NEED.

## 3. PROVIDE RESOURCES.

One of the most important things an employer can do is to **provide information** to their employees. Post this information in a location where all employees have access to it and where an employee in crisis might discreetly take down the needed information.

*Suggested locations: break rooms, restrooms, regular employer publications, employee handbooks, information boards.*

### Resources for Victims and their Employers

National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233

National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-HOPE

Portland Women's 24-Hr Crisis Line 503-235-5333  
(statewide) Toll Free 888-235-5333

Crime Victims' Assistance 800-503-7983  
(Oregon Department of Justice)

Legal Aid Services of Oregon 800-520-5292  
[www.oregonlawhelp.org](http://www.oregonlawhelp.org)

**For more information or for help developing policies or programs contact :**

**Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYERS**

**971-673-0824 or online**

**<http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI>**