

Physical Intervention: Reducing Risk



BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM
for successful and responsible retailing



A guide to good practice for employers, towards safer performance of the retail security function.



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In memory of Peter Boatman: 1953 - 2010

Peter was awarded the Queen's Police Medal for the contribution he made to the safety of staff and the public in potentially violent situations. He helped raise awareness among employers of strategies to reduce violence risks and with the development of this good practice guide. Peter was a pioneer in this field and a true professional dedicated to raising standards. He was a proud, loyal and generous man who was always willing to help.

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Executive Summary

This employer guidance contributes to good practice in violence risk reduction in the retail sector. It specifically addresses activities known to carry heightened risk such as confronting suspected thieves or disorderly individuals, as there is potential for harm to all parties concerned. It does not encourage such activity, but it does urge employers to address these risks through an objective and systematic approach.

This guidance is aimed at retail businesses where violence against staff is a concern and for the providers of security services to the retail industry. It is particularly relevant to security and loss prevention functions, whether performed as a dedicated role within a large store or an adopted role, for example by a manager in a small retail outlet.

The retail industry is a vital and vibrant part of the UK economy providing employment for several million people and contributing in the region of 8% of the Gross Domestic Product. Retail operations lie at the heart of nearly every community and retail workers provide an essential service to the public. Yet, for a significant number of retail employees their working lives are blighted by the spectre of violence. British Retail Consortium survey statistics and campaigns by USDAW and other bodies have highlighted alarming levels of violence to shopworkers ranging from verbal abuse to threats and physical attack. The negative impact of this upon business, the taxpayer and, more importantly the health of employees is immense.

Workplace violence is a dynamic and complex risk with no single cause and no simple 'one size fits all' solution. Product range, location and environmental characteristics all influence the level of risk. Retail businesses vary enormously in structure, size and in the resources available to tackle issues of safety and security.

There is, however, much that employers can do to better manage the risks and create a safer working environment for their employees. This guidance recommends an approach that can be adapted and scaled to suit any enterprise from a multi-site operation to a small, single staffed shop. It considers an integrated strategy with practical guidance on:

- A risk assessment process that effectively addresses work related violence, fed by staff consultation, robust reporting processes and management information
- Developing clear policy and guidance in relation to higher risk roles and activities
- Selection of appropriate control measures that start at root cause and prevention
- An objective approach to identifying training needs
- Reducing risk where physical intervention is used by certain roles
- Incident and post incident considerations and review

Emphasis throughout is placed upon linking together the core safety processes into a coherent system based upon the principles of continuous improvement.

This guidance does not seek to promote the use of physical intervention but acknowledges that for some it is a legitimate option of last resort. Its use is discussed in the context of a systematic approach to violence risk management which introduces clear accountability and minimises the risk of harm to all involved. The guidance includes information on the legal and potential medical implications of physical intervention to help employers make better informed decisions on its use.



Introduction

The aim of this guidance is to help reduce the incidence and impact of injury to employees and customers through promoting good practice and better training.

The guidance will benefit employers by showing practical steps they can take to better protect their staff and customers from harm and their businesses from potential litigation. It does not seek to promote the use of physical intervention, only to ensure that if it is a necessary and legitimate option in the view of the employer, then it is approached professionally.

Research identifies that staff working within the retail sector are often called upon to deal with criminal behaviour, anti-social behaviour and customer disputes. There will be occasions when physical intervention may be considered as a legitimate option to control a situation, example in arresting a thief or preventing an assault. Staff engaging in such activity risk allegations of unlawful arrest and excessive force. There is also the potential for serious injury to staff and those they are dealing with and for a restraint related death. Such scenarios have a devastating impact on individuals and businesses. If physical intervention cannot be stopped, it should be reduced and only used as a last resort when other responses have failed or are likely to fail.

This guidance first considers preventative measures and alternatives to physical skills. It then examines steps that can be taken by employers, in terms of training and guidance, that will help ensure a safe outcome when physical intervention is legitimately used.

You should implement this guidance if you are an owner or operator of a retail business where it is foreseeable that employed or contract staff will use physical intervention, or, if you are a provider of security services to retail businesses. This guidance has relevance for all retailers including those who do not employ dedicated security and loss prevention/profit protection staff, as store managers and staff may have security responsibilities as part of their wider role and be at risk.

Background

The retail sector provides the link between production and consumption for most goods and services, with many staff operating at the customer interface. The sector is also a significant employer, particularly in the youth and female segments of the labour force. In the region of 3 million people work in retail and it is now the UK's third largest industry behind business services and the health sector.

Within the retail sector the size of business varies enormously from some of the largest in the country, sometimes employing many thousands of staff, to the small independent shop, often a one-person enterprise.

Resources available to manage security related issues likewise vary with the size of the enterprise and range from dedicated teams of loss prevention/profit protection officers, external security contractors to the lone working sales assistant.

Despite the diverse nature of the retail sector it is possible to develop a common approach to securing business assets in a way that places primary emphasis upon the safety of staff, customers and the general public.

Context

British Retail Consortium annual crime surveys in recent years have shown the alarming extent of incidents of violence towards employees. There are fears that this could worsen with the economic downturn.

The risk of violence to retail staff may be categorised under two broad headings:

- Goods and cash held on premises put them at risk from criminals who are prepared to use violence to steal
- Contact with the general public puts them at risk from people who become aggressive and violent typically when they are frustrated and angry



Incidents generally involve theft, anti-social behaviour, angry customers and drunk, drugged or disturbed customers. A significant amount of conflict takes place as staff try to uphold the law in respect of underage sales and when refusing to serve alcohol. BRC research has identified the prevention of customer theft to be the main cause of physical violence, accounting for over 60% of all cases.

Under health and safety legislation employers are required to assess the risks, including the risk of violence, to which their staff are exposed, and put in place measures to prevent or minimise these risks. Staff training in positive customer care and conflict management is widely considered to be one of the most effective measures in controlling aggressive behaviour within the retail environment. Proactive service delivery is also one of the best deterrents of thieves, who do not like to be noticed.

Where an employer regards arrest and physical intervention as necessary and legitimate options their use must be supported by clear guidance and appropriate training. This will minimise the risk of injury to all parties and help staff operate within the law and account for their actions.

This guidance seeks to complement general guidance on the prevention and management of work-related violence offered by organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and supports National Occupational Standards through ENTO. It specifically addresses the use of physical intervention but should not be viewed as a definitive guide on this subject or violence generally. It is the responsibility of all employers to keep up-to-date with emerging good practice and requirements. Employers should seek legal advice to ensure compliance in relation to their specific activities and requirements.

Need

This publication responds to an absence of guidance on physical intervention in a significant area of risk and concern for all stakeholders. This lack of guidance and training standards has been unhelpful for retailers, and has been used by some as an excuse for inaction. Others have done their best to develop policy and training in this area which varies considerably in approach, quality and relevance. In the absence of guidance and effective training, staff can put themselves and others unknowingly at risk and may adopt techniques learnt outside of their employment that can carry a high potential for harm.

It is generally accepted that there are inherent risks associated with certain retail security activities, notably challenging, arresting and detaining suspected thieves. The propensity of some offenders to resort to extreme violence to avoid apprehension is well documented. Case law shows both employers and employees to be vulnerable if they fail to reduce risk and adopt safer methods of intervention. Case law has also reinforced the vulnerability of the business owner in addition to the security provider through vicarious liability.

Scope and Definitions

Violence is defined by the HSE as: “Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work”.

There are various definitions surrounding physical intervention and the Security Industry Authority (SIA) uses the following for its physical intervention competency requirements:

Physical Intervention is used to cover the use of direct or indirect force, through bodily, physical or mechanical means, to limit another person’s movement.

Restrictive Intervention describes a use of force to limit the movement and freedom of an individual and can involve bodily contact, mechanical devices or changes to the person’s environment. Such interventions can be:

- Highly Restrictive i.e. severely limit the movement and freedom of an individual
- Low Level Restrictive i.e. limit or contain the movement and freedom of an individual who is less resistant with low levels of force



Non-restrictive Intervention allows a greater degree of freedom where the individual can move away from the physical intervention if they wish to. This would include prompting and guiding an individual to assist them walking, also defensive interventions such as disengagement for protecting oneself or others from assault.

Least Forceful (Aversive) Intervention describes the physical intervention with the least force and potential to cause injury in achieving the given objective.

Employer includes the owner/operator of the retail business and any contracted provider of security personnel.

Stakeholder includes customers, owners, operators and employees of retail businesses, contracted security providers and their personnel, trade bodies and regulatory bodies including the SIA, HSE and Local Authorities, agencies including the police and health service, professional and membership bodies, local community and business representatives.

Overview of Existing Requirements for Employers

There are various Common Law and Statutory requirements on employers in relation to this area of risk. These can vary between the member countries of the United Kingdom, for example the Criminal Law Act 1967, but are generally similar. Some of the more relevant include:

Common Law

Common Law has long established the principle of 'duty of care' and this often forms the basis of civil actions/compensation claims. Common law allows reasonable force to be used where necessary in:

- The removal of trespassers
- Protecting life
- Self defence

Health and Safety Legislation

The Health and Safety at Work Act (HSAW) 1974 (Northern Ireland Order 1978), establishes a legal duty on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Northern Ireland 2000: Amended 2006) specifies actions to be taken by employers in assessing and controlling risks.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995, (Northern Ireland, 1997), requires certain serious incidents to be reported to the enforcing authority.

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (PPE) 1992 (Northern Ireland, 1993), governs assessment suitability deployment and use of protective equipment.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 (Northern Ireland 1993), considers matters such as training and maintenance of PPE.

Employment Law

Employment Law also addresses health and safety issues:

S.44 of the Employment Rights Act (ERA) 1996 establishes health and safety as a shared responsibility of employers and employees. Health and Safety is covered by Section 68 of The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. Retail employees sometimes place themselves and others at unnecessary risk, such as when chasing suspected thieves. It is important therefore that they are made aware of their employment and legal obligations in this regard.



Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (Northern Ireland 1979) and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 require employers to inform, and consult with, employees or their representatives in good time on matters relating to their health and safety.

Contract law imposes obligations on the employer to provide a workplace with minimal exposure to risk.

Security Regulation

The Private Security Industry Act 2001 is a UK wide Act via the Private Security Industry Act 2001 (Commencement No.1 Northern Ireland Order 2009). It sets out duties upon the Security Industry Authority in reducing criminality and improving public safety that includes ensuring persons who engage in licensable conduct:

- Are fit and proper to engage in such conduct
- Have the training and skills necessary to engage in the conduct for which they are licensed

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) has established communication and conflict management as a core-training competency within its Licence to Practice for contracted security personnel. In 2010 the SIA introduced a level 2 qualification requirement in physical intervention for the private security industry that will be mandatory for new door supervisors and an option for licensed security officers.

Licensing Legislation

Some retail stores, shopping centres and other sites contain licensed premises and it is important that security functions comply with relevant SIA requirements and the Licensing Act 2003 which is based on four objectives which all licensed premises must promote if they are to trade. These are:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm

All these objectives are of equal importance. All those involved in the licensing process including personal and premises licence holders will be expected, at all times, to uphold these objectives and not doing so could lead to forfeiture of licences.

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 introduces a further objective in 'Protecting and improving public health' and provides a power for an "authorised" person such as a door supervisor to remove a person committing certain offences including behaving in a disorderly manner, from the relevant premises and, if necessary for that purpose, to use reasonable force.

Human Rights Act 1988 and the European Convention on Human Rights

While the Human Rights Act focuses on 'public authorities', its principles have developed into wider individual responsibilities. The provisions most likely to be relevant to Physical Intervention are:

- Article 2 - Right to life
- Article 3 - Prohibition of torture, inhumane or degrading treatment
- Article 5 - Right to liberty
- Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life
- Article 14 - Right to freedom from discrimination in respect of convention rights
- Lawfulness necessarily includes compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Interference with the individual's human rights must be necessary, legitimate and proportionate to the aim being pursued. If force is not proportionate, then this may amount to a breach of Articles.



Other Legislation

In certain circumstances employers may need to operate under additional legislation, for example, the Children Act 2004 and the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. It is not practicable to list all requirements and it is important that employers seek legal advice to ensure compliance with specific requirements.

Case Law

Case law is continually developing and in particular in relation to vicarious liability. This has shown how retailers may, in certain circumstances, be held responsible for the actions of security officers, even if they do not directly employ them. The Court of Appeal ruling in *Hawley Vs Luminar and ASE* 2006 illustrates this well.

Violence Risk Management

In retail environments work related violence is a complex risk to manage due to the many factors that can combine and contribute to an escalation and assault. Some of these factors can be controlled, others the employer can influence, such as designing out the opportunity for product theft or providing clear guidance and training for staff in managing potentially violent situations.

Physical intervention may be necessary in certain situations, for example, where there is an expectation that employees or contracted security personnel will challenge and arrest thieves, or where staff are otherwise likely to come under physical attack and may not be able to safely withdraw from the situation.

The need for physical intervention and training in this area will be influenced by a number of variables, one of the most significant of which is employer policy concerning contact with suspected thieves. Some employers for example, strongly discourage arrest and the use of force by staff other than in self-defence, thereby reducing exposure to risks associated with an arrest and subsequent detention. It is important that retail employers communicate their position on these matters clearly and ensure that policy and guidance is complied with at store level.

The decision to teach physical intervention and the scope of such training needs to be underpinned by an objective assessment of the risks. Any such training needs to form part of an integrated and balanced strategy that emphasises prevention rather than intervention.

This guidance therefore considers physical intervention in the context of risk assessment, alternative strategies and supporting policy and guidance. The goal of employers should be two fold:

- To reduce the need for physical intervention and the use of restraint
- To reduce risk when such interventions are necessary through effective training, guidance and supervision

Key Messages

- Retail business owners, operators and managers are legally obliged to ensure the safety of their employees, contractors and customers using their premises
- Security contractors also have a duty of care for their security officers
- Retail business operators may, in certain circumstances, be held responsible for the actions of security personnel even if they do not directly employ them
- It is in the best commercial interest of retail business owners, operators and managers to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment to their staff and customers
- The purpose of this guidance is to help employers recognise how they can better protect staff, customers and their businesses through reducing the need for physical intervention and encouraging appropriate training and safe practice
- Where physical intervention cannot be completely avoided, it should be seen as one part of a broader strategy to manage the behaviour of customers who pose a risk to their own safety or the safety of others



Assessing Risk

Employers are required by law to assess the risk of violence as they would any other workplace hazard. This is the start of an objective process that informs control measures including training.

As well as assessing the risk regarding violence in the context of health and safety, operators of retail premises subject to licensing regulation will have to assess risk in the context of the licensing objectives. The threat of violence would have to be mitigated in the promotion of crime and disorder prevention, public safety, public nuisance and the protection of children in certain licensed premises.

There are different types of risk assessment helpful to assessing the risk of violence and these broadly fall under planned or dynamic risk assessment.

Planned Risk Assessment

A 'planned' assessment should be undertaken and reviewed at set intervals by designated individuals. It is important that employers clearly set out responsibilities in terms of who undertakes what level of assessment, how and when. Incident recording systems should support and inform the risk assessment process. The risk assessment must effectively identify the situations in which violence may occur and provide information on how the risk is to be eliminated or controlled. The assessment process will provide evidence of the need for any additional control measures.

The risk of violence within any large retail business is likely to vary according to the activities undertaken, the location of the store and other environmental factors. For multi-site retailers it is important that any generic risk assessment template is tailored to address local variations.

Types of planned risk assessment include:

Generic role based assessment: This approach works well with violence risk assessment allowing the employer to consider the risks associated with the specific tasks and activities undertaken by staff in a defined role. For example, there are significant risks associated with duties undertaken by many loss prevention/profit protection staff which can include:

- Intervening in disputes
- Challenging suspected thieves
- Escorting and ejecting individuals
- Detaining arrested persons pending arrival of police

These activities can involve significant risks to security staff, the subjects of their intervention, and other store colleagues and customers. In some settings where dedicated security functions do not exist, it may be a store manager or supervisor that deals with such situations. Employer policy can greatly influence the extent of risks relating to activities such as those outlined above. A central manager or function such as health and safety may lead the generic role based assessment, depending on the size of the organisation.

Environment/premises specific assessment: This approach will identify specific risk factors relating to the premises that need to be addressed. These could include location and aspects of design and layout that create flashpoints, hazards such as stairs and escalators and remote or confined spaces. Staff should be consulted as part of the risk assessment process to ensure that all hazards and risks are identified. Where an employer sanctions detention of suspected thieves, consideration should be given to the appropriateness of any temporary or purpose built holding areas, also routes to and from these and emergency procedures.

Consideration should also be given to security measures designed to reduce the risk of violence and/or to summons help should staff believe they are in imminent threat of violence. These include CCTV, static and personal alarm, alarm triggered central monitoring systems, counter screens, adequacy of lighting, raised counters, positioning of counters to provide a clear unobstructed view, safe areas (protected office/store room) review of manning levels and opening hours to reflect times of greatest risk.



Event assessment: Sometimes local events will heighten the risk of violence, for example a promotion, street carnival or protest march. These should be risk assessed and appropriate measures put in place to protect staff for the duration of the event.

In conducting planned risk assessments it is important to analyse reported incidents and near misses. The value of this information will depend greatly on the quality and consistency of reporting. It is therefore important to consult with staff who are at risk, plus other staff groups and, where practicable, customers to ensure a balanced picture.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

An accurate dynamic (situational) risk assessment by staff will help them to decide on a sound and justifiable course of action. Dynamic risk assessment is especially relevant in addressing the risks of conflict and violence, as every situation is different and the outcome of an interaction can often be influenced by staff responses. These situational assessment skills need to be developed and reinforced through all levels of training and practice.

All risk assessments should be reviewed to ensure the risks identified were accurate and appropriately mitigated for and/or the risk environment has changed.

Post Incident Review

Incidents and near misses provide valuable learning opportunities and should be used to continually inform the risk assessment process and evaluate the effectiveness of control measures. Line managers play a pivotal part in the post incident review process and their roles and responsibilities in the aftermath of an incident should be clearly defined. They also need the tools and understanding to be able to conduct a professional and sensitive review of an incident. Reporting and learning from incidents is addressed in further detail later in this guidance.

Key Messages

- Effective violence risk assessment is the key to a successful violence prevention strategy
- Planned risk assessments will help to inform decisions on the control measures necessary to reduce the risks of violence
- Certain tasks and activities that carry inherent risks such as arrest and detention of suspected thieves should be identified within the risk assessment and considered in line with related policy, role expectations and guidance
- Dynamic risk assessment of situations will help staff to respond appropriately to a developing situation and minimise the risk of escalation
- Incidents and near misses need to be fully and sensitively reviewed to ensure personal and learning and to inform risk assessments/controls



Reducing Risk

Identifying Underlying Causes

Consulting staff as part of the risk assessment process is vital in developing a true picture and in establishing the underlying 'root cause' of incidents. This will provide the insights necessary to tackle the causes of conflict and factors that fuel escalation and risk.

It is often the case that front line staff will suggest simple, creative and cost effective solutions to the problems they are facing. They are also more likely to embrace safe working practices that they have contributed to and view to be workable.

One simple method of establishing root cause is the 'five why's' approach, for example:

Q. Why have violent incidents increased?

A. Because we are arresting and detaining increased numbers of thieves

Q. Why is this happening?

A. More determined and professional thieves are being attracted to our store

Q. Why is this happening?

A. Because we have re-designed our store layout placing high value easily transportable products in areas of low staff visibility

Q. Why is this leading to increased physical violence?

A. Because we are having to use physical restraint to stop them escaping?

Q. Why not let them walk away if they become violent?

A. Because our arrest policy states we should arrest and detain repeat offenders and hand them to police

Identifying causation is the real key to minimisation and prevention. This simple questioning approach has unlocked the problem and suggests a number of potential control measures that we will return to later.

Control Measures

For the purposes of this guidance we will consider three levels of control measure in a similar approach to that promoted by the World Health Organisation:

1. Primary controls refer to action that can be taken to prevent conflict situations arising or reduce their likely frequency. Primary controls tend to be planned and address the root causes of frustration and conflict.

At an organisational level this includes establishing policies, safe systems of work, carrying out risk assessments, delivering good service, addressing store design and layout, product security, access control and staffing levels and providing staff with necessary training.

At an individual level primary controls involve understanding the risks, delivering positive service, complying with safe practice guidance and putting training and learning into practice. Preventative action also includes reporting and recording incidents so as to learn from what happened and prevent recurrence. Preventative action is a continuous process of improvement rather than a finite work project.

2. Secondary controls focus on action taken by staff to prevent conflict escalating to violence. It typically involves the use of communication and conflict management skills, defusing and calming strategies.

3. Tertiary controls refer to action taken when violence is occurring and after it has occurred to prevent or reduce the potential for physical and psychological harm. Typically this will involve disengagement or other physical intervention tactics, invocation of emergency procedures or implementation of exit and containment strategies.



Tertiary response includes providing post incident support for the victims and managing the situation through to recovery. Incident reporting, review and learning will provide feedback for review of primary preventive measures in a continuous improvement cycle. Tertiary measures will be needed less often if effective primary and secondary controls are in place.

Returning to the 'five whys' example above:

A primary response would tackle the root cause of these incidents occurring by, for example re-designing the store layout and improving product security to deter prospective thieves. It would also involve reviewing the arrest and physical intervention policies to ensure a safe and consistent approach in dealing with offenders who become violent – that may involve staff disengaging rather than restraining.

A secondary response could involve staff being proactive in service delivery so as to deter prospective thieves by their presence.

A tertiary response could involve training staff in skills for protecting against assault and ensuring incidents are reported and followed up.

The 'five whys' encourages us to get to the root cause of the problem and helps identify primary and secondary strategies for reducing the risk. Primary exposure to risk should be reduced as far as reasonably practicable. If for example most assaults occur when intervening in disputes or when arresting thieves, one needs to understand why these situations are arising and identify ways of preventing them or dealing with them differently.

When we have tackled the root cause of a problem through non-physical preventative controls, incident frequency can be reduced. Where a significant 'residual risk' remains, tertiary level controls may be needed and should be prepared for.

Key Messages

- Front line staff should be consulted and actively involved in developing the risk assessment and with ideas on the necessary control measures
- Underlying causes of conflict should be identified and eliminated so far as is practicable
- Retailers can reduce staff exposure to the risks of dealing with thieves by making the store less attractive to such individuals
- Active staff consultation will help employers establish and address what is happening and foreseeable in the 'real world', for example, staff arresting, chasing and restraining suspected thieves
- Where violence risks cannot be controlled through primary and secondary measures alone, staff may require physical intervention training supported by emergency response procedures

Policy and Guidance

Policy Formation

Where work related violence is a significant risk it is important that an employer has policy and guidance on its prevention and management. Policy needs to set out the employer's commitment to tackling this issue and in supporting staff. The employer should ensure operating procedures fall in line with policy and that managers, staff (including contractors) and customers are clear as to their responsibilities in creating a safer environment. Policy headings could include:

- Employer commitment to tackling violence
- Definition and common values
- Legal requirements and responsibilities
- Nominated individual responsible for co-ordinating implementation and monitoring of the policy
- Identification of stakeholders
- Specific roles and responsibilities of support functions, local managers and staff groups in implementing policy and strategy
- Responsibilities of managers and staff expected to perform security or loss prevention functions and activities
- Responsibilities and expectations of contract security staff
- Policy on arrest and detention of individuals and use of force by staff
- Expectations upon customers concerning acceptable behaviour
- Risk assessment process requirements and responsibilities at each level
- Risk reduction (control measures) to be considered
- Role of other agencies
- Incident management and emergency procedures
- Reporting requirements including monitoring, investigation and feedback
- Post-incident procedures and support
- Stance on prosecution of offenders and sanctions available
- Mechanism for dealing with policy transgressions
- Media and crisis management strategy
- Policy communication strategy, internal and external
- Policy maintenance and update

Arrest and Detention Policy

Dealing with someone who has stolen goods, or who is strongly suspected of having stolen goods, has to be undertaken in such a way as to minimise the risk of violence.

Policy and guidance should emphasise that staff safety is paramount and that retrieval of goods or money is of secondary importance.

Retail businesses adopt different approaches to dealing with suspected thieves ranging from deterrence only, through to arrest and detention with use of force sanctioned as a legitimate option in preventing the escape of an offender.

It is important that policy and guidance reflects the corporate decision on how suspected offenders will be dealt with. If the use of force is sanctioned then clear guidance should be issued on how staff are expected to deal with escalating resistance and violence. For example where offenders become physically violent in trying to escape, should staff attempt to physically restrain pending arrival of police or does there come a point at which staff should be expected to release the suspect?



These are difficult decisions but unless they are considered in advance as part of the risk assessment process, applied consistently and closely monitored by store, area and regional managers the safety of staff and those they come into contact with is likely to be compromised. In practise restraint may require a number of well trained staff which few retailers will have.

Detention of offenders is another high-risk activity. Policy and guidance should reflect the reality of facilities available in stores to detain offenders and the numbers of trained staff likely to be available. If purpose-built secure holding areas are not available then this should be identified in the risk assessment and taken into account when developing the detention policy. Consideration should be given to the risks involved in moving an individual through customer and staff areas and to duty of care and human rights issues. The risks of self-harm and attempted suicide also need to be considered and potential weapons, exit strategies and emergency responses.

The pursuit of individuals from shop premises is fraught with danger to staff, suspects and passers by. Employers need to give explicit directions to staff regarding such behaviour. Another area where clarity is needed concerns the question of employees assisting staff in other stores/areas with arrests and incidents, and vice versa.

Policy decisions regarding the use of force must be supported by appropriate training and workplace learning. It is also vital that organisations monitor the implementation of policy and guidance at ground level to ensure staff do not continue to get involved in situations that are discouraged and for which they have not received training. This situation can arise when staff feel pressure to act from local store management or are simply not prepared to 'let people get away with it'.

Incident and Post Incident Management

In addition to setting out responsibilities for the assessment and reduction of risk, the policy will need to cover the eventuality of a violent incident. It is important that this possibility is acknowledged, prepared for and rehearsed to ensure an incident can be contained and its impact on all stakeholders minimised.

For some retail businesses the risk of robbery i.e. the use or threat of violence in order to commit theft is high. Off licenses and small/medium enterprises operating their own banking arrangements are particularly vulnerable to this style of attack. Such incidents are particularly traumatic for staff involved. Where there is a heightened robbery risk it is important that procedures and working practices that reduce the likelihood of robbery and minimise the physical and psychological impact on staff are developed and regularly rehearsed. Staff safety must be given paramount importance over asset protection and staff need to be given clear guidance so that they do not further increase risk to themselves or others during a robbery.

For these purposes, central policy needs to be supported by local and event specific guidance on incident management. Incident management protocols should establish emergency communications (internal and external) and leadership and support roles. Medical emergencies need to be planned for, safe havens identified and sources of support established.

It is important to rehearse and test incident management procedures as one would a fire drill. This will ensure understanding among staff in all roles, ensure communications are working and that plans are realistic. Other local venues/retailers and agencies such as the emergency services should be involved where practicable, or at least consulted on incident management procedures. Where a retail business is located in a shopping centre or similar complex it is essential that clear terms of reference are developed for situations where shopping centre security personnel are called to assist in-store staff and vice versa.

Positive relationships with local police are important in terms of reducing crime, disorder and anti social behaviour. It is also important that staff operating a store and local police know what is expected of each other should an incident occur. A problem shared is a problem halved and positive relationships will reduce problems and help ensure successful sanctions and prosecutions.



Supporting Employees and Customers Post Event

Individuals respond differently to violence and assumptions should not be made about their resilience, no matter how confident they normally appear. Sustained exposure to low-level abuse and intimidation can cause stress and an assault or serious threat of assault can traumatise the most experienced of staff.

It is vital therefore that staff receive support from their peers and managers following a violent incident and that they have access to independent and professional help where needed. There exists a wide range of agencies offering confidential advice and counselling services on a “pay on use” basis. Customers may also be traumatised in experiencing and witnessing such an incident, and managers may wish to consider how they can be best supported.

Line managers are a key source of support following an incident and should facilitate this in the immediate aftermath and mid to long term. Support whilst off work and on return to work are critical to aid rehabilitation and the return of confidence. Colleagues are another important source of support and managers can encourage this.

The employer’s policy should set out roles and responsibilities in the aftermath of an incident and establish support during any absence and on return to work. Small independent retailers may not have the luxury of specialist support functions but can and should think through these issues and identify sources of help within their own networks and professional associations? Voluntary/charity?

Sanctions and Prosecution of Violent Individuals

Employers need to be aware of the legal remedies and powers available for dealing with violence, harassment and anti-social behaviour directed against their staff. The police and local authorities/councils have specific responsibilities and in some areas powers with regard to crime and disorder and community safety and these should be utilised.

Policy should set out responsibilities, in terms of prosecution and the level of support that will be provided to staff and their access to legal advice, financial support and personal support during any investigation or proceedings.

Identification and successful prosecution of those that commit offences depends in part on securing intelligence, evidence and witnesses. Staff and managers should ensure that incident scenes are managed and evidence professionally presented.

Reporting and Learning from Incidents

Under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) employers must report certain more serious violent incidents to the Health and Safety Executive.

Every incident presents an opportunity to learn from what has happened so as to prevent a recurrence. It is important that employers capture information on all violent incidents so that lessons may be learned. Incident reports should also be used to inform the ongoing risk assessment process. This approach will help an employer demonstrate the robustness of their risk assessment process in any legal proceedings.

Incidents are commonly underreported and there are a number of reasons offered for this including the perception that:

- Violence comes with the job
- You never get any feedback
- Nothing will change so it's a waste of time
- Reports are confusing and time consuming
- Budgets are tight, no money is available
- Staff who report incidents will be labelled ‘a problem’



These perceptions need to be overcome and simple steps include:

- Challenging beliefs that violence is acceptable and part of the job
- Emphasising the importance of reporting incidents and the benefits to staff
- Learning how to complete reports during training
- Designing a simple and relevant reporting mechanism
- Ensuring managers at local and corporate level actively encourage reporting and provide tangible support and feedback to staff
- Promoting successful actions and changes that have resulted from staff reports

Multi-purpose incident report forms are naturally limited in terms of gathering specific information on violent incidents. In an area of work where conflict and violence are major issues it makes sense to have a reporting and monitoring process modified or designed for purpose. The management information produced will be invaluable in managing this area of risk.

Some staff have limited ability and confidence in writing reports and this can be overcome through the right design and support. Alternatives to paper reporting should be considered, including on-line or telephone/text reporting. The key is to make the initial reporting easy and the incident review thorough. The latter can be triggered by the staff report and be carried out by a local or area manager who has been trained in how to support staff and sensitively review incidents.

Balancing: Support and Investigation

In the immediate aftermath of an incident there is much to do and remember and emotions often run high. Employers need systems in place to monitor the situation and be prepared to provide prompt additional support where key managers and staff have been involved and affected by the incident.

The situation needs to be contained, evidence secured and immediate operational issues addressed. Managers then need to focus on the well being of those involved and ascertain their immediate support needs.

It is important that personal support is prioritised over internal investigation, as a perception of attributing blame can be very harmful to the recovery of a victim.

Managers can find this a difficult balance to achieve, particularly if they believe staff may have contributed to the outcome. A sensitive and timely approach to investigation is needed that is conducted in an open way. The purpose is to draw learning from the incident for both the individuals involved and the organisation and thereby help to prevent a recurrence. This balance will be easier to manage if attitudes and behaviours of problem staff are addressed proactively by managers – before it goes wrong. Managers may benefit from training in these challenging areas of their role.

Key Messages

- Current best practice guidance emphasises the importance of developing and implementing an effective policy to address work-related violence
- Dealing with suspected thieves, arrest, detention and use of force should specifically be addressed as policy issues and guidance provided to staff on how they should deal with likely scenarios
- Good policy formation will involve consultation with everyone who is affected by the issue. It will clearly outline the organisation's stance on violence and send a powerful message to staff that the business is committed to their safety and welfare
- For the policy to become embedded in the working culture it must be accompanied by an implementation strategy that drives action on the ground and enables managers and supervisors to monitor progress
- It is vital that store managers understand what is required and that they are consistent in supporting the policy and ensuring it is followed
- Guidance should be provided to staff concerning any involvement in issues in other stores or public areas
- Employers need to prepare for potential incidents to help ensure they are managed professionally and staff are supported in the aftermath

Assessing Training Needs

Security personnel licensed under the Private Security Industry Act 2001 will have completed training to deal with conflict as part of their Licence to Practice. This training represents a minimum standard for the purposes of licensing and may not be sufficient for the role performed i.e. physical intervention skills may need to be taught. The obligation remains on employers to provide additional guidance and training, highlighted as necessary through their health and safety risk assessment process.

The SIA has also set a requirement for security personnel applying for a door supervision licence to undertake a level 2 qualification in physical intervention that is approved by an SIA endorsed Awarding Body. This will be an optional unit for private security officers, such as those operating within retail settings and includes standing holds but not ground restraints.

Security Industry Authority competency requirements may not currently apply to in-house employees of a business, such as loss prevention/profit protection officers, but it is incumbent upon the employer to ensure the adequacy of their training. This should be at least the equivalent of SIA minimum standards from a benchmarking perspective.

Training needs to be relevant and commensurate with the risks faced. The risk assessment process described in this guidance will provide key information to underpin training needs analysis. Training itself carries a risk of injury, further reinforcing the need for an objective basis on which to decide which staff need training in physical intervention and to what level.

It is important for employers to understand that training is one of a range of control measures in reducing work related violence and will have limited impact if introduced in isolation. Training must be supported by policy and safe practice guidance. It is not uncommon for reported incidents to increase following training as staff better understand the need to report and how to do so.

Support Roles

This guidance focuses mainly upon contractors, employees and managers carrying out security related functions. It is important however to establish the learning needs of other employees in a particular retail environment. Everyone has a part to play in reducing risk and roles and responsibilities need to be clear.

Staff employed in non-security roles within the business need to understand their support roles, for example where appropriate being:

- Proactive in providing good service which can deter criminals and reduce conflict
- Eyes and ears for security staff
- Good witnesses
- Knowledgeable as to the emergency communications and procedures
- Clear as to what is expected of them (and not) in relation to physical intervention

Staff induction, coaching and training should reinforce these important roles and safety points. All staff should be involved in rehearsing the response to violent incidents to ensure understanding and to test procedures and communications.

Loneworking should be considered from a personal safety perspective and appropriate training and lone worker communications established.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

Factors to be considered in a TNA addressing violence include:

- Risk assessment findings
- Employer policy
- Job responsibilities and expectations



- Specific tasks and activities performed
- Analysis of reported incidents
- Existing knowledge and skills of staff

This process will highlight the knowledge and skills gap = the training need.

For personnel performing security functions, either in a dedicated role, or in addition to their core role, there are broadly speaking two areas of physical skills training to consider:

- 1. Defensive skills:** Non-restrictive physical skills to help avoid and protect (oneself or another) against unlawful assault and enable disengagement.
- 2. Holding skills:** This can comprise of low-level non-restrictive escorting skills through to restrictive holds including those on the ground.

Staff should not undertake training in physical skills unless they have first trained in primary and secondary prevention including communication and conflict management skills.

Where physical intervention training is necessary it needs to refresh and reinforce primary and secondary controls. The employer's training needs analysis will identify the specific emphasis required for such training and the following areas should be considered in this:

Underpinning Knowledge

- Legal position on the use of force and how to report and account for this
- Dynamic risk assessment and decision-making
- Potential medical implications of physical intervention including restraint
- Medical emergency protocols
- Alternatives to physical intervention; refreshing primary and secondary controls
- Incident management and emergency communications and protocols
- Positive communication, de-escalation and exit strategies
- Teamwork, leadership and communications

Defensive Skills

- Positioning and movement skills
- Skills for avoiding identified risks of assault
- Protection against most likely blows and kicks
- Releases from most likely grips (disengagement / breakaway skills)
- Rescue and separation skills

Holding Skills

- Non-restrictive interventions i.e. guiding and escorting skills
- Restrictive interventions can include:
 - Restrictive escorting
 - Standing holds
 - Seated holds
 - Ground holds

The selection of skills will be influenced by numerous factors including policy, role expectations, task analysis and risk assessment findings. It is important that techniques are kept to the minimum and chosen because of their relevance to the tasks undertaken and risks actually faced.



Additional areas to be considered in training needs analysis:

- Awareness of potential weapons including edged and concealed weapons
- Searching procedures and safe methods
- Training and guidance on equipment used, for example, communications equipment, protective equipment and mechanical restraint e.g. hand cuffs – if issued
- Training in the management of specific customer groups, children for example

Duration of Training

The duration of physical intervention training will be influenced greatly by:

- Level/extent of the training required i.e. just disengagement, or full restraint training
- Skill set taught i.e. complexity and number of techniques
- Training methodology i.e. is delivery solely course based or can it include pre-study of underpinning knowledge
- Group size / supervision ratio
- Existing knowledge, skills and abilities of staff i.e. previous training in conflict management

These factors can influence duration between one and four days. SIA Licensed security officers and many in house staff will have previously completed training in communication and conflict management and in some cases physical intervention. It should be noted that SIA competency requirements relating to physical intervention do not include horizontal restraint skills and risk assessments may identify a need for training and guidance in these. In other words it should not be assumed that holding an SIA Licence constitutes sufficient training for the role and setting.

Refresher Training

Physical skills can fade over time with potentially serious consequences so it is important to ensure that competency is maintained. Employers need to establish a training process and plan that ensures staff refresh their skills regularly through coaching or course based training. Staff should also undergo formal assessment and recertification of knowledge and skills within a pre-set period to ensure competency is maintained.

The frequency and duration of staff refresher and recertification training will be influenced by factors including:

- The type of skill set taught in terms of complexity, number of techniques, associated risk levels and training method
- The frequency with which skills are used and practised in the workplace

This training should be planned ahead and form an integrated part of the employer's continuing professional development process for staff. It is vital that trainers also refresh and recertify their knowledge and skills and the SIA requires this to be undertaken on an annual basis.

Employers need to provide guidance on workplace practice of skills, as risks can increase if a trainer is not present. The guidance will consider, for example, safety considerations, supervision, recording and monitoring of such activity. Injury rates during initial, refresher and recertification training need to be continuously monitored and acted upon, as does any operational use of physical intervention.

Medical Implications

Reference is made throughout this document to the potential medical implications surrounding physical intervention and equipment use, which can include restraint related death. Staff need to be informed of the risks associated with any physical skills they are taught and how these can be minimised.

Even where training focuses on less aversive skills it can still provide an understanding of the potential risks with intervention and restraint and the increased vulnerability of certain individuals and groups. Although most individuals with mental health issues or learning disabilities present little risk to staff there are times when they may be particularly confused and vulnerable and present a risk to themselves and occasionally others.



Use of Force

It is important that staff cover relevant areas of common law, such as self defence and trespass, and statute relating to the use of reasonable force, such as when effecting a lawful arrest. SIA licensed security personnel should have covered aspects of use of force in their licence linked training.

Understanding of these areas of law should be refreshed and expanded during any training in physical skills and particularly the need to justify such action. The statutes (and common law) governing use of force must be read in conjunction with the Human Rights Act. The Act raises related issues in respect of proportionality. For example, are there viable alternatives to using force and if it is necessary is the force used proportionate to the wrong that it seeks to avoid or the harm it seeks to prevent? Is the use of force chosen the least forceful practicable option? The higher the level of force the greater the justification required. Staff need to be made fully aware of the potential personal implications should they use force and of their duty of care obligations to themselves and others. They should also be made aware of employer, Police and CPS procedures including what to expect and support available.

It is important that the relevant staff have a clear understanding of their powers of arrest and that if, for example, they prevent an individual from leaving, this may constitute an arrest. If an arrest is unlawful then any force used could be deemed an unlawful assault.

Employers have a right to provide policy and guidance on matters such as arrest and use of force and the importance of staff clarity over this has been outlined previously in this document. Employer policy should not affect the lawful rights of employees to protect themselves or others from imminent harm.

Staff may have to account for any use of force in the courts. They will need to know the legal authority for their actions and be able to explain why these were necessary, reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. Staff training should focus on the principle of using the least forceful intervention practicable in achieving the desired objective.

Key Messages

- Training must be relevant to and commensurate with the risks faced. The risk assessment process described in this guidance will provide key information to underpin training needs analysis
- Staff should not undertake training in physical skills unless they have first trained in primary and secondary prevention including conflict management skills. Staff should be encouraged to apply these skills throughout physical intervention training
- Physical intervention training should cover the legal and medical implications of use of force and especially the risks associated with restraint
- Staff must understand their powers of arrest if this is an activity they are expected to engage in
- Training may need to respond to the needs of vulnerable groups that staff may come into contact with for example, children and young people, older people, and individuals with mental health problems or learning disabilities
- Training itself carries a risk of injury, further reinforcing the need for an objective basis on which to decide which staff need training in physical intervention and to what level
- The learning needs of staff in non security roles should be established to ensure they are clear on their important preventative and supporting roles
- Physical intervention skills must be refreshed regularly and training formally assessed and re-certificated at set intervals
- Training is an important control measure that needs to be part of an integrated violence risk management strategy
- Staff and supervisors should be clear as to employer policy and guidance relating to activities that carry heightened risk and the importance of following these

Selecting and delivering physical intervention training

Approaches to Physical Intervention

There are as many models and approaches to physical intervention as there are training providers. It is not the remit of this guidance to set training standards or recommend specific approaches to physical intervention.

The quality of training will vary and it is important that the employer chooses its provision with care. Physical skills vary in complexity and risk and there is limited research and much debate on the relative merits and effectiveness of different approaches.

A highly forceful intervention may carry increased risk to all parties for example, a strike or ground restraint, but may be lawful in extreme circumstances. Restraint face up, or face down, carries increased risk and if this cannot be avoided staff must be taught safe methods. Training should also equip staff with lower risk strategies that may include non-aggressive skills for disengagement and lower level standing, escorting and seated holds.

Areas that an employer can consider when selecting a training approach include:

Relevance: The relevance of the skill set to the role, tasks and activities performed and actual risks faced.

Flexibility: The balance and problem solving potential of the programme of skills in responding to day-to-day working practices and occasional high-risk incidents.

Simplicity: The ease with which the skill set can be learnt and recalled under stress, based upon the minimum of techniques with few component parts.

Philosophy: The ethos and emphasis of the training, trainer and provider.

Safety: The potential medical risks associated with both staff training in the skills and with their operational use. The appropriateness of the techniques for use with vulnerable groups.

Effectiveness: The effectiveness of the skills applied by both male and female staff of varying experience and aptitude. An effective reporting process will help provide such information and indicate which skills are being used operationally.

Selecting Trainers and Providers

When selecting trainers from within the business, it is important to choose positive role models and not simply the most physically adept individuals.

If choosing an external provider it is important to consider their:

- Understanding and emphasis on primary and secondary controls
- Track record, experience and specialism in this field
- Knowledge of the sector
- Trainer qualifications and professional development process
- Quality assurance process
- Service commitment, resilience and reliability
- Rigour in training needs analysis and training evaluation
- Credibility and experience as expert witnesses
- Risk assessments of physical skills, including medical and legal reviews
- References and evidence of tangible results with other employers, for example, in reduction of complaints, assaults and restraints

Certification of training by awarding bodies is increasingly important, especially in this area of health and safety training where it adds further rigour and credibility.



The SIA has set specific requirements for trainers and training programmes concerned with the delivery of licence-linked qualifications:

1. Trainers must hold recognised qualifications in training delivery i.e. a teaching or training qualification equivalent to PTLLS accredited by Ofqual, SQA or endorsed by the HE Academy. They must also hold a Level 3 qualification (or above) in the delivery of conflict management training. If delivering the SIA related unit of qualification in physical intervention trainers need to hold a Level 3 Unit of Qualification in the delivery of physical intervention training, or an approved equivalent.
2. Trainers can only deliver a physical intervention training programme that has been approved by an SIA endorsed Awarding Organisation to an SIA approved criteria.

Employers should ensure that they seek assurance on the qualifications of the individual providing the training. It is recommended that all trainers delivering training in relation to conflict resolution and physical intervention outside of SIA requirements, for example to 'in house' security staff, hold relevant nationally recognised training qualifications. Trainers should also possess relevant experience of the retail roles and environments they train in.

Employers need to check that their insurance and that of any provider covers the specific training provided. It is also important that employers and training providers keep individual training records on participation and completion of training to the required standard and record any injuries. These records may form a vital part of the audit trail at a later stage in any legal action.

Delivering Safer Training

There is always a possibility of injury during physical intervention training and this should be reduced through a range of controls, including:

- Provision of an appropriate, risk assessed training environment
- Focus on less aversive/forceful skill sets
- Risk assessment of both skill sets and training methodology
- Strict, well documented safety controls before and during training
- Ensuring staff are fit to participate in physical skills training
- Appropriate preparation and warm up for the activity being undertaken
- Use of experienced and responsible trainers
- Adequate supervision and trainer/delegate ratios

Each of the above factors can affect safety and learning/skill acquisition and in turn influence the choice of training method and trainer to delegate ratio. The SIA stipulates a maximum of twelve delegates being supervised by a single trainer for SIA Licence related training in physical intervention.

It can be difficult to add realism to training without compromising safety. One straightforward way to achieve this is to have access to the workplace or similar area during training. This allows realistic but tightly controlled problem solving scenarios where staff can be guided/walked through situations they experience at work considering the skills they could use.

Generally speaking, simulations or role-plays where situations are acted out under high levels of resistance should be avoided, due to the high risk of falls and/or injury. If such training is provided, it should be regarded as an advanced level with suitable control measures in place.

The trainer may want staff to experience the skills with a degree of resistance to enhance confidence and technique. This should be done through tightly controlled exercises stipulating the level of resistance to be offered and safety boundaries. For added control the trainer may adopt the role of the subject being controlled.



Trainers should continually examine and reinforce primary and secondary responses i.e. alternatives to physical intervention, during any problem solving or role play (if used).

Evaluation

Employers need to consider at the outset how training will be evaluated so that key baseline data can be gathered and goals and measurements established. If for example a desired outcome of the training is a reduction in the use of physical intervention and restraint, there needs to be a way of monitoring these activities. The training evaluation will typically consider the safety of any interventions taught and review injuries and near misses in both training and operational use. It may also consider the operational currency/relevance and effectiveness of the training and specific physical intervention skills taught. Information can be drawn from a combination of quantitative data, such as incident reports, and qualitative means such as staff surveys.

Key Messages

- Select a credible, appropriate and balanced training approach/skill set that responds to the training needs analysis
- Balance realism with safety and ensure safety guidance and control measures are followed and evaluated
- Choose internal trainers carefully to ensure they are positive and responsible role models
- Establish the expertise, qualifications, credibility and track record of external training providers
- Ensure employer and provider insurance covers the specific type of training provided
- Ensure training maps to relevant standards and best practice and that trainers hold current certification to deliver the specified programme and relevant qualifications
- Ensure that training is evaluated on an ongoing basis in the workplace to establish its operational effectiveness, currency and safety

Additional Information

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE sits at the end of this guidance as it is the last step in the HSE Hierarchy of Controls. The priority of an employer should be on reducing exposure to risk and in providing appropriate training and other controls.

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (PPE) 1992 govern assessment suitability deployment and use of protective equipment. The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 consider matters such as training and maintenance of PPE. In general terms equipment provided for use at work needs to be:

- Suitable for the intended use
- Safe for use, maintained in a safe condition and, in certain circumstances, inspected to ensure this remains the case
- Used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training
- Accompanied by suitable safety measures, e.g. protective devices, markings, warnings

PPE can range from protective gloves used when searching or handling substances to protective vests. Protective vests are increasingly being considered by employers for staff in higher risk security and enforcement roles. This equipment can be worn overtly or under clothing and provides protection against blows (trauma) and varying degrees of protection against edged weapon and ballistic threats. The down side is that such equipment does not provide full protection, is expensive to buy and maintain, and can have negative connotations in terms of staff image and perceptions.

Before considering PPE it is important to undertake a thorough assessment of the risks and to explore a wide range of potential controls. Once these controls are in place there will be a clearer picture of any residual risk and an informed decision on PPE can be made.

The danger in starting with an assumption that specific equipment such as protective vests are needed is that simple preventative measures can be overlooked. The use of protective equipment should be regarded as the “last resort” where risks cannot otherwise be controlled. It is essential to identify and tackle the root causes of incidents and to reduce primary exposure to risk. Protective equipment may be necessary but may only provide partial protection and it should be considered after other controls have been evaluated as described in PPE regulations.

Mechanical Restraints

It is an offence to carry an offensive weapon in a public place. The law prohibits the possession of batons and other equipment carried for the purposes of self-defence, for example, a long heavy torch.

There is no law however preventing security personnel from carrying mechanical restraints such as handcuffs. Mechanical restraint is the broad term to cover various types of equipment used to restrict an individual's movement and it is covered in this guidance as its use is increasing across the security business sector and wider policing family. The decision to use such equipment should not be taken lightly and employers have a duty to provide adequate training and guidance in its use. Staff must use such equipment lawfully and account for their actions. Mechanical restraints should not be trained in isolation, but rather as part of a holistic programme of conflict management.

An individual needs to be under a reasonable level of control to allow mechanical restraints to be applied and staff would therefore need to be sufficient in number and have had comprehensive training in restraint and its associated risks prior to being permitted to use such equipment. If ground restraint is a legitimate and necessary option for some retailers then mechanical restraints are an important consideration as once secure the individual can be moved to a position that carries reduced risk of harm.

Handcuffs are the most common mechanical restraint used by security operatives and the common types include:

- Chain linked and hinged handcuffs
- Rigid handcuffs
- Plastic handcuffs (locking and non locking versions)



Soft restraints such as Velcro wraps are becoming popular and can also be used to control the legs of a violent individual.

Each design has its merits and potential medical implications. These issues need to be addressed through training and guidance in relation to the specific equipment chosen.

Training and guidance needs to educate staff that a handcuffed individual can still present a threat and of the importance of continuously monitoring the individual and the handcuffs to ensure they are not causing harm.



Useful Sources and References

The following list is not exhaustive but provides valuable sources of information and support:

- Project Chair Bill Fox: Bill@maybo.com
- The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) provides information and tools in relation to work related violence: www.hse.gov.uk
- HSENI: www.hseni.gov.uk.
- Skills for Security: www.skillsforsecurity.org.uk
- British Retail Consortium (BRC): www.brc.org.uk
- ENTO National Occupational Standards (Prevention and management of work-related violence): www.ento.co.uk/standards
- Security Industry Authority (SIA): www.the-sia.org.uk
- Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DELNI): www.delni.gov.uk
- Scottish Business Crime Centre: www.sbcc.org.uk
- British Institute of Innkeeping (BII): www.bii.org.uk
- USDAW: www.usdaw.org.uk
- GMB: www.gmbunion.org
- ICM: www.conflictmanagement.org
- British Security Industry Association (BSIA): www.bsia.co.uk
- Association of Business Crime Partnerships: www.businesscrime.org.uk
- Skills for Justice: www.skillsforjustice.com



Notices

This document represents good practice at the time of publication and should be read in conjunction with national guidelines and standards relating to work related violence. It should not be viewed as an authoritative or definitive guide on the law or practice and employers should seek expert advice to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. The authors and publishers supply the information on the strict understanding that no legal or other liability attaches to them in respect of it.

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