



## Domestic Violence and the Workplace: What are your rights?

Domestic violence can impact your ability to work. It can cause you to miss days at work because of the physical and mental impacts of the abuse. You may be fearful at work and find it difficult to focus, which can impact your job performance and career progression. There is workplace legislation that is in place to support your safety and employment.



### Good to Know!

There are laws that protect you from discrimination based on your gender, race or ethnic background, or disability. These might also support you if your work is being impacted by abuse. For example, your employer may be stereotyping your experiences of violence because of your race, or discriminating against you because of your trauma.

### What if I need to take time off because of Domestic Violence?

Many employees are legally entitled to take Domestic or Sexual Violence Leave. Some of this leave is paid. You can access this leave if you, or your child(ren), are experiencing domestic or sexual violence, and need to seek medical attention (including counselling),

access support services, move/relocate, or seek police or legal assistance. If you are entitled to this leave, your employer must provide it without any punishment.



### Good to Know!

Domestic or Sexual Violence Leave gives you 10 days of protected leave, or up to 15 weeks and your job is still protected. The first 5 days are paid leave.

If you are needing support for income during this time, you may be able to access pay through employment insurance. It is best to apply for this as soon as possible if you might need a longer leave.

### What if I don't feel safe to be at work because of harassment from a partner or ex-partner?

Your employer is required to take any necessary precautions if they are aware or think you may be experiencing domestic or sexual violence. If you feel able to, you can tell your employer what will make you feel more safe at work. For example, you can ask for a change to



your schedule, change to your work location or branch, or to have any security staff at your workplace made aware of your partner or ex-partner.

### **What if the trauma from the abuse is making it difficult for me to work?**

Symptoms of trauma could entitle you to access sick leave or qualify as a disability impacting your work. Your employer has a responsibility to accommodate any disability as long as this does not cause them too much hardship. A couple of examples of accommodations could be flexible working hours, or a change of workplace location.



#### **Good to know!**

Some employers offer short-term or long-term coverage for disability and rehabilitation programs.

### **I don't feel comfortable telling my employer about the abuse but it is impacting my work.**

You might not feel comfortable or safe to tell your employer that you are experiencing domestic violence. This might be the result of feeling embarrassed, or prejudices against your race, culture, or immigration status. You might also fear repercussions to your job. You can still get free, employment-related support and safety planning from a local shelter or domestic violence agency. You can find these at [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca).

### **Further support and information:**

#### Employment Standards Information Centre

416-326-7160

1-800-531-5551 (Toll free)

1-866-567-8893 (TTY for hearing impaired)

[www.ontario.ca](http://www.ontario.ca)

#### Steps to Justice

<https://stepstojustice.ca>

*More information on workplace rights and safety based on gender, disability (mental health) or racial discrimination:*

#### Ontario Human Rights Commission

[www.ohrc.on.ca/en](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en)

#### Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development Health and Safety Contact Centre

1-877-202-0008

[www.ontario.ca/page/filing-workplace-health-and-safety-complaint](http://www.ontario.ca/page/filing-workplace-health-and-safety-complaint)



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