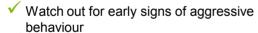# Toolbox Talk
72. Violence at Work

What?

- Violence at work is where an incident occurs in which a person is verbally abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work and can include verbal assault or threats, as well as physical attacks
- Verbal abuse and threats are the most common types of incident whereas physical attacks are comparatively rare.

Why?

- The problem is widespread in some industries where 1 in 5 workers have been physically or verbally assaulted whilst at work
- It is important to identify employees most at risk - those who have face-to-face contact with members of the public are normally the most vulnerable and when it happens it can be devastating to those involved
- It is usually a combination of factors that give rise to violence and employees can be trained to spot the early signs of aggression and either avoid it or cope with it.
- All cases of violence at work should be reported to enable the Company to build up a complete picture of the problem

Do ✓

- ✓ Watch out for early signs of aggressive behaviour
- ✓ Stay calm and composed
- ✓ Control your tone of voice and be careful with words. Usually best to say nothing
- ✓ Defuse the situation where possible
- ✓ Involve another colleague to deflect the conversation
- ✓ Make sure there is some object between you e.g. desk, screen, cabinet etc
- ✓ Establish eye contact
- ✓ Report all incidents to your supervisor so that they can be recorded

Don't ✗

- ✗ Try to strike or physically engage with the aggressor
- ✗ Use aggressive behaviour
- ✗ Raise your voice
- ✗ Stand too close – keep your distance
- ✗ Make gestures or point