

# NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Venbrook Insurance Services

## **CDC Releases Guidance on Handling COVID-19 Policy Disputes With Customers**

The past few months have seen multiple instances of aggression and violence against workers who attempted to enforce their establishment's COVID-19 prevention policies and practices with customers. As a result, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued new guidance instructing employees not to force any customer who appears upset or potentially violent to comply with their workplace's COVID-19 prevention requirements.

In addition to this new guidance, the CDC also provided strategies to help employers reduce the risk of violence that may be aimed at their staff when implementing organizational standards to limit the spread of COVID-19. Keep reading to learn more about the CDC's latest guidance and workplace violence prevention strategies in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Guidance for Handling COVID-19 Policy Disputes**

The CDC's new guidance encourages employees to avoid forcing any customers who seem upset or have the potential to be violent to follow their workplace's COVID-19 prevention policies and practices. Such policies and practices may include the mandatory use of masks, social distancing standards or limits on the number of customers permitted within the establishment at any given time.

In the event that a customer does display any form of aggressive or violent behavior (e.g., using threats, yelling, swearing, insulting, hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, choking, grabbing or any other malicious physical contact), the CDC recommends that employees remain calm, inform their supervisor and go to a safe area, if necessary.

While this guidance is for employees of all sectors, the CDC emphasized that workers in retail and other service industries are more likely to experience workplace aggression and violence. As such, employers and employees in these particular industries should be especially vigilant during the ongoing pandemic.

### **Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies**

Apart from this new guidance, the CDC listed the following actions that employers can take to help prevent workplace violence during this time:

- Clearly document your organization's COVID-19 prevention policies and practices on your website and through workplace signage.
- Consider assigning two employees to work as a team to enforce COVID-19 prevention standards.
- Give customers options to limit contact with others (e.g., curbside pickup, personal shoppers, home deliveries or alternative shopping hours).
- Implement steps for assessing and responding to workplace violence. Train employees on threat recognition, conflict resolution and nonviolent response methods.
- Utilize security systems within your workplace and train staff on how to use them.
- Establish a safe area for workers to go if they feel like they are in danger.

For additional CDC guidance on this topic, [click here](#). Contact us today for the latest COVID-19 updates.

