

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2899

---

---

C 22 L 00

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Developing a workplace safety plan for state hospitals.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Conway, Clements, Cody, Cooper and Keiser; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

**House Committee on Commerce & Labor**  
**Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections**

**Background:**

Most employers in Washington are required to have written accident prevention plans under the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA). These plans must include a safety orientation program for employees, with information about how and when to report injuries and unsafe working conditions. In 1998 the Department of Labor and Industries published a non-mandatory guide on workplace violence prevention that included a sample violence prevention program for employers to use in creating a workplace violence prevention program or incorporating such a program into their accident prevention plans.

Legislation enacted in 1999 requires certain hospitals and other health care settings to develop and implement workplace violence prevention plans by July 1, 2000. As enacted, this legislation would have applied to the two state hospitals for the mentally ill, but the provision was voided when funding was not provided in the biennial budget.

According to a Department of Labor and Industries report published in 1997, data from 1992 to 1995 show that social services and health services accounted for 51 percent of assault-related claims in the workplace. Psychiatric hospitals had the highest rate of assault of any industry, averaging 90 injuries per 1,000 workers over the four-year period.

**Summary of Bill:**

State hospitals for the care of the mentally ill must develop and implement plans and training programs to prevent workplace violence. The departments of Labor and Industries, Health, and Social and Health Services must collaborate with the state

hospitals to develop technical assistance and training seminars on plan development and implementation.

Plans for preventing workplace violence. By November 1, 2000, each state hospital must develop for implementation by January 1, 2001, a plan to reasonably prevent and protect its employees from workplace violence. The plan must be developed with input from the hospital's safety committee. The plan must address security considerations related to:

- the state hospital's physical attributes;
- staffing, including security staffing;
- personnel policies;
- first aid and emergency procedures;
- procedures for reporting and responding to violent acts;
- criteria for determining and reporting verbal threats;
- employee education and training; and
- clinical and patient policies.

Before developing the plan, each state hospital must conduct a security and safety assessment, including an analysis of workers' compensation data, to identify existing or potential hazards for violence and determine appropriate preventive action.

In developing the plan, the state hospital may consider any relevant guidelines issued by government agencies or state hospital accrediting organizations. The state hospital must update the plan at least annually.

Violence prevention training. By January 2001, and at least annually thereafter, each state hospital must provide violence prevention training to its affected employees. Initial training must occur before assignment to a patient unit and must be in addition to ongoing training as determined under the Violence Prevention Plan. The training must address specific topics, as appropriate to the particular workplace setting and the duties of the employees being trained, including following general and personal safety procedures, dealing with violent behavior, documenting and reporting incidents, and using intershift reporting procedures to communicate about patients between shifts. The form of the training may vary and may include classes, videotapes, brochures, and instruction.

Recordkeeping. Beginning no later than July 2000, each state hospital must keep records of any violent acts committed against employees or patients occurring at the hospital, including specified minimum information. The records must be preserved for at least five years and must be made available to the Department of Labor and Industries upon request.

Enforcement. State hospitals failing to comply with these Violence Prevention Plan requirements are subject to citation under WISHA.

Reports. The Department of Social and Health Services is required to report to the Legislature on the progress of plan development by July 1, 2000, and to provide a copy of the completed plan by November 1, 2000. Thereafter, by September 1 each year, the Department of Social and Health Services must report on its efforts to reduce violence in state hospitals.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 96 0

Senate 47 0

**Effective:** June 8, 2000