

Risk Management for Practice Staff Security

Every state and territory has occupational health and safety (OH&S) legislation that places, on employers, a general duty of care to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. Therefore, adequate consideration must be given to ensuring that the practice is a safe working environment for all staff.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) Position Statement 'Personal Safety and Privacy for Doctors', recommends that for successful risk management concerning practice staff security, it requires the commitment of management through sufficient investment of time, money and personnel. Consultation with staff is also essential for such risk management to be effective.

When developing and improving practice staff security risk management strategies, the following areas should be considered:

- Complaints Mechanism: strategies in place for staff in order to encourage problems to be addressed in a calm, controlled and non-violent manner
- Physical Environment: external doors locked at night, with only main entrances under surveillance available for public access, and access to secure lockers or alike to store valuables
- Education and Training: to assist with the management of threatening situations
- Additional Security Measures: particularly in the case of after hours facilities, relocating drugs cabinets so that they are within full view of as many staff as possible
- Post-incident Management: support activities including first aid and incident debriefing and reporting.

For any risk management strategy to be effective, continuous monitoring and evaluation must be carried out on the measures that have been implemented.

Reference and further details: AMA (2005) *Personal Safety and Privacy for Doctors Position Statement* (available through www.ama.com.au)