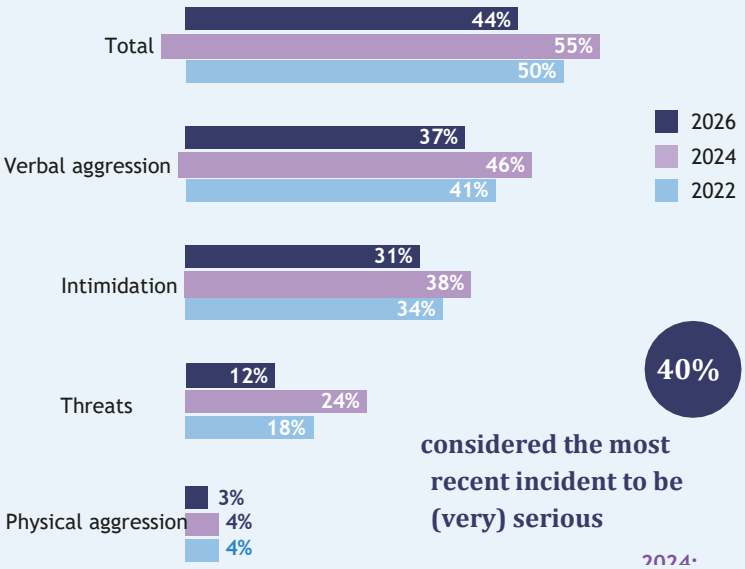
NEDERLANDSE ORDE VAN ADVOCATEN

Aggression, threats and intimidation towards lawyers

2026

Experience with aggression, threats and intimidation



40% considered the most recent incident to be (very) serious

2024:

"I have been physically threatened, received an envelope containing a bullet, and am intimidated through e-mails on a daily basis. I'm cautious when handling certain cases or when I get into my car."

Quote from a lawyer

Areas of law in which aggression is common:

1. Law of persons and
2. Personal injury law
4. Criminal

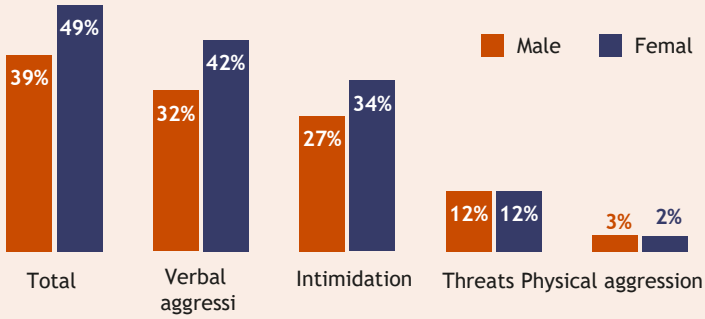
Due to the improved survey method, the results for 2026 are not directly comparable with those for 2022 and 2024.

Differences between men and women

Female lawyers are more likely to face aggression than male lawyers. Women are particularly more likely to experience verbal aggression and intimidation, just as they were in 2024.

A quarter of women consider the most recent incident to be discriminatory in nature, compared with eight percent of men. This mainly concerns discrimination based on gender and age.

Percentage of lawyers who have experienced aggression, broken down by



Perpetrators and targets of aggression

In half of the incidents, the aggression came from a former (26%) or current client (27%). In 32 percent of the incidents, the aggression came from the opposing party.

According to lawyers, aggression is primarily an expression of rising emotions and/or frustration (37%) or is deliberately used to reach a specific goal (23%).

Aggression is usually directed at the lawyer in their professional capacity (59%) or at the lawyer personally (58%). In cases of threats, 15 percent are (also) directed at family or friends.

Ipsos I&O

This survey was conducted in April 2026. 2,251 of the approximately 19,500 lawyers completed the questionnaire. Weighting was applied based on age, gender, firm size, and judicial district, ensuring that the sample is representative of all lawyers in the

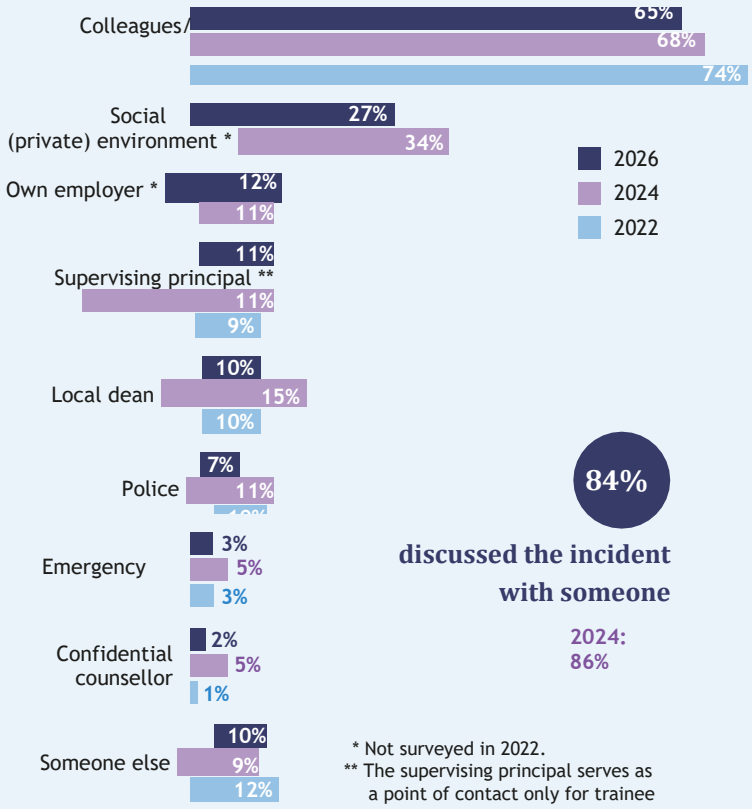
NEDERLANDSE ORDE VAN ADVOCATEN

Aggression, threats and intimidation towards

Discussing and reporting

Who do lawyers discuss an aggressive incident with?

(more than one answer was possible)



* Not surveyed in 2022.
** The supervising principal serves as a point of contact only for trainee

84%

discussed the incident with someone

2024: 86%

3%

reported the incident to the police

2024: 7%

Lawyers are more likely to discuss serious incidents with others, such as colleagues, the local dean, the police, their social circle, and the NOvA emergency hotline. The severity of the incident does not influence whether they discuss it with their employer or supervising principal.

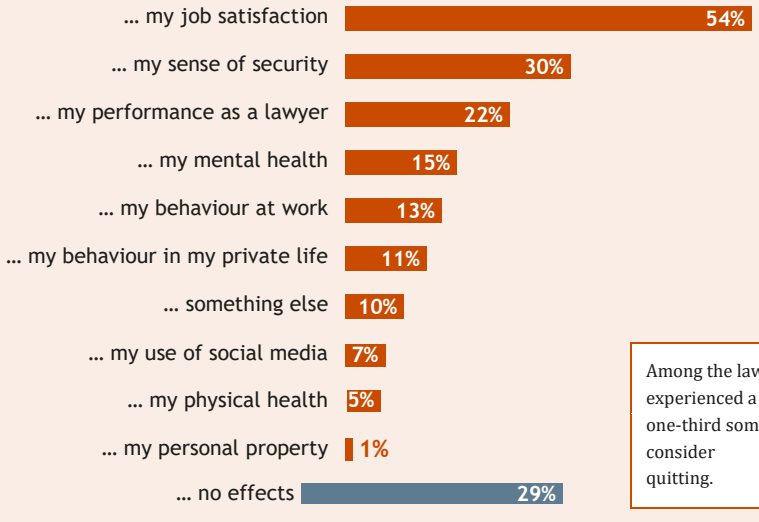
The most commonly cited reasons for not

1. Incident not serious enough (49%)
2. It was not a criminal offence
3. I didn't want things to escalate
4. It's part of my job (19%)
5. Person with mental health issues (19%)

Due to the improved survey method, the results for 2026 are not directly comparable with those for 2022 and 2024.

Impact of incidents

Adverse effects after having experienced an incident



Among the lawyers who experienced a serious incident, one-third sometimes consider quitting.

71%

experienced adverse effects following an incident

2024: 67%

28%

felt the need for counselling or after-care

2024: 43%
2022: 37%

18%

sometimes consider quitting as a lawyer

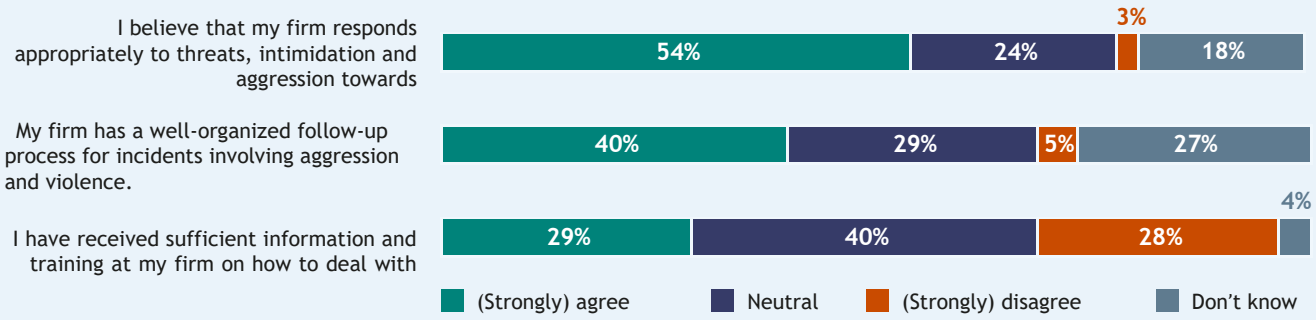
2024: 23%
2022:

Due to the improved survey method, the results for 2026 are not directly comparable with those for 2022 and 2024.

Aggression, threats and intimidation towards

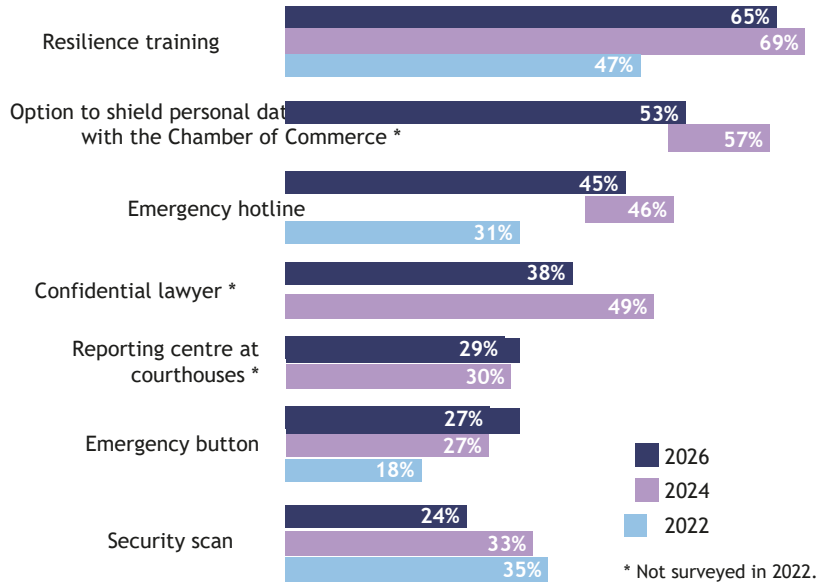
Role of a lawyer's own firm

Lawyers' views on the role of their own firm and how it responds to incidents



Awareness of existing support and protective measures

Awareness of the support services offered by the NOvA





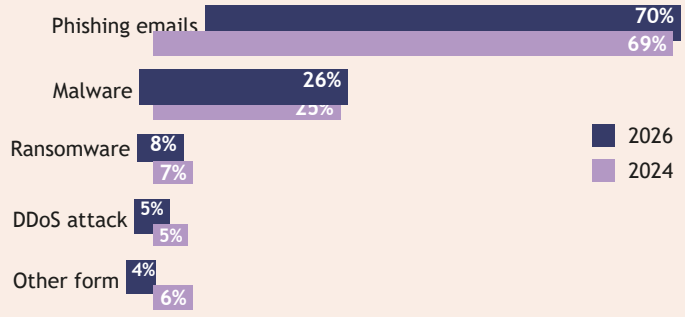
Three ways in which the NOvA, according to lawyers in the focus group, can contribute to the prevention of aggression:

1. **information:** e.g. general rules of conduct or an app for sharing experiences.
2. **Training:** focus on collegiality, training sessions on aggression.
3. **Procedures:** tightening disciplinary rules or implementing a 'sanity check' for complaints.

Due to the improved survey method, the results for 2026 are not directly comparable with those for 2022 and 2024.

Cybercrime and the need for support

Percentage of lawyers who have encountered forms of cybercrime



Four percent occasionally use *AI* when dealing with aggression and intimidation, mostly for *advice*.

Although DDoS attacks occur less frequently, they are perceived as more serious than other forms of cybercrime.

Most lawyers do not feel the need for support. Lawyers at small firms are more likely to need the digital resilience hotline than lawyers at large firms.

Due to the improved survey method, the results for 2026 are not directly comparable with those for 2024.