

# Violence in the Workplace

Scope, Warning Signs and Prevention

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation  
Division of Safety & Hygiene Training Center  
Revised: July 2002



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	<i>These references are in the public domain.</i>	
	1. <i>Combating Workplace Violence: Guidelines for Employers and Law Enforcement.</i> International Association of Chiefs of Police, Private Sector Liaison Committee, 1997. Public Domain.	
	2. Duhart, Detis T., Ph. D. <i>Workplace Violence, 1993-1999.</i> Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report (NCJ 190076). U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 2001. Public Domain.	
	One hour Safety Presentation	101

# Agenda

8:30

Introduction

How serious is the problem?

Definitions

VIWP Types

Causal Factors

Warning Signs

Prevention Strategies

Management Commitment & Leadership Style

Employee Involvement

Zero Tolerance Policy

Pre-hiring Checks

Risk Assessment

Crisis Team

Training

Documentation

OSHA Questions

Summary

12:00

DISMISS

There will be one morning break

# Course Outcomes

## UPON COMPLETION OF THE CLASS, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

1. Be aware of the current statistics related to workplace violence
2. Understand the interrelatedness of various causes of workplace violence
3. Be able to identify possible warning signs and implement strategies to minimize likelihood of incidence occurrence

## FORWARD

Workplace Violence is a complex issue that impacts businesses and persons in differing ways. Through this training, it is our goal to better prepare participants to limit the risk to themselves and their respective businesses. There are few certainties in addressing the complex social issues that are categorized under the umbrella term of Workplace Violence.

This course is designed to overview the issue of workplace violence for all industry segments. This course will not provide specific recommendations for your workplace, and is not designed to outline when employee discipline or removal should occur. Employee labor issues must be managed within the context of your specific organization's rules, policies and applicable state and federal labor laws. The designers of this course, strongly recommend that professionals involved in the management of violence in the workplace issues seek additional training on this topic area as well as related topics such as labor law, human resource management, accident investigation, diffusing violent situations and crisis management. We additionally encourage all participants to incorporate resources such as legal, human resources, facility management, labor relations and senior managers as resources for the evaluation of your current violence in the workplace program and policy as well as future prevention measures.

Specific recommendations within this training manual related to handling Red Flag indicators, causation and managing violent interactions, are presented as overviews of these specific topics for educational purposes. These recommendations should not be viewed as exact guidelines or methods to avoid escalation or critical event occurrence.

# Awareness Survey

1. Workplace violence by its definition has to involve some form of physical attack.  
True or False
  
2. OSHA has cited organizations for allowing “violent” environments to exist.  
True or False
  
3. Workplace violence is primarily a “security” issue.  
True or False
  
4. Violence is actually a major “social” problem and therefore should not be considered a serious “workplace” issue.  
True or False
  
5. Break-ups or other workplace “personal relationships” should be considered as potential causes of workplace violence.  
True or False
  
6. There are ways you and your employer can effectively limit violence in the workplace.  
True or False
  
7. Your company needs policies and procedures dealing with violence in the workplace.  
True or False
  
8. A persons home life and external support network should not be considered as a risk assessment factor  
True or False
  
9. Some violent acts and threats just need to be ignored.  
True or False
  
10. The human resources or security sections of an organization are the only areas that should be involved in managing potential violence in the workplace situations.  
True or False







# Violence in the Workplace

## Types, Warning Signs & Prevention

Ohio Division of Safety & Hygiene



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### How serious is the problem?



- Homicide is the first leading cause of death in the workplace for women, 2nd cause of death for men. 80% of homicides are during robberies.
- Each week, an average of 20 people are murdered and 18,000 are assaulted in US workplaces.

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### Definition

**Workplace violence:** Unwelcome harassment, threats, or attacks causing fear, mental or physical harm, or unreasonable stress in the workplace.

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## VIWP Types

- Type I Criminal
- Type II Client, customer, patient
- Type III Employee
- Type IV Personal relationship



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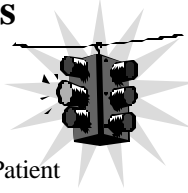
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## Warning Signs

- Type I Criminal
- Type II Client, Customer, Patient
- Type III Employee
- Type IV Personal Relationship



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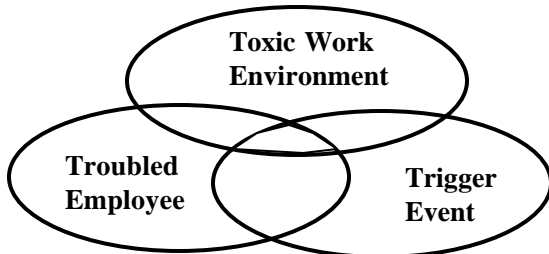
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## Dangerous Ingredients



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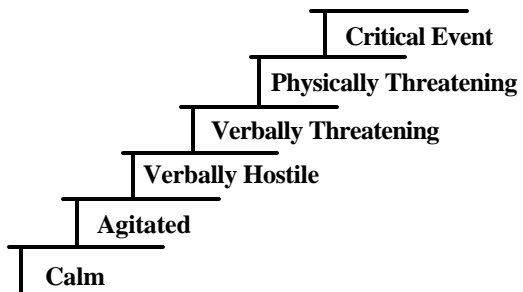
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## Personal Anger Escalation



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## Prevention

- Management commitment & leadership style
- Pre-hiring checks
- Employee involvement
- Zero Tolerance Policy



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## Prevention continued

- Risk assessment
- Crisis team
- Training
- Documentation



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## Summary

- Actively address VIWP issues
- Assess the risk of violence
- Involve employees
- Consistently apply standards
- Document incidents & take threats seriously
- Create a zero tolerance policy
- Train all employees



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# How Serious is the Problem?

## Relevant Statistics

### RATE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- Each year between 1992 and 1996, more than 2 million people became victims of violent crime while at work or on duty (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).
- Businesses ranked workplace violence as their top concern for the third straight year in the 1996 Pinkerton Security Issues Survey Report (Montoya, 1997).
- Twelve percent of all victims of nonfatal workplace violence reported having been physically injured (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).
- In Ohio, ten percent of all workers' compensation death claims were attributed to workplace violence in 1997 (Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation).

### VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

- Among people victimized while working or on duty, male victims outnumbered females by about 2 to 1. Nearly 9 in 10 victims of workplace violence were white. About 70% of the victims were between ages 25 and 49 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).
- Female victims were more likely to report that their attackers were known to them (50%) compared to male victims (37%) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).

### OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

- Those who committed workplace violence were predominantly male, white, and older than twenty-one. Only about 20% of violence incidents involved an armed offender (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).
- Forty-three percent of the robberies were committed by more than one offender (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).

### WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS

- Annually, 330,000 retail sales workers became victims of workplace violence. More than 160,000 medical workers were victimized each year (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).

### WORKPLACE HOMICIDE

- Each year from 1992 to 1996, there were more than 1,000 workplace homicides (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).
- Work-related homicides decreased in Ohio in 1997, down to 22 from 31 in 1996. Of these, seven were related to robberies.
- Although job-related homicides dropped 7% from 1996 to 1997, homicide was still the second leading cause of job-related deaths. Fourteen percent of the fatalities at work were attributed to homicides. The causes for these homicides include:
  - \* robberies and other crimes (85%)
  - \* disputes among coworkers and with customers (9%)
  - \* domestic disputes (5%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998)
- Homicide is the leading cause of death from occupational injury among females (National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health, 1996).
- Retail sales workers experience the highest number of workplace homicides (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998). Two-thirds of workplace homicides occur in service and retail trade industries (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998).
- The bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building caused 12% of the job-related homicides in 1995 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1996).

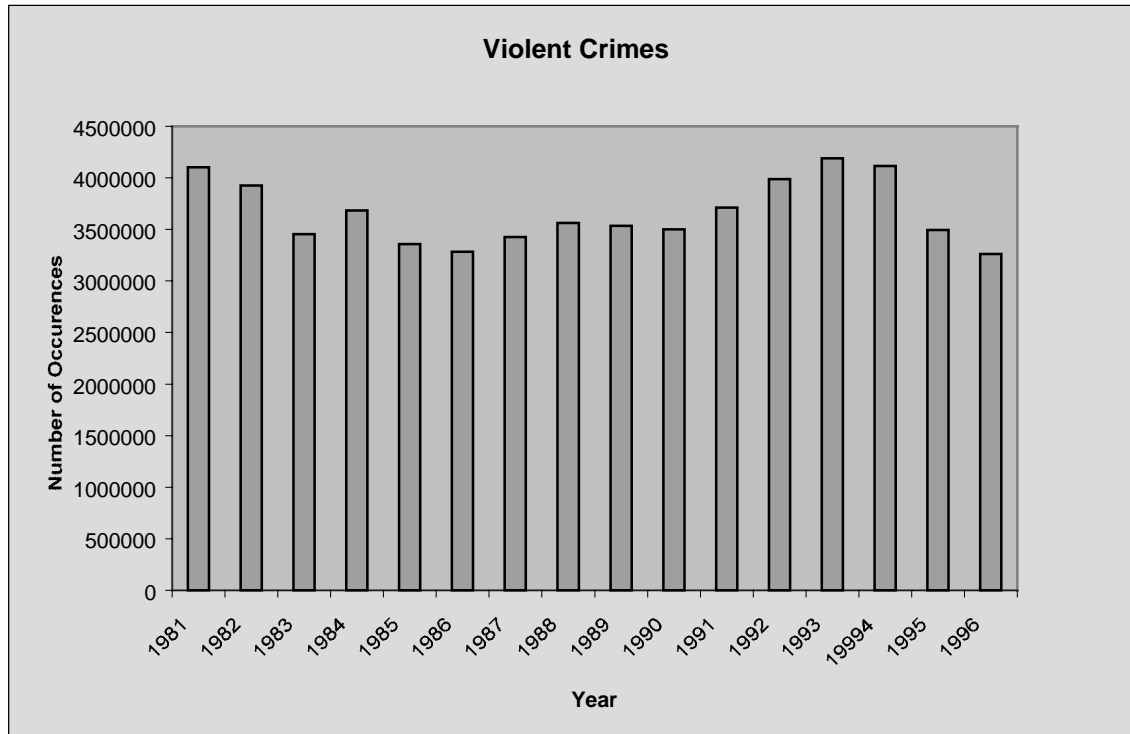
## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

- According to a survey by the National Safe Workplace Institute, 94% of surveyed corporate security and safety directors rank domestic violence as a high security problem.
- More than 25% of the female victims of job-related homicides were assaulted by people they knew. About 16% resulted from domestic disputes that spilled over into the workplace (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998).
- According to the National Violence Against Women Survey:
  - \* Stalkers made overt threats to about 45% of victims.
  - \* Stalkers spied on or followed about 75% of victims.
  - \* Stalkers vandalized the property of about 30% of victims.
  - \* Over 90% of stalking incidents involve some form of contact (physical, personal, written communication) at the workplace.



## SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIME STATISTICS

Serious violent crime has shown a decrease over the past several reported years (see chart below). The serious violent crimes index includes incidents of rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and homicide. (U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics)



## REFERENCES

- “Deaths Due to Injury on the Job Remain the Same.” (News Release.) Ohio Dept. of Health, Office of Public Affairs, October 1998.
- Montoya, Paul. “Workplace Violence Still Top Concern Among Businesses.” *San Antonio Business Journal*, 10(52): 18, 1997.
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- Violence in the Workplace: Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies*. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1996.
- Warchol, Greg. *Workplace Violence, 1992-1996*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report (NCJ 168634). U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 1998.
- “Women Experience Fewer Job-related Injuries and Deaths than Men.” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 98-8, July 1998. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# Sample Definitions

**NOTE:** These following definitions (except “stalking”) were written by participants from previous Violence in the Workplace classes. They are not legal definitions.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is the act of someone creating a hostile work environment through unwelcome words, actions, or physical contact not resulting in physical harm. **Sexual Harassment** may also be considered a form of workplace violence. By definition, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral or written communications or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment or position. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or decisions affecting the individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or abusive work environment.

Sexual harassment can occur between individuals of different sexes or of the same sex. Although sexual harassment most often exploits a relationship between individuals of unequal power such as between supervisor and employee, it may also occur between individuals of equal power (such as between fellow co-workers), or in some circumstances even where it appears that the harasser has less power than the individual harassed.

## **THREAT**

A threat is an expression of an intent to cause physical harm at the time or in the future. Any words, slurs, gestures or display of weapons which are perceived by the worker as a clear and real threat to their safety and which may cause fear, anxiety, or inability to perform job functions.

## **STALKING**

Most statutes define stalking as the willful, malicious and repeated following and harassing of another person. Stalking is broadly characterized by unwanted obsessive interest. Stalking is not based exclusively on male/female “romantic” scenarios. A specific pattern of conduct must exist to be categorized as stalking. Many state laws mandate that an imminent, credible threat of violence be made against the victim for the activity to be considered stalking.

**PHYSICAL ATTACK**

With or without the use of a weapon, a physical attack is any aggressive act of hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, scratching, sexual attack, or any other such physical act directed to the worker by a co-worker, patient, client, relative or associated individual which arises during or as a result of the performance of duties and which results in death or physical injury.

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Workplace violence is unwelcome physical or psychological forms of harassment, threats, stalking behavior or attacks that cause fear, mental or physical harm, or unreasonable stress in the workplace.

## Types of Violence in the Workplace

<b>Type I</b>	<b>External to company</b>	<b>Criminal (Robber, rapist, carjacker, arsonist etc.)</b>
<b>Type II</b>	<b>External, but business-related</b>	<b>Customer or client</b>
<b>Type III</b>	<b>Internal to company (Employee to employee violence)</b>	<b>Employee issues within the organization May include former employees</b>
<b>Type IV</b>	<b>Personal Relationship</b>	<b>Current or past romantic involvement*</b>

**\*Please note that “involvement” may be real or perceived to be real by the perpetrator**

# Violence in the Workplace Overview

Description	Risk Factors	Early Warning Signs	Prevention Keys
<b>TYPE I</b>  External criminal activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of \$ with the public</li> <li>Employees working alone</li> <li>Predominately female workforce</li> <li>Working late</li> <li>Working in high crime areas</li> <li>Guarding valuables</li> <li>Poor environmental design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in crime in the area</li> <li>Incidents in similar industry or workplace</li> <li>Employee concerns</li> <li>Special/unique conditions - time of year, local activities</li> <li>Graffiti</li> </ul>	Pro-active security and audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External lighting</li> <li>Minimum Cash - so stated</li> <li>Drop safes</li> <li>Silent alarms - doors locked</li> <li>Surveillance cameras</li> <li>Bullet proof barriers</li> <li>Operational changes to limit vulnerability</li> </ul>
<b>TYPE II</b>  External assault from clients or customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TYPE I risk factors</li> <li>Collection activities</li> <li>Problem resolution departments</li> <li>Major change in product or company policy that affects customer</li> <li>Contact with angry or frustrated public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in customer complaints</li> <li>Increase in complaints with products or service</li> <li>Employee fear statements</li> <li>Security breaches</li> <li>“Close calls”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pro-active security</li> <li>Controlled access to facilities</li> <li>Customer service training</li> <li>Conflict resolution skills</li> <li>Pro-active public announcements</li> <li>Community service and action</li> <li>Improved perceptions and image</li> <li>Problem solving team</li> </ul>
<b>TYPE III</b>  Internal employees, supervisors or work related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type II risk factors</li> <li>High stress environment</li> <li>Little control over decisions at work</li> <li>Autocratic management style</li> <li>Fear of losing job, layoffs, economic peril</li> <li>Radical organizational change</li> <li>Major life change event(s)</li> <li>Labor v. management tension</li> <li>Substance abuse</li> <li>Negligent hiring and retention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressions of open anger and/or frustration</li> <li>Intimidating behavior</li> <li>fight</li> <li>Actual or implied threats</li> <li>Changes in behavior, performance or appearance</li> <li>Perception gaps</li> <li>Increased grievance activity</li> <li>Increase in absenteeism, tardiness or job turn-over</li> <li>Person with history of violent behavior</li> <li>References to/access to weapons</li> <li>Feelings of victimization or oppression</li> <li>Victim of domestic abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top management &amp; labor partnership</li> <li>Pro-active risk assessment</li> <li>Organization-wide participation &amp; support</li> <li>Zero tolerance policy</li> <li>Crisis plan / Crisis team</li> <li>Hiring, retention &amp; termination system(s)</li> <li>Awareness training</li> <li>Skills &amp; policy training</li> <li>Recognition system</li> <li>Participative management style</li> <li>Stress management</li> <li>Employee involvement and opportunity to voice concerns</li> </ul>

Description	Risk Factors	Early Warning Signs	Prevention Keys
<p><b>TYPE IV</b></p> <p>Personal Relationship (perceived or real)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual harassment work atmosphere</li> <li>• Phone contact only settings</li> <li>• Inner office relationships and subsequent break-ups</li> <li>• Marital break-ups</li> <li>• “Star” element in the workplace (Movie, TV, print, Music)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obsessive interest</li> <li>• Over reliance on relationship for emotional support</li> <li>• Domestic abuse</li> <li>• Letters, voice mail, in person expressions of “fatal attraction”</li> <li>• Flowers, gifts to the workplace from admirers</li> <li>• Employees out of work area to constantly visit target of perceived relationship</li> <li>• Stalking behaviors</li> <li>• Excessive workplace visits</li> <li>• “Shrine” like displays in the work area to loved one or target of perceived relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and early intervention</li> <li>• Reporting &amp; training for employees</li> <li>• Support through EAP for emotional break-ups</li> <li>• Management awareness of retraining orders</li> <li>• Police involvement in stalking behaviors</li> <li>• Prompt investigation of harassment</li> <li>• Control over employee and visitor traffic</li> <li>• Verification and awareness of grapevine information</li> <li>• Training on harassment issues for all employees</li> <li>• Confidential referral system of issues related to harassment</li> </ul>

# ACTION STEPS

	Action Step	Current Status	Who will help	Completion date
Management Commitment & Leadership Style				
Employee Involvement				
Zero Tolerance Policy				
Pre-hiring Checks				
Risk Assessment				
Crisis Team				
Training				
Documentation				







# Causal Factors

It is not possible to isolate one single causal factor for Violence in the Workplace. Many complex psychological and physical forces may blend and reinforce one another to prompt an individual to commit violent acts. People react in differing ways to stress and personal events. Determining exact causes or trigger events leading to violent outbursts or actions may be difficult.

## DENIAL

1. **Minor problem** - Despite studies, statistics and similar industry experiences, many organizations continue to rank violence in the workplace as a minor workplace problem.
2. **Inevitable** - Many organizations recognize that violence in the workplace exists, and further recognize that they are likely to be the victim of violent acts. Alarming, many of these same organizations have adopted a philosophy that is based upon inevitability. These organizations respond to threats and threat warning signs as if nothing can be done to prevent escalation or occurrence.
3. **Social problem** - Based upon the complexity of the violence in the workplace issue, many organizations view it as a social problem, not a workplace problem. By adopting this definition, organizations may fail in preventing avoidable instances of violence in the workplace.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL ISSUES

1. **Unrealistic personal expectations** - The gap between the reality of a person's life situation and their perceived level of desired comfort can produce volatile behavior if aggravated by a trigger event.
2. **Domestic spillover** - Home and family turmoil can result in workplace violence. Managers should be aware of their employees' domestic changes that may impact the work place.
3. **Reduced trust** - Workers may feel that the organization or their supervisor is "out to get them," reducing the amount of trust and allegiance they feel for their employer. This lack of trust can lead to disgruntled employees.
4. **Reduced caring** - Impersonal handling of employee issues and concerns can be perceived as a devaluing of the work force or person. Persons who feel that they are "just a number" may be prone to violent outbursts by a real or perceived lack of concern for them as individuals.
5. **Loss of control over life direction** - Persons expressing a pervasive sense of an inability to influence or control future events in their lives may be exhibiting a key warning sign of workplace violence. Persons convinced that (a) a predetermined negative outcome awaits them and (b) their actions have little bearing on this predestined conclusion may be prime candidates for violent or irrational acts.
6. **Media influence** - Some believe that media coverage of workplace violence spawns additional violence or "copy cat" incidents. Numerous recent studies suggest that saturation coverage related to violence in society desensitizes the public to the warning signs and the actual occurrence of violence.

## JOBS AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

1. **Downsizing** - The realities of corporate downsizing impact the work force in differing ways. Advance notice of job loss can prompt negative emotional issues to surface and may lead to violent outbursts or incidents. Organizations with marginally ‘toxic’ work environments may increase their risk profile if downsizing efforts are not managed appropriately.
2. **Jobs versus careers** - Positions within organizations rarely provide life-long employment, which is resented by some people who resist job changes. The change in perception of employment in general, may add to the increase of violent outbursts or incidents by limiting the employee’s sense of “ownership” or loyalty to an organization. The perception can magnify other psychological issues and may additionally provide a rationalization element for those that commit violent acts in the workplace.
3. **Job changes** - The changing shape of employment via position consolidation, automation, doing less with more and other management practices, may add to a climate ripe for violent acts. Persons who cannot manage the inner stress of position instability are more likely to seek out other means to project their inner frustrations. Employee assistance, communication and transitional training can be keys to avoiding violent incidents in a changing job landscape.
4. **Personal identity from job** - Interesting studies contrasting European and American perceptions of the relationship of position and self definition have been conducted noting a stark contrast in these two work groups. When asked the question “What do you do?” Europeans generally responded with a hobby, interest, or personal activity. The American sample groups responded with a job title or position. Persons who heavily define self worth by their job position may respond more aggressively to job challenges, interruption or loss than those in a more balanced setting.
5. **Labor-management tension** - Work environments that ignore strife between labor and management, or foster an adversarial work climate may be more likely to experience specific forms of workplace violence. Incidents of assault, sabotage and theft may emerge in this toxic work environment. Employees or managers deeply entrenched on either side of this stalemate may rationalize doing acts of violence.
6. **Negligent hiring & retention** - Practices such as improper background checks and inconsistent discipline or removal can have far reaching effects on work force morale. Negligent hiring practices can allow marginal elements into your work force. Failure to consistently screen for drugs can also have far-reaching legal implications.
7. **New technology** - Dramatic changes in work place mechanization, automation, or computer reliance can have adverse impact on employees. Employees that have high levels of anxiety about automation may displace anger or frustration into violent outbursts.

## PERSONAL ISSUES

1. **Major life-changing event**- Whether an event is “major” or not depends on the importance of the event to the individual. The violent death of a parent, spouse or child can be termed a major life-changing event. Even the death of a pet can be extremely traumatic if the person’s support structure relied on affection from this pet. This example, although extreme, illustrates the importance of sensitivity to employee needs and life changes. Major life changing events can be effectively navigated by the employee without the incidence of violence. Assistance in the form of counseling, time away from work or other support groups should be examined as strategies to prevent violence.
2. **Substance abuse** - The effect of drug and alcohol abuse on stress and, in turn, workplace violence should not be underestimated. The employee’s ability to cope with daily life challenges through the use of controlled substances may be a key warning sign of potential volatility. An increase in prescription and over the counter drug abuse has compounded the workplace drug problem. Persons battling addiction or dependence on prescription drugs may be primed for irrational acts and outbursts. Managers need to note behavioral changes that may be caused by drug use. Employee assistance programs (EAP) and the ability of managers at all levels to identify those in need of assistance are critical elements to your organization’s workplace violence prevention efforts.
3. **Personal problems** - Each employee carries a certain amount of stress or “emotional baggage” associated directly to a challenge in their personal life. This constant stress can become cause for concern if a substantial change in support structure occurs or problems escalate to an unmanageable level. In many circumstances substantial warning signs exist if a support structure is not present for the affected person. Warning signs include dramatic changes in outlook on life and verbalization of despair to those outside of the traditional support structure. This “reaching out” is potentially more significant when attempted by those that generally keep this stress to themselves.
4. **Feelings of oppression** - Stress reactions can be magnified to the person who believes that s/he is being singled out or severely restricted by someone in power over them. Managers must be cautious (especially in autocratic settings), to be aware when feelings of oppression are voiced. Targeted statements like “you are keeping me down”, are of special concern as they may be a final warning of impending action.
5. **Inability to provide for family** - When interrupted through workplace injury, downsizing, layoffs or job loss, the traditional family provider may demonstrate his/her desperation with irrational reactions and workplace violence. When one’s income is significantly reduced or eliminated, one may act with desperation. Those providing the “last safety net” for employees must be aware of the increased probability of violent outbursts at the termination or interruption of benefits.

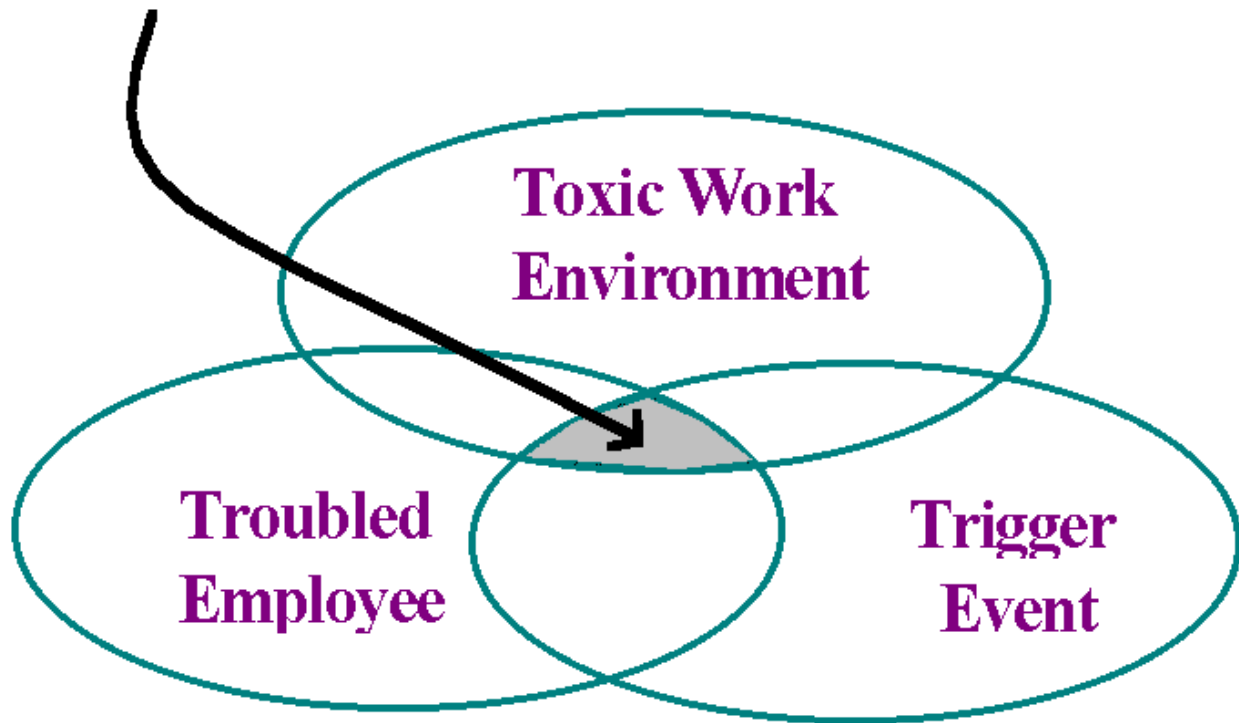
## MANAGEMENT STYLE & WORK ENVIRONMENT

1. **Autocratic environment** - Managers ruling by fear, intimidation or extreme inflexibility can be facilitators toward violent acts. Employees under an autocratic environment are less likely to trust, ask for help, or care about the well being of others or the organization. In an autocratic environment violent outbursts, or acts of extreme violence, may be viewed as ways to seek revenge or maintain dignity.
2. **Managers out of touch with workers** - Acts of revenge and frustration are more likely to occur in environments where managers are not in tune with the needs or changes within the work force. Signs of employee morale change are less likely to be noticed in an environment characterized by indifference or even disdain.
3. **Organizational change** - an organization's ability to successfully integrate and "sell" change to their employees can have an effect on violence in the workplace. Violent acts can be responses to stress and in some persons "out of their control" or forced change can be a trigger event leading to violence. Employee involvement in operational changes may meet with less resistance and cause less stress.
4. **Unrealistic expectations** - Quotas that are unattainable or systems designed to institutionalize failure can contribute to stress, helplessness and feelings of oppression. Employees may resort to sabotage or other violent acts to offset the impact of unrealistic managerial expectations.
5. **Unfair allocation of tasks** - Managers may inadvertently fall into situations where their drive toward task completion may increase stress and violent outbursts. In our current work environments, violent outbursts are a retaliatory option in the mind of many workers. Managers can avoid increasing workplace volatility by being sensitive in allocating tasks that may appear to others as preferential or vindictive.
6. **Lack of teamwork** - Environments that are characterized by an absence of team work, isolation of workers, lack of support, and extreme pressure placed upon the individual may be more likely to experience violent outbursts. Characteristics of effective teams include mutual support, a climate of trust, ownership of team goals/objectives, input from everyone, valuing the strengths of each team member, and open communication.
7. **Sexual Harassment**- Environments that are impacted by sexual harassment may also have a high vulnerability to workplace violence incidents. Sexual harassment may be considered a form of intimidation. Persons may react to intimidation by striking back in retaliation via a violent act directed at the harasser or vented toward others. Additionally, persons involved in the act of harassment may also escalate their activities to physical attack. Environments that allow sexual harassment to become a part of the organization's culture may in fact facilitate violent acts.

# Causes, Manifestations, & Resolutions for Threatening Behavior

	<b>Intimidation</b>	<b>Desperation</b>	<b>Revenge</b>
<b>CAUSATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trigger situations in person’s life or environment</li> <li>• May be for enjoyment or to fulfill inner need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A request for something that is not being met</li> <li>• May be rooted in frustration or desperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be clandestine or planned in nature</li> <li>• Is generally not a first response to adversity unless as element of daily life</li> </ul>
<b>HOW IT MANIFESTS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More likely to begin by phone or letter</li> <li>2. May escalate to in person threats</li> <li>3. May include reporting to higher authorities</li> <li>4. May threaten job of target</li> <li>5. May escalate to physical assault or specific threats</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May be rooted in poor listening or overly bureaucratic responses</li> <li>2. May be very direct in demands including deadlines and delivery specifications to avoid action on part of person making threat.</li> <li>3. Is commonly irrational in nature</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May focus on a specific person or an organization that has been given “human” traits</li> <li>2. May be revenge motivation for the handling of another person. (Defend the helpless)</li> <li>3. May have warning signs apparent on non-threat issues</li> </ol>
<b>RESOLUTION STRATEGIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Train employees to de-escalate at first occurrence</li> <li>2. Address behavior at earliest opportunity</li> <li>3. Attempt to secure facts in writing and arrange for single point of contact</li> <li>4. Terminate interaction</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow venting</li> <li>2. Remove barrier</li> <li>3. Meet in person</li> <li>4. Demonstrate empathy</li> <li>5. Research handling of incident by employees seeking start point of conflict</li> <li>6. Document and communicate to all parties</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counsel on root issue between parties</li> <li>2. Early intervention and seek full resolution</li> <li>3. Don’t allow “testing comments” by subject at onset of incident</li> <li>4. Insure that this is not a corporate culture issue</li> </ol>

## Critical Event



Park Dietz model

Viewing some instances of workplace violence as foreseeable and preventable are key elements in understanding causation. How does a person with “problems” become the perpetrator of a violent act? This model demonstrates the intersection of three key elements that comprise many violent acts. Each element is defined, demonstrated and shaped by the individual’s perceptions.

**TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT** - Many of the topic areas listed under causal factors related to the workplace dynamic are included in this broad term. A toxic work environment includes such factors as the state of employee-management relations, working conditions, pressure to produce, job security, downsizing and problem solving avenues available to employees.

**TRIGGER EVENT** - A trigger event or as “the straw that broke the camel’s back” is an instance that pushes the employee past the point of effectively managing their stress, into an actual violent act.



This event can be a unique occurrence that may not have caused the stress build-up, but now has led to a violent response. At high stress levels a myriad of issues are likely to trigger the person “at the brink.” In the ideal work setting, managers and coworkers are charged with observing when their friends and coworkers are at the breaking point, and communicating these observations to someone who can help minimize the stress being experienced. Through effective minimization, trigger levels or events can be neutralized.

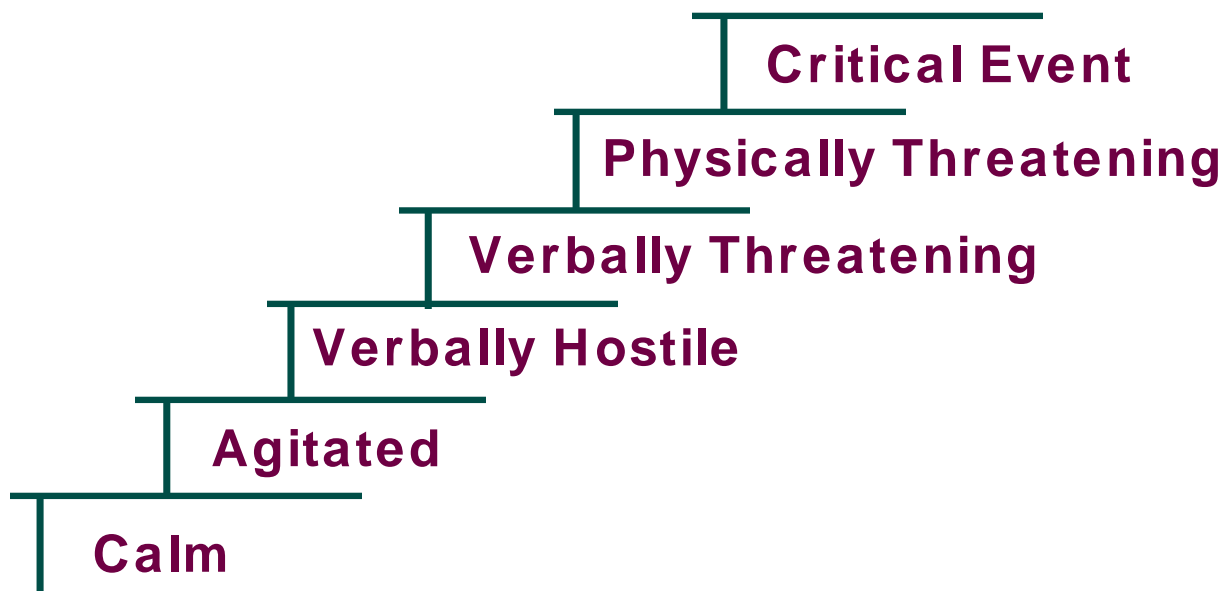
**TROUBLED EMPLOYEE** - The troubled employee is one who is experiencing some change in their ability to cope with their daily problems. An individual’s ability to cope, major life changes, home life, support structure and change in belief systems are part of the troubled employee profile. (See “Personal Issues” under Causal Factors in this document.).

# Personal Anger Escalation

Seldom will an individual progress directly from a calm state to the critical event stage without some intermediate steps. This model on “Personal Anger Escalation” shows a progression of phases of interactions and behaviors that warn us that a critical event may be imminent. Although stress factors can cause an individual to “skip” steps of this model, often an individual steps through these stages on the way to a critical event. Keep in mind that the recommendations within this section are made to assist in your evaluation and handling of interactions and can not be exact in their application. As established earlier in this course, persons react in varying ways to stimuli negating any guaranteed method to prevent or predict escalation or critical event occurrence.

## GAUGING

Gauging the stress level of co-workers is an important skill used to determine the potential for a violent situation. Gauging activities take many forms, but generally include observing interactions, communication patterns, non-verbal signals, word choice, voice level, and gestures.



## **CALM**

Calm is the baseline or common everyday behavior for an individual. Generally, there is no elevation of mood, anger or agitation. Reaching the calm state may be the goal of intervention.

### **Indicators that calm has been reached:**

1. Breathing rate returns to common levels.
2. Hand gestures return to base line. Flailing gestures are limited and person returns to common gestures (gauged)
3. Issue reaches resolution and individual agrees with conclusion. Sincerity is key to this level of calm. Individuals may simply “give up” in a problem setting, mislabeling this concession as agreement, could be problematic.
4. Non-verbal signals such as nodding agreement, open communication posture, relaxed seated body posture.

## **AGITATED**

This state is the common area that managers and coworkers take notice that a problem is occurring. Coworkers have a very good chance of resolving problems when an agitated person is taken seriously and his/her concerns are addressed. Problem solving at the Agitated level has a higher likelihood of success than at any other level and does not require the same degree of training to reach successful resolution.

### **Pointers for handling the Agitated person**

1. First moments of interaction are critical to success
2. Listen actively
3. Don't invade body space
4. Remove interaction from view of peers, and friends (face saving, posturing)
5. Get to base issue
6. Offer to help in areas that you can truly deliver
7. Solve all that is within your control or effectively communicate what cannot or will not be delivered
8. Close void between what is anticipated or expected from Agitated individual to a realistic deliverable
9. Follow-up meetings to insure issue resolution
10. Address agitated behavior at some future phase or at the closure of incident.

## **VERBALLY HOSTILE**

Verbally hostile individuals may be adopting this tactic to draw attention to their issue or venting. The problem with verbal hostility is that it has a ripple effect on those that view the activities, fueling the “grapevine” with negative messages.

The first challenge of investigating or following-up on verbal hostility is finding a first-hand eyewitness, rather than second or third-hand versions. This is known as the “pure version.” The pure version is what actually occurred devoid of speculation, exaggeration or other inaccuracies. The pure version may be best obtained through electronic media (like a surveillance camera) that does not have the biases inherent to personal observations. However, if this is not available, then interviewing eyewitnesses is the next choice.

### **Suggestions to improve the accuracy of gathering information**

1. Gather the information as soon as possible.
2. Separate witnesses to the event and gather information in a setting devoid of observers or persons that may influence the witnesses.
3. Record the interview session on tape (first choice) or in writing.
4. Ask that the witness not discuss the incident with others until the situation is closed, and you notify them.
5. Ask open-ended questions (i.e. Tell me what you saw the other day). Avoid leading the witness through disclosure of any fact gathered from others or your perception.
6. Do not interject undue structure in your witness questioning. Standard questions for each witness may be a good practice, but if the witness wishes a free flow discourse, then adapt to this method.
7. Allow the witness to offer opinion as well as factual statements of the incident as they recall it. Sometimes intermingled in opinion is valuable evaluative information that may be omitted if you ask for “just the facts”.
8. Determining the witnesses’ understanding of the context of the verbal threat may provide valuable insight for your future interactions with the person directly involved in the situation.
9. Whenever possible, avoid letting the primary subject know who “informed” on him/her. Respect the witnesses’ privacy. Share information without attributing it to a direct source.
10. Ideally in your subject interview, witness statements should be used to verify what the primary subject is stating, not as a refutation mechanism.

Witness interviews will prepare you to interact directly with the person making the verbally hostile statements. If you are not trained in interview techniques, consider seeking the assistance of a trained interviewer. Developing basic interview skills of several key resource persons within your organization (prior to the incident) will help you when an incident occurs.

### **Suggestions for managers or supervisors**

As a manager or supervisor you may be confronted with another set of challenges if the verbally hostile situation occurs in your presence.

1. You must determine if direct intervention is necessary at the time the incident occurs. If the hostile action is geared at another person you may be pressed into action.
2. It is very important to remove the person from the incident setting, especially if others employees are observing your intervention. A change of venue can make a substantial difference in your success in minimizing the incident and diffusing the volatile person.
3. Document this interaction. Tape record or take notes during the interaction when practical. If you can't take notes at the time of the incident, immediately document what was said at the conclusion of the meeting. List start and stop times of the meeting, the location, those in attendance and as many quotes as possible. Hostile interactions are difficult to recall accurately and your documentation may be very important in evaluating future outbursts and remedies.
4. If the actions of the employee are venting actions you may have to address the causation as well as counsel the employee toward effective methods to vent in the future. Failure to provide an appropriate settlement of the root issue furthers the probability of reoccurrence and escalation.

### **VERBALLY THREATENING**

Verbally threatening individuals may exhibit many of the same characteristics as the verbally hostile individual. In many circumstances, verbal threats and hostility are a method to vent or displace anger. Managers and supervisors are challenged to isolate the root cause and solve this issue or re-direct the employee anger.

In many circumstances, verbal threats are utilized as a method to “get something” that has been denied. At times the denial method, failure to explain a decision or sell the employee on the issue may be the cause of the violent act or verbal threat. Open-ended questions of the individual post occurrence may isolate the true cause of the outburst. To effectively minimize verbal threats it is necessary to modify behavior to some degree or cease interaction with the threatening individual. In many settings the option of avoiding or ceasing interaction with the individual is not an option.

### **Pointers for handling verbal and physical threats**

1. If immediate in nature, stop the interaction
2. Separate individuals, gather facts and/or interview subjects and witnesses
3. Document the interaction
4. Determine root cause
5. Solve situation (remedy)
6. Clearly state that behavior cannot be repeated
7. If venting, provide alternate vent method
8. Seek agreement
9. Monitor and follow-up

## **PHYSICALLY THREATENING**

When confronted with physical threats, employees should involve local law enforcement who are trained to deal with aggressive individuals who pose physical threats.

### **Suggestions for dealing with physical threats**

1. Call security or law enforcement.
2. Until they arrive, act as calm and non-threatening as possible.
3. Try to appear to the perpetrator to be solving his/her problem, asking for clarification about the problem.
4. Adopt mannerisms, actions and words that convey an attitude of assistance. Persons approaching violent individuals with negative attitudes may find themselves the new target of the aggression.
5. Physical size, strong tone of voice may be a disadvantage at the early stages of interactions with a volatile individual. Larger, dominant individuals should make an effort to make themselves less threatening and “smaller” in tone, word choice and mannerisms.
6. Persons of high organizational authority level or role must make similar efforts to separate themselves from positional authority. If rank in the organization equates to distrust or lack of caring then this person begins at a disadvantage, as they must overcome these negative perceptions before minimization attempts can take hold.

## **CRITICAL EVENT**

The critical event is the violent incident fully unfolding into a physical act. This act may include sabotage, assault or homicide. Call security or law enforcement, handle the victims, gather information, analyze the incident, and take appropriate action to prevent further incidents.

While you are waiting for security or law enforcement to arrive, here are some suggestions for diffusing volatile behavior.

### **Physical response**

1. Breathe deep and slow: inhale through nose, exhale through mouth.
2. Relax: jaws, neck muscles, body.
3. Never touch or violate the perpetrator's space.
4. Keep your movements slow and non-threatening.
5. Stay out of arm's reach.

### **Attitude**

1. Maintain a non-defensive attitude.
2. Don't take the perpetrator's comments personally.
3. Remain calm don't let the perpetrator see you "jump" or be intimidated.
4. Treat the perpetrator like any other valued customer, guest, vendor, co-worker.
5. Don't show your anger.
6. Appear patient.
7. Remain calm.

### **Communication techniques**

1. Listen politely.
2. Listen for underlying cause of problem/complaint.
3. Let the perpetrator vent fully the first time through the complaint; don't interrupt.
4. Ask clarifying questions about topics that the perpetrator brings up.
5. Communicate in non-threatening manner.
6. Focus on what you can do for the perpetrator, not what you can't do.
7. Play the diplomat or seek collaborative solutions.
8. If appropriate, use humor but avoid sarcasm.
9. Assure the perpetrator of your continued interest and commitment to problem solving.
10. Continue to use calming techniques until assistance arrives.
11. At some phase of the interaction it must be made clear to the subject that you cannot tolerate abusive behavior.

### **Response to imminent danger**

1. Send an assistance alert code. Contact security if available or police.
2. Place a barrier between you and the perpetrator.
3. Caution for weapons (traditional/non-traditional)
4. Plan an escape path.
5. Summon team member or supervisor for "support presence."
6. Remove yourself from the situation.

# Behavioral Warning Signs

## **EARLY WARNING SIGNS: PROMPTING DISCUSSION, MODIFICATION OR ASSISTANCE**

1. Refuses to cooperate
2. Spreads rumors and gossip to harm others
3. Frequently argues with co-workers
4. Frequently uses profanity toward others
5. Change in value structure or extreme variations of core values

## **ADVANCED WARNING SIGNS: PROMPTING DISCIPLINE, INTERVENTION AND/OR CONTINUED MONITORING AND AWARENESS**

1. Argues with customers, co-workers, and management
2. Refuses to obey agency policy and procedures
3. Sabotages equipment
4. Steals for revenge
5. Verbalizes wishes to harm co-workers or management
6. Sends sexual or violent notes to other employees
7. Perceives self as victimized by management
8. Makes unwanted sexual comments
9. Views organization as a "person" or attributes negative human qualities to organization

## **IMMEDIATE WARNING SIGNS: PROMPTING INTERVENTION, IN SOME CASES LAW ENFORCEMENT INVOLVEMENT AND POTENTIAL SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

1. Frequent displays of intense anger
2. Recurrent suicidal threats
3. Recurrent physical confrontations
4. Destruction of property
5. Utilization of weapons to harm others
6. Commission of assaults, attacks, crime





# Warning Signs by Specific Threat Type

Each warning sign is not necessarily indicative of pending violence. These are observations drawn from numerous studies.

## **EXTERNAL TO COMPANY (TYPE I)**

Type I is criminal acts from someone who has no connection to the company or business, most commonly a robbery, but also including rape, carjacking, arson, and assault.

### **Risk factors that increase the probability of robbery and other criminal acts**

1. Businesses that are involved with the exchange of money with the public
2. Employees handling valuables or money while working alone or in small numbers
3. Odd hour or late night cash intensive operations
4. Businesses located in areas that have experienced a historically high crime rate or trend.
5. Persons charged with the responsibility of guarding valuable property
6. Facilities with poor environmental design such as view obstructed entrance and exit areas, and poor lighting.
7. Employee concerns expressed related to safety and fear
8. Special/unique conditions: time of year, local activities, events

## **EXTERNAL, BUT RELATED VIA BUSINESS (TYPE II)**

Type II is violent acts from someone who does not work for the company or business, but who is somehow connected to that company, such as a customer or client.

### **Warning signs**

1. Increased number of complaints from one customer
2. Increased number of complaints with one product or service
3. Attempts by an external customer to gather personal information related to employee(s).
4. External customer insisting on dealing with one specific employee. The employee expresses some fear or discomfort in handling the complaints of this customer.
5. Unreasonable customer concerns related to the delivery of a minor product or service.

## **INTERNAL TO COMPANY, EMPLOYEE TO EMPLOYEE VIOLENCE (TYPE III)**

Type III is violent acts from someone who works for the company or who previously worked for the company.

### **Warning signs**

1. Loner type with few interests outside of work
2. Holds grudges, especially against supervisors / authority positions
3. Has preoccupation with and makes frequent reference to weapons
4. Has a history of interpersonal conflict, is argumentative or uncooperative
5. Has difficulty accepting authority or criticism
6. Tends to blame employer, supervisor, and/or co-workers for problems
7. Repeatedly violates policies/rules
8. Has a sense of victimization/oppression
9. Decreased social connection - little or no family support
10. History of physical / verbal intimidation
11. Increased arguing with co-workers
12. Significant changes in behavior, performance, appearance
13. Substance abuse
14. Frequently depressed or withdrawn
15. Difficulty coping with changes and criticism
16. Expressions of open anger and/or frustration
17. Intimidating behavior
18. Fights
19. Actual or implied threats
20. Increased grievance activity which is not typical for this employee
21. Increased absences, tardiness or job turn-over
22. Person with history of violent behavior or vocalized violent behavior

## **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TYPE IV**

Type IV involves violence connected to personal relationships, including families, friendships, marriages or romantic relationships that spill over into work environments. Traditionally, employees are conditioned to avoid being “too personal” with co-workers. However, the recognizing troubled employees and giving appropriate assistance to help resolve their conflicts can prevent workplace violence.

### **Warning signs**

1. Spousal abuse
2. Intimidating phone calls and phone harassment
3. Stalking
4. Suspicious mail, faxes, pages, electronic mail messages
5. Flowers or gifts delivered to the workplace from uninvited sources
6. Unwelcome visits to the workplace under the guise of business

Relationships within the workplace between coworkers offer additional challenges. If a policy exists prohibiting inter-office romantic relationships, problem indicators may be suppressed for fear of discipline or other negative work repercussions.

Stalking behaviors may necessitate the referral to the victim’s local police. Jurisdictions handle referral or reporting of stalking in different ways. In some jurisdictions, the report filing source is where the act occurs. If an employee is stalked from home, then their local police may be the filing source. If the actions occur at work, then the local police for the business may be the filing source. If the stalking actions impact a state or federal facility, the reporting jurisdiction may be some other enforcement agency other than the local police.





# Prevention Strategies

## PREVENTION OVERVIEW

- A) Management Commitment & Leadership style
- B) Employee Involvement
- C) Zero Tolerance Policy
- D) Pre-hiring checks
- E) Risk Assessment
- F) Crisis Team
- G) Training
- H) Documentation

## A) MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT & LEADERSHIP STYLE

Managers, supervisors and organizational leaders need to be consistently aware that “how” they manage may have a far greater impact on workplace perceptions, behaviors, and overall environment than any skill or knowledge of systems and processes. Their “style” of leading may be the most critical ingredient to a violence prevention program.

### **Suggestions for management**

1. Management seeks to understand the scope and causes of violence in the workplace.
2. Management understands that there is potential for violence in any workplace.
3. Management accepts its share of responsibility in the prevention of violence in the workplace, both moral and legal.
4. Management demonstrates organizational concern for employees’ emotional and physical health.
5. Management understands that excessive stress and strict authoritarian management styles are contributors to workplace stress and possible violence.

### **Labor-management partnership**

1. Top management supports employee involvement and collaboration to prevent violence in the workplace.
2. Through communications and actions, management provides motivation and accountability to all levels of management, supervision and employees.
3. Management makes decision with input from employee leadership.

## **B) EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT**

Both management and employees must actively participate in the safety and health management process (including violence prevention) for it to be effective.

1. Participation and support in determining policies
2. Assisting with risk assessment
3. Helping co-workers deal with stress
4. Communication throughout the organization
5. Input on training needs
6. Recognition of “Warning Signs” indicating that violence is a possibility and an understanding of what to do when these are recognized

## **C) ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY & APPROACH**

### **Elements of a policy**

1. Purpose
2. Definitions
3. Reporting procedure
4. Investigation
5. Disciplinary action

### **Characteristics of a successful company**

- Deal with incidents and warning signs as an operationally accepted practice
- Handle warning signs and indicators consistently and fairly through a response plan and organized referral system



## **D) PRE-HIRING CHECKS**

Before hiring, employment background checks are an important step towards improving overall workplace safety. Verifying certain elements of previous employment can better equip the employer to make the appropriate employment decision. Several options are listed below that can be considered part of the selection process. Each of these options should be reviewed with your legal staff for appropriate implementation, record keeping and administration.

### **Before hiring:**

1. Criminal background check
2. Driving record (if applicable to job)
3. Call previous employers
4. Check references carefully
5. Ask open-ended questions during the interview
6. Verify credentials, certifications, degrees and training received
7. Test for drug use

## **E) RISK ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of assessment (survey, analysis, audit) is recognize and identify any existing or potential hazards for workplace violence. The ultimate goal is to eliminate as many risk areas as possible and establish preventive steps for those vulnerabilities that cannot be eliminated.

A wide range of activities from very informal and casual personal discussion, to formal written surveys can be used to reach your assessment goals. Risk assessment at certain levels can be accomplished by staff members of most organizations. Conversely, some elements of an effective risk assessment should be conducted by security professionals or specialists in the specific area under assessment. Assessment strategies include screening or perception survey, audit, suggestion box, small group discussion, and one-on-one, no-risk discussions.

### **Assessment for Type I (External--mostly robbery)**

1. Workplace security analysis
2. Police reports
3. Communication with neighborhood
4. Customer flow
5. Hours of operation
6. Contingency plan

### **Assessment for Type II (External, but related)**

1. Treatment of customers
2. Training of front-desk personnel
3. Installation of panic-buttons
4. Restricted areas

### **Assessment for Type III (Internal)**

1. Analysis of accident and medical reports
2. Organizational climate (caring, trusting, positive environment)
3. Policies (Fair, consistent, and reasonable)
4. Early identification of potential problems

### **Assessment for Type IV (Relationship)**

1. Evaluation of visitor traffic and limitations
2. Work space design
3. Physical security devices
4. Easily accessible employee assistance programs
5. Escort for after hours employee traffic
6. Parking lot lighting and security
7. Awareness

## **F) CRISIS TEAM - RESPONSE TEAM**

The size, composition, and purpose of a crisis team will depend on the type and size of the organization. Successful teams act as a trusted, fair, and respected group whose purpose has organizational-wide support.

### **Team responsibilities**

1. Represent the entire organization in Workplace Violence management and assessment
2. Serve as liaison to employees in time of crisis and prevention activities
3. Address issues related to policies and procedures, training needs, documentation and vulnerabilities
4. Serve as liaison with investigators

### **Departments or functions represented on the Crisis Team**

1. Human Resources and Public Relations
2. Senior Management
3. Employee representation
4. Health Serves: Medical and EAP
5. Legal, Internal Affairs
6. Security, Facilities management
7. Outside sources: Contract Security, Counseling services

## **G) TRAINING TOPICS**

Organizational training needs are to be determined after collaborative assessment. The purpose is to ensure staff awareness of (a) potential hazards and (b) knowledge of preventive measures. Employee awareness of warning signs and what they should do when/if they view a warning sign should be included in any violence prevention training program.

### **Training topics**

1. Workplace violence prevention policy
2. Risk factors contributing to assaults
3. Ways to protect oneself & co-workers
4. Recognition of violence warning signs (Red Flags)
5. Procedure for reporting incidents
6. Diffusing volatile situations
7. Effective employee management
8. Team building

## **H) DOCUMENTATION**

Effective documentation is essential to the success of a workplace violence prevention program. Accurate and complete records can help employers determine the severity of a specific problem, evaluate methods of controlling the problem, and identify future training needs.

### **Types of documentation**

1. Injuries
2. Incident Reports of Violent acts
3. Security call reports
4. Risk Assessment results
5. Corrective action taken related to employee conduct
6. Training received by each employee

## **OSHA Questions**

OSHA will ask these types of questions to determine if the violence was preventable:

1. Did the employer have direct knowledge of a person's violent tendencies?
2. Was there knowledge of what a reasonable person could have done to prevent the violent act?
3. What is the industry's practice in dealing with this issue?
4. Did the employer take reasonable steps to abate the hazard?

# Workplace Violence Prevention Checklist

## Management Responsibility

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- Yes    No   Management support for harmonious work environment with mutual trust and respect
- Yes    No   Informing employees in advance of significant changes in the workplace
- Yes    No   Research on applicant's employment history prior to hiring
- Yes    No   Employee participation in solving workplace problems, and/or being part of teams which influence workplace conditions/environment
- Yes    No   Supervision of written policies, training, and prevention on premises of workplace violence

## Written procedures/policies

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- Yes    No   Zero tolerance workplace violence policy, including zero tolerance for harassment and intimidation
- Yes    No   Written procedure for responding to workplace violence
- Yes    No   Written procedure for reporting and investigating workplace violence incidents, including disciplinary measures
- Yes    No   Written procedure for the airing of grievances
- Yes    No   Policies which prohibit firearms and other weapons from the premises
- Yes    No   Policies which minimize the amount of cash on hand with signs to announce this to the public
- Yes    No   Written procedure for dealing with hostile customers
- Yes    No   Written procedure for employment termination to avoid disgruntled employees



## Training

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- Yes    No   Trained supervisors who are aware of warning signs for potentially violent behavior in employees
  
- Yes    No   Trained employees who understand how to behave courteously toward customers, clients, and visitors
  
- Yes    No   Trained escorts to accompany employees to their cars
  
- Yes    No   Trained employees who can respond to threatening phone calls and bomb threats, including mail/parcel bombs
  
- Yes    No   Trained employees who understand effective means to deal with conflict reduction and crisis management
  
- Yes    No   Trained employees with skills in interpersonal communication, active listening, and acceptance of criticism

## Prevention on Premises

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- Yes    No   Well-lit and uncluttered business premises, both inside and outside the facility
  
- Yes    No   Secure access to the facility, such as security guards, photo badges, magnetic pass cards, or sign-in policy
  
- Yes    No   Where necessary, bullet-resistant enclosures, silent alarms, surveillance cameras, manual emergency alarms
  
- Yes    No   Police patrolling facility, especially late at night or early morning

This checklist was adapted from the following article:

Kaletsky, Rick. "A Violence Reality Check." *Occupational Health & Safety*, October 1998, 188-190.







## **CITY OF FOREST PARK**

### **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY**

It is important to the City of Forest Park to implement reasonable safeguards to protect the safety and security of its employees. Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on City of Forest Park property will not be tolerated.

Any person who makes substantial threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on City of Forest Park property may be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and may be directed to remain off City of Forest Park premises pending the outcome of an investigation. The City of Forest Park will initiate an appropriate response to violations of this policy, which may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved.

All City of Forest Park personnel are responsible for notifying their respective department head of any threats which they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Even without an actual threat, personnel should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out on a city controlled site, or is connected to city employment. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior. If the department head is not available, personnel should report the threat to the Human Resources Director, or City Manager.

All individuals who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order which lists city locations as being protected areas, must provide to the department head a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order, a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order which is granted, and a copy of any protective or restraining order which is made permanent.

Although all City records (with few exceptions) are subject to public disclosure, the City of Forest Park will handle situations related to this policy with sensitivity and reasonable discretion.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your department head or Human Resources at 595-5204

## VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

(Sample 1)

*The Acme Corporation is committed to supporting the safety of the workplace. Any associate who threatens violence or engages in violence, engages in intimidating behavior, or who violates regulations regarding dangerous materials in the workplace, is in serious violation of our policy. The workplace is defined as all company property, including parking lot, break room, and all public areas such as lobby, and restrooms.*

*Acme Corporation believes that all associates are entitled to a non-threatening workplace where the basic safety of each associate is promoted. **Therefore, any form of violence, whether actual or perceived, will not be tolerated.***

*This includes, but is not limited to:*

- *Disruptive activity in the workplace*
- *Threatening, hostile or intimidating behavior*
- *Possession of a dangerous weapon*
- *Violation of restraining orders*
- *Fighting*
- *Verbal abuse*
- *Stalking*
- *Sabotaging another associate's work*
- *Harmful misuse of equipment or other company property*
- *Any behavior which is perceived as threatening by the recipient*

*Any associate who believes he or she is or has been subjected to threatening or intimidating behavior related to the workplace by a fellow associate, a customer, a family member or other, should report such conduct to the individual(s) specified in the complaint procedure. Complaints of intimidation or violence will be promptly and discreetly investigated. Any associate who violates this policy will be subject to serious disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.*

## VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

(Sample 1 continued)

### **MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS--MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

*Violence, or the threat of violence, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is against stated company policy, and may be considered as unlawful as well. In addition, management is responsible for taking action against threats or acts of violence by company personnel or others (customers/outside vendors, family members or others), regardless of the manner in which the company becomes aware of the conduct.*

*All complaints must be treated as serious violations of company policy and investigated accordingly. It is management's responsibility to show associates that the company is serious about prohibiting and preventing violence in the workplace.*

*If a supervisor becomes aware of any action, behavior, or perceived threat that may violate this policy, the supervisor is responsible for immediately contacting a member of the Crisis Management Team.*

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

- *Complaints of violence or of intimidating behavior should be brought to the attention of the Crisis Management Team. Any of the following may be contacted: Senior Vice President of Compliance, Vice President of Human Resources, or the Director of Security. In addition, depending on the severity of the situation, the CEO may need to be informed.*
- *After the Crisis Management Team has been notified of a complaint, or when it receives knowledge that a situation involving a possible threat of violence exists, then the Team will undertake a through investigation to gather all pertinent facts.*
- *Non-Retaliation--This policy prohibits retaliation against any associate who brings complaints of violent or intimidating behavior or who helps in investigating complaints; the associate will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, nor discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint.*

*After the investigation has been completed, a determination will be made regarding the resolution of the complaint. If a violation of this policy is found, disciplinary action will be taken up to and including termination of employment.*

# VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

(Sample 2)

We wish to make absolutely clear to all PDQ, Inc., associates that our policy on acts and threats of violence is as follows:

## ***THERE WILL BE ZERO TOLERANCE OF ACTS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE IN OUR WORKPLACE.***

**This includes, but is not limited to, all forms of harassment.**

### **Harassment is:**

- ◆ Any form of unsolicited, and/or unwarranted, verbal or physical depreciation of person;
- ◆ Explicit of derogatory statements;
- ◆ Use of profanity, when linked with physical and/or psychological aggression;
- ◆ Any actual, implied or veiled threat, made seriously or in jest;
- ◆ Discriminatory remarks made by someone in the workplace which:

Are offensive to the recipient;

Cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation;

Interfere with the recipient's job performance.

All associates have the right to expect their employer to maintain a place of employment that is free of behavior that can be considered harassing, abusive, disorderly, or disruptive. Management fully intends to abide by the law.

In order to protect the overwhelming majority of excellent associates, we are giving fair warning that each and every act or threat of violence will elicit an immediate and firm response that could, depending on the severity of the incident, include termination from employment at PDQ, Inc.

No one wants to work in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. It is in everyone's interest to have a violence-free environment. We will do whatever it takes to provide that environment.

# VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

(Sample 2 continued)

## VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE MISSION STATEMENT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

### **POLICY**

PDQ, Inc., is committed to a safe, violence-free workplace. Threats or intimidation of associates, vendors, customers will not be tolerated. Any associate who fears for his/her personal safety for any reason should discuss his/her concerns with a member of management. All reported incidents involving the use of physical aggression or threat of aggression against any associate will be immediately investigated and addressed. This includes harassment, stalking, nuisance phone calling, carrying of weapons, etc. Any associate who uses physical aggression or violence against another PDQ, Inc., associate, customer, vendor, etc., will be subject to immediate termination of employment.

### PROCESS

Any associate who has questions or concerns about this policy should contact a member of management at store, regional office, distribution center or home office.

I have read and understand the above policy and agree to do my part in maintaining a violence free workplace.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

# VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

(Sample 3)

DRAFT: Policy on Violence in the Workplace

XYZ is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free from violence or threat of violence. Any violent behavior or behavior that creates a climate of violence, hostility, or intimidation will not be tolerated, regardless of its origin.

Any form of violence or threat of violence, actual or perceived, by a XYZ employee, a customer, or a member of the public, that threatens a XYZ employee or family member must be reported. Violent behavior by an employee, whether management or bargaining unit personnel, may result in discipline, including termination. Violence, threats or intimidation from persons outside the company directed at XYZ employees will be met with an immediate response, including legal action, designed to protect the employee and prevent further incidences.

This policy includes the following behaviors and situations:

- Violent or threatening physical contact (e.g., fights, pushing, physical intimidation)
- Direct or indirect threats
- Threatening, abusive or harassing phone calls
- Possession of a weapon on company property or on a job site
- Destructive or sabotaging actions against company or personal property
- Stalking
- Violation of a restraining order
- High levels of conflict or tension within a work unit
- Threats of suicide

## *Procedure*

**Reporting.** Procedures have been developed to encourage early reporting, support and stress reduction for staff, as well as the prevention of violence. Many situations, if investigated and responded to before they become serious, can be diffused before they result in violence or in damage to employees' health or careers. Any employee can report concerns or incidents to his or her supervisor, superior, personnel representative, or a designated member of the local crisis prevention team.

**Non-retaliation.** This policy prohibits retaliation in any form against an employee who brings a complaint of violence, intimidation or harassment.







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*Unless otherwise noted, all these materials can be found in the BWC Division of Safety & Hygiene Libraries. Call (614) 466-7388.*

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CONFLICT COMMUNICATION SKILLS 1995, 15 minutes

CONFLICT ON THE LINE: A CASE STUDY 1983, 14 minutes

CONFLICT RESOLUTION 1992, 27 minutes

CONFLICT RESOLUTION 1996, 10 minutes

DEALING WITH CONFLICT 1992, 21 minutes

MURDER 9 TO 5 1994, 48 minutes

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE 1985, 24 minutes

RESOLVING CONFLICTS 1982, 22 minutes

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE 1995, 10 minutes

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE, PART 1, 1996, 14 minutes

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: CUSTOMER SERVICE AND FIELD PERSONNEL 1994,  
26 minutes

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: EMPLOYEE AWARENESS 1994, 22 minutes

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: RECOGNIZING & DEFUSING AGGRESSIVE  
BEHAVIOR 1994, 26 minutes

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM 1994, 27 minutes

YES YOU CAN! 1995, 115 minutes

# Violence in the Workplace

## Internet Web Sites

### GOVERNMENT SITES

Occupational Safety & Health Administration's Workplace Violence page  
<http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/index.html>

National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)  
Search the site using the term "violence" for reports & statistics  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html>

U.S. Dept. of Justice  
Search using keywords "workplace violence"  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics  
Statistical report on Workplace Crime, 1992-96  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/wv96.htm>

U.S. General Services Administration, Federal Protective Service  
Guidelines for federal employees on dealing with threatening situations  
<http://www.gsa.gov/pbs/fps/fps.htm>

Washington (State) Dept. of Labor and Industries  
Publication: "Workplace Violence: awareness and prevention for employers and employees"  
<http://www.wa.gov/lni/pa/workvil.htm>

The Santa Clara County Committee on Workplace Violence  
Publication: "Workplace Violence: Preparedness Guide for County Employers"  
[http://www.growing.com/nonviolent/protocol/wv\\_pgce.htm](http://www.growing.com/nonviolent/protocol/wv_pgce.htm)

### ORGANIZATIONS

International Assn. of Chiefs of Police  
Publication: "Combating Workplace Violence"  
<http://www.amdahl.com/ext/iacp/pslc.index.html>

Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse  
Click on "Workplace Violence" in the Table of Contents  
<http://www.mincava.umn.edu/>

Flint (Mich.) Public Library  
Resource list and bibliography  
<http://www.flint.lib.mi.us/fpl/resources/violence.html>

Family Violence Prevention Center  
Domestic Violence in the Workplace information  
<http://www.igc.apc.org/fund/workplace>



**From “Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers.” OSHA Publication 3148 (1996). (p. 1 of 5)**

Periodic inspections for security hazards include identification and evaluation of potential workplace security hazards and changes in employees' work practices that may lead to compromising security.

Most workplaces may require assessment for all three types of work place violence, this is (sic)

- **TYPE I: Criminal or robbery,**
- **TYPE II: Assault from clients or customers, and**
- **TYPE III: Employee, supervisor or work related abuse.**

Please use the checklist to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards.

Evaluation for all types of workplace security hazards include assessing the following factors. **YES** answers indicate a potential for serious security hazard risk.

- Y N** Is this industry frequently targeted for violent behavior, i.e. robbery, assaults on staff?
- Y N** Is the area in which the business is located known for regular occurrences of violence?
- Y N** Have violent acts occurred in any way on the premises or in the conduct of business?
- Y N** Do customers or clients assault, threaten, yell, push, or verbally abuse staff members or use racial or sexual remarks?
- Y N** Employees have not been trained by employer to recognize and handle threatening, aggressive, or violent behavior?
- Y N** Is violence thought to be “part of the job” by some managers, supervisors and/or employees? (e.g. police, community health workers, psychiatric hospital workers)



*From OSHA Draft Guidelines for Health Care Workers (p. 2 of 5)*

**Inspections for Type I** workplace security hazards (retail establishments or those who might experience robbery or criminal activity) include assessing the following questions. **NO** answers indicate areas where corrective action should be taken if appropriate for the establishment.

- Y **N** Is the entrance to the building easily seen from the street and free of heavy shrub growth?
- Y **N** Are security cameras and mirrors placed in locations that would deter robbers or provide greater security for employees?
- Y **N** Are signs posted notifying the public that limited cash, no drugs, or other valuables are kept on the premises?
- Y **N** Drop safes or time access safes are utilized.
- Y **N** Lighting is bright in the parking and adjacent areas
- Y **N** There is a second room in which one or more employees may be working unknown to the attacker.
- Y **N** Windows and view outside and inside are clear of advertising or other obstructions.
- Y **N** The cash register is in plain view of customers, police cruisers, etc. to deter robberies.
- Y **N** Employees work with at least one other person.
- Y **N** The facility is closed during the night or during the high risk hours of 9 p.m. - 6 am.
- Y **N** Emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services are posted in areas where employees have access to a telephone with an outside line.
- Y **N** Employees have been trained in the proper response during a robbery or other criminal act.
- Y **N** Employees have been trained in procedures to use for reporting suspicious persons or activities.

***From OSHA Draft Guidelines for Health Care Workers (p. 3 of 5)***

Inspections for **Type II** workplace security hazards (hospitals, security guards, police, risk from clients/patients) include assessing the following factors. NO answers indicate areas where corrective action should be taken if appropriate for the establishment.

- Y N Access and freedom of movement within the workplace is restricted to only those who have a legitimate reason for being there.
- Y N The workplace security system is adequate, such as is functioning door locks, secure windows, physical barriers and containment systems.
- Y N Employees or staff members have never been assaulted, threatened, or verbally abused by recipients of service.
- Y N Medical and counseling services have been offered to employees who have been assaulted.
- Y N Alarm systems such as panic alarm buttons, or personal electronic alarm systems have been installed to provide prompt security assistance.
- Y N There is regular training provided on correct response to alarm sounding.
- Y N Alarm systems are tested on a monthly basis to assure correct function.
- Y N Security guards are employed at the work place.
- Y N Personal protective devices are provided and must be worn or used.
- Y N Closed circuit cameras and mirrors are used to monitor dangerous areas.
- Y N Hand held or other metal detectors are available and used in the facility.
- Y N Employees have been trained in recognition and control of hostile behavior, escalating aggressive behavior, and management of assault behavior.
- Y N Employees do have the option of adjusting work schedules to use the “Buddy System” for visits to clients in areas where they feel threatened.
- Y N Cellular phones or other communication devices are made available to field staff for requesting aid.
- Y N Vehicles are maintained on a regular basis to insure reliability and safety.
- Y N Equipment is provided that may add to the security officer’s safety and ability to do the job, such as closed circuit cameras, silent alarms.
- Y N Employees work with others where assistance is not immediately present, in detention, in caregiver or other potentially hazardous work settings.

*From OSHA Draft Guidelines for Health Care Workers (p. 4 of 5)*

Inspection for **Type III** workplace security hazards including disgruntled employees, former employees or acquaintances of employees include assessing the following factors. **NO** answers indicate areas where corrective action should be taken if appropriate for the establishment.

- Y N** Employees, supervisors and managers have been effectively informed about the establishment's anti-violence policy.
- Y N** It is known how employees feel about management treatment of employees or personnel policies.
- Y N** Employees, supervisors and managers have been trained to recognize warning signs of potential workplace violence.
- Y N** Access to and freedom of movement within the workplace by non-employees is restricted, including persons who have threatened employees.
- Y N** Employees are never threatened by supervisors or other employees with physical or verbal abuse.
- Y N** Threats and violent acts, damage, or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace are always handled effectively by management, i.e.; recorded, investigated, and action taken to correct.
- Y N** There is a policy to assure that employee disciplinary and discharge procedures are handled fairly and effectively, recognizing the employee's rights, and every effort's made to assist the employee in transition.
- Y N** There is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other mental health assistance provided for employees who may be experiencing personal problems, who may have exhibited aggressive behavior, or who have made other employees fearful of being assaulted by the employee.

When you complete this checklist, **YES** answers on the first seven questions indicate that there is a serious potential for violence to occur. **NO** answers in the remainder of the questions indicate areas in which there is a need to improve on policies or procedures or take corrective action to adequately prevent violence in the workplace.

***From OSHA Draft Guidelines for Health Care Workers (p. 5 of 5)***

Procedures to take to investigate incidents of workplace violence may include:

1. Review all previous incidents involving violence including threats and verbal abuse.
2. Visit the scene of an incident as soon as possible.
3. Interview the injured or threatened employee and witnesses.
4. Examine the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident, including any reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator.
5. Determine the cause (s) of the incident, i.e. unlawful entry, unresolved grievance, alarm system malfunction, barriers not effective, training not provided etc.
6. Determine locations, people, or activities that pose the highest risk, e.g. persons with a history of violence, stations with close, and possible emotional contact with clients, exchange of money, drugs, or isolated services.
7. Take corrective action (s) to prevent the incident from recurring.
8. Record the findings and corrective action taken including medical treatment or psychological counseling provided.
9. Record in OSHA Log or Injury & Illness if applicable and report to OSHA if a fatality or catastrophe occurs.



# Combating Workplace Violence

## Guidelines for Employers and Law Enforcement

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International Association of Chiefs of Police  
515 N. Washington St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2357

# **Combating Workplace Violence**

## **Guidelines for Employers and Law Enforcement**

This document was prepared by the Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC) for the Private Sector Liaison Committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Funds for reproduction and distribution of the document have been provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance under grant number 95-DD-BX-0166. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Department of Justice.

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PERSEREC staff responsible for project research and document preparation include:

Howard W. Timm  
Callie J. Chandler

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## Section 1. Introduction

Violence in the workplace can have devastating effects on the productivity of organizations and on the quality of life of employees. However, relatively few employers have established effective programs to combat this problem. Similarly, while the police role in combating workplace violence is increasing, few departments have modified their existing training, policies, or practices to reflect those changes. The purpose of this document is to provide employers and law enforcement with guidelines on the steps they should consider to help reduce certain workplace violence hazards.

The document focuses on violence committed by non-strangers (e.g., coworkers, bosses, clients, domestic partners) within a common worksite (e.g., factory, office, shop, construction site). It is important to note that many forms of workplace violence are not addressed, such as robbery, terrorism, and assaults while employees are working off-site. It is crucial that employers also take into consideration the possibility of those acts occurring and take action to minimize the hazards stemming from those crimes. Contact your local police department, insurance representative, OSHA office, security professional, or any of the applicable sources on page 22 for more information on how to reduce those hazards.

The guidelines for employers and police departments are presented in separate sections. The law enforcement guidelines were developed with input from over 300 chiefs and command level officers representing large, medium, and small departments. The employer guidelines also reflect input from hundreds of subject matter experts and practitioners, including business owners; managers; supervisors; lawyers; and security, personnel, human resource, threat assessment, and employee assistance specialists.

The guidelines can be used as benchmarks for helping assess the state of an organization's current policies and practices. However, not every recommendation may be appropriate for all organizations. If a suggestion has not already been implemented, the reader should consider whether that recommendation (or some derivation of it) would be appropriate for their organization.

Case examples and other illustrative information have been included to help readers better understand the issues being addressed. In addition, a model policy on workplace violence is offered for possible use by organizations without existing policies.

Employers and police share a leadership responsibility in combating workplace violence. By working together, police and employers can be far more effective in this effort. In addition, this partnership may serve other common interests, such as 1) improving the level of cooperation on community policing and business crime prevention efforts, and 2) increasing the extent to which employers and law enforcement share their resources. It is hoped that these guidelines will play a useful role in furthering this partnership.

## Reasons for Establishing a Program

Some organizations may not see the need for creating a program to reduce the hazards of violence in the workplace, especially if they have never experienced an incident of violence. The following reasons are why it is important for all employers to consider the recommendations included in this document.

- Businesses are beginning to realize the high cost of just one violent incident. These costs can include medical and psychiatric care as well as potential liability suits, lost business and productivity, repairs and clean-up, higher insurance rates, consultants' fees, increased security measures and--most important of all--the death or injury of valued employees and coworkers.
- Threats and other violent, abusive behaviors are no longer being tolerated in the workplace.
- Executives, professionals, and administrative personnel are no longer immune to acts of violence in the workplace.

- Layoffs, increased workload, having to do more with less, and other unpopular changes in the work environment have been associated with increased risk for violence.
- Recent reports and surveys suggest that workplace violence impacts large numbers of employers and employees (see the sidebar for more details).

### ***Impact of Workplace Violence***

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), each year almost 1 million individuals become victims of violent crime while working. The BJS reports that about 500,000 victims of violent crime in the workplace lose an estimated 1.8 million workdays each year and over \$55 million in lost wages, not including days covered by sick and annual leave.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief: Violence and Theft in the Workplace, NCJ-148199, July 1994

- It's the right thing to do. Employers have both a moral and a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace for their employees, clients and visitors (refer to page 15).

These issues are spurring employers to develop plans for addressing workplace violence. When compared to the potential costs of an incident, these plans are a relatively inexpensive way to reduce the risk of violence and to minimize its impact.

The following case study illustrates how an organization, never before touched by violence, learned the value of being prepared for an incident.

Case 1  
*Violence Catches Company Unprepared*

Prior to the 1980s most companies did not have threat management plans for dealing with workplace violence. Such was the case with a major computer-manufacturing corporation that was forced by two shocking incidents to develop the full corporate workplace violence program that is now in place.

The first event involved an employee who had been fired from the company some years before. Nobody understands why, after so many years, the employee decided to re-focus his unhappiness on the company. However, one day he got into his car and drove to his old building. He drove the car up onto the sidewalk and into the lobby, jumped out, and shot and killed a security guard. He shot at a few others, killing two, and then ran upstairs and began shooting randomly. He remained in the building some 6 or 7 hours, essentially holding all the employees hostage while SWAT teams and other negotiators talked with him. (Eventually, he surrendered. Tried and convicted, he committed suicide in prison sometime later. )

Although company management could scarcely believe that this could be more than an isolated event, they rushed to put together emergency plans throughout the company. Officials and employees alike were stunned when only three months later a second incident occurred at another location. This person had just been fired and had a particular grudge against the company department which he believed was responsible for his termination.

Many changes were initiated as a result of both these cases. Examples of defensive changes are: extending the protective perimeter by preventing cars from driving up to the building, hardening lobbies by creating a second barrier within the lobby, installing alarms, providing building maps, and putting in place special telephones for use in hostage negotiations. A whole range of contingency plans have now been developed worldwide to help the company cope with either preventing workplace violence or dealing better with its often tragic consequences.

- Consider utilizing local associations and community organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, security organizations, and law enforcement groups, as a resource in order to stay abreast of crime trends and prevention techniques. Communicate to your employees those issues and trends which pose a significant threat.
- Limit former employees' access to the workplace as appropriate.
- Develop policies regarding visitor access within facilities. For example, if warranted, require visitors to sign in and out at reception, wear an identification badge while on the business premises, and/or be escorted.

### *Institute and Review Security Procedures*

Periodic review of security policies and procedures will help minimize your organization's vulnerability to violence and other forms of crime.

- Conduct security surveys at scheduled intervals to help determine whether modifications should be made. Four examples of improvements that might be considered during a security survey are:
  - a) Improved lighting in and around the place of work (including parking lots);
  - b) Arranging escorts for employees who are concerned about walking to and from the parking lot;
  - c) Having reception areas that can be locked to prevent outsiders from going into the offices when no receptionist is on duty; and
  - d) When appropriate, having more than one employee on the premises.
- Use, maintain, and regularly review appropriate physical security measures, such as electronic access control systems, silent alarms, metal detectors, and video cameras in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

### ***Use a Common Sense Approach To Risk Management***

Your organization's program to reduce the hazards of violence in the workplace should be based on common sense, reflecting: 1) the potential impact of one or more violent incident, 2) the likelihood of violent incidents occurring, and 3) the cost and effectiveness of the different measures you could take to reduce your risk. Your risk assessment should consider the likelihood of incidents occurring given the individuals, community, and type of organization involved. Among the sources of information available to help you make those determinations are 1) your organization's incident history, 2) police data concerning the type and rate of violent acts in your area, and 3) published reports comparing the violence rates across different types of organizations.

### *Improve Internal/External Communications*

Employees should have a means to alert others in the workplace to a dangerous situation (see Case 2) and to provide information requested by emergency responders.

- If appropriate, establish an internal emergency code word or phone number similar to 911.

## Section 2. Guidelines for Employers

**A**fter reading these guidelines employers should have a better understanding of the most important steps they can take to minimize the impact of workplace violence and threats. This section concludes with a description of all employers' legal obligations and potential liabilities regarding workplace violence issues.

### I. Pre-Incident Violence Prevention and Preparation

#### *Pre-Employment Screening*

Employers who conduct effective background checks can often improve productivity and reduce the number of personnel prone to exhibiting violent behaviors.

- Use a job application form that includes an appropriate waiver and release (permitting the employer to verify the information reported on the application). Prior to hiring any applicant, check references and inquire about any prior incidents of violence. In addition, conduct thorough background checks and use drug screening to the extent practicable.
- Also, evaluate the need for screening contract personnel who work at your facility. Vendors and service organizations whose personnel make frequent visits or spend long periods of time working at your facility should certify that those individuals meet or exceed your firm's safety and security requirements. Conversely, contractors who assign personnel to work at other organizations' facilities should also

consider the host firm's safety and security policies and practices.

- Recommend to legislative bodies that access to conviction records in all states be made available to businesses when conducting their background investigation process.

#### *Take Advantage of Community Resources*

There are many programs and resources in the community that can help you develop your workplace violence plans. Some examples follow.

- Invite local police into your firm to promote good relations and to help them become more familiar with your facility. The police can explain what actions they typically take during incidents involving threats and violence. Such visits can help your firm work better with police when incidents do occur.
- Use law enforcement and security experts to educate employees on how to prevent violence in the workplace. Such experts can provide crime prevention information, conduct building security inspections, and teach employees how to avoid being a victim.

Case 2  
**Former Client Exacts Revenge**

On a bright summer afternoon a middle-aged man rode up the elevator of a downtown high rise. He was toting a black satchel on a dolly similar to the kind lawyers use except that his contained two pistols, a handgun and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. This was the day he planned to get even with the firm which had formerly provided him legal counsel.

No one took notice of the man as he strode down the hall to the glass conference room. The people inside received no warning before he suddenly fired upon them. The gunman continued his rampage, shooting those who attempted to warn their colleagues. He sought out and shot employees who tried to hide and others who were trapped in their offices. As SWAT teams surrounded the floor his two pistols jammed, and the desperate gunman took his own life with the remaining weapon.

The unsuspecting firm learned a hard lesson: that even the most seemingly sheltered environments are not immune to violent crime. They have since instituted better access control procedures and improved internal warning systems among other precautions.

- Place lists of contact persons, crisis management plans, evacuation plans, and building plans where they can be made available to emergency responders. Keep important telephone numbers in several places (including offsite locations), available to all appropriate managers and employees.
  - Implement procedures for your organization to become a drug-free workplace. This includes prohibiting unauthorized use or possession, or being under the influence of alcohol at work.
  - Disseminate to all employees a policy of zero tolerance to threats or actual violence at the workplace. For example, discipline or terminate every threat-maker if the complaint is substantiated.
  - Establish a policy applicable to everyone employed by the company or on company property, including the company parking lot, prohibiting the possession of weapons which have not been authorized by your organization.
- Organizations that do not tolerate drug abuse or aggressive interaction lower the risk of workplace violence.
- Organizations should inform employees about policies concerning drugs, violent acts, and possession of weapons so that employees know exactly what is expected of them.

Employers may use the model policy on the following page to develop their own company policy on violence and threatening behavior in the workplace.

### ***Model Policy for Workplace Threats and Violence***

Nothing is more important to (Company Name) than the safety and security of its employees. Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on (Company Name) property will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will lead to disciplinary action which may include dismissal, arrest, and prosecution.

Any person who makes substantial threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on (Company Name) property shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and shall remain off (Company Name) premises pending the outcome of an investigation. (Company Name) will initiate an appropriate response. This response may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved.

No existing (Company Name) policy, practice, or procedure should be interpreted to prohibit decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring or a life threatening situation from developing.

All (Company Name) personnel are responsible for notifying the management representative designated below of any threats which they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Even without an actual threat, personnel should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out on a company controlled site, or is connected to company employment. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior. If the designated management representative is not available, personnel should report the threat to their supervisor or another member of the management team.

All individuals who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order which lists company locations as being protected areas, must provide to the designated management representative a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order, a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order which is granted, and a copy of any protective or restraining order which is made permanent.

(Company Name) understands the sensitivity of the information requested and has developed confidentiality procedures which recognize and respect the privacy of the reporting employee(s).

The designated management representative is:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Employee and Manager Training*

In order for policies and procedures concerning workplace violence to be effective, they must be implemented in conjunction with appropriate employee training.

- Train managers and other selected individuals on appropriate ways to handle employee termination's, layoffs, and discipline. Examples include appropriate use of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselors and outplacement services; providing managers with sensitivity and aggression management training; and, when possible, assessing violence potential of individuals prior to termination and taking appropriate measures such as hiring additional security.
- Suggest local police encourage victims of threats and violence outside the workplace to notify their employers

about the incident when warranted so their employers can take appropriate measures to help protect them and their coworkers from possible future incidents of violence at the work site. It is recommended that employers reinforce this message to their employees. Upon notification, employers should provide receptionists and other front-line personnel having a need to know a description or picture of the alleged offender and inform them what actions they should take in the event that individual seeks entry or contact.

- Have available for your employees information about the potential for violence in the workplace, how to recognize the early warning signs of a troubled or potentially violent person, how to respond to those individuals, and how to report such incidents. See the following two side bars for details on identifying and conducting yourself around potentially violent individuals.

#### ***Warning Signs of Potentially Violent Individuals***

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of these warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent but does not necessarily indicate that an individual will become violent. A display of these signs should trigger concern as they are usually exhibited by people experiencing problems.

- Irrational beliefs and ideas
- Verbal, nonverbal or written threats or intimidation
- Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence
- Expressions of a plan to hurt himself or others
- Externalization of blame
- Unreciprocated romantic obsession
- Taking up much of supervisor's time with behavior or performance problems
- Fear reaction among coworkers/clients
- Drastic change in belief systems
- Displays of unwarranted anger
- New or increased source of stress at home or work
- Inability to take criticism
- Feelings of being victimized
- Intoxication from alcohol or other substances
- Expressions of hopelessness or heightened anxiety
- Productivity and/or attendance problems
- Violence towards inanimate objects
- Steals or sabotages projects or equipment
- Lack of concern for the safety of others



## ***Personal Conduct to Minimize Violence***

Follow these suggestions in your daily interactions with people to de-escalate potentially violent situations. If at any time a person's behavior starts to escalate beyond your comfort zone, disengage.

### **Do**

- Project calmness: move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently.
- Be an empathetic listener: encourage the person to talk and listen patiently.
- Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.
- Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture and position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings. Indicate that you can see he or she is upset.
- Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area.
- Establish ground rules if unreasonable behavior persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behavior.
- Use delaying tactics which will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup).
- Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller, more manageable problems.
- Accept criticism in a positive way. When a complaint might be true, use statements like "You're probably right" or "It was my fault." If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.
- Ask for his recommendations. Repeat back to him what you feel he is requesting of you.
- Arrange yourself so that a visitor cannot block your access to an exit.

### **Do Not**

- Use styles of communication which generate hostility such as apathy, brush off, coldness, condescension, robotism, going strictly by the rules or giving the run-around.
- Reject all of a client's demands from the start.
- Pose in challenging stances such as standing directly opposite someone, hands on hips or crossing your arms. Avoid any physical contact, finger-pointing or long periods of fixed eye contact.
- Make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening. Notice the tone, volume and rate of your speech.
- Challenge, threaten, or dare the individual. Never belittle the person or make him/her feel foolish.
- Criticize or act impatiently toward the agitated individual.
- Attempt to bargain with a threatening individual.
- Try to make the situation seem less serious than it is.
- Make false statements or promises you cannot keep.
- Try to impart a lot of technical or complicated information when emotions are high.
- Take sides or agree with distortions.
- Invade the individual's personal space. Make sure there is a space of 3' to 6' between you and the person.

### *Prevention Programs*

Companies need to have programs in place to assist troubled employees and to address managerial concerns before violence or threats arise.

- Provide confidential employee assistance programs (EAP) to deal with emotional, substance abuse, marital, and financial problems. Or, provide employees with a list of relevant community resources. Employees, supervisors, and managers should be actively encouraged to use these services.
- Conduct exit interviews when employees retire, quit, or are transferred or terminated to identify potential violence-related security or management problems.

### *Reporting Procedures*

All employees should know how and where to report violent acts or threats of violence.

- Encourage employees to report and establish avenues of communication so they can do so without fear of reprisal or criticism:
  - a) Incidents of threats, harassment, and other aggressive behavior (see the sidebar for more details);
  - b) Conditions where employees are subjected to excessive or unnecessary risk of violence; and
  - c) Suggestions for reducing risk of violence or improving negative working conditions, such as establishing a telephone hot-line, identifying specific points of contact in the organization for addressing those issues, having a suggestion box or computer bulletin board, or providing an ombudsman.

### ***Recognizing Inappropriate Behavior***

Inappropriate behavior is often a warning sign of potential hostility or violence. When left unchecked it can escalate to higher levels. Employees who exhibit the following behaviors should be reported and disciplined in accordance with your company policy:

- Unwelcome name-calling, obscene language, and other abusive behavior
- Intimidation through direct or veiled verbal threats
- Throwing objects in the workplace regardless of the size or type of object being thrown or whether a person is the target of a thrown object
- Physically touching another employee in an intimidating, malicious, or sexually harassing manner. That includes such acts as hitting, slapping, poking, kicking, pinching, grabbing, and pushing
- Physically intimidating others including such acts as obscene gestures, "getting in your face" and fist-shaking

- Establish a policy to assure that reports which are submitted from outside the company, concerning potentially violent people who are likely to be present at your worksite are routed to the appropriate manager and then investigated. The types of information collected during an investigation are discussed in the side bar below.

### ***Threat Incident Report***

Company policy should require employees to report all threats or incidents of violent behavior which they observe or are informed about to the Designated Management Representative (DMR). The DMR should take the steps necessary to complete a threat incident report as quickly as possible, including private interviews of the victim(s) and witness(es). The report will be used by the Threat Management Team (see box on page 12) to assess the safety of the workplace, and to decide upon a plan of action. The following facts should be included in the threat incident report:

- Name of the threat-maker and his/her relationship to the company and to the recipient
- Name(s) of the victims or potential victims
- When and where the incident occurred
- What happened immediately prior to the incident
- The specific language of the threat
- Any physical conduct that would substantiate an intention to follow through on the threat
- How the threat-maker appeared (physically and emotionally)
- Names of others who were directly involved and any actions they took
- How the incident ended
- Names of witnesses
- What happened to the threat-maker after the incident
- What happened to the other employees directly involved after the incident
- Names of any supervisory staff involved and how they responded
- What event(s) triggered the incident
- Any history leading up to the incident
- The steps which have been taken to ensure that the threat will not be carried out
- Suggestions for preventing workplace violence in the future

Elements of the threat incident report and any subsequent actions relating to the incident should be recorded in a tracking system for use by the DMR and the Threat Management Team. Such systems range from simple card files to commercially available relational databases. The tracking system as well as all investigative files, should be kept secure and maintained separately from other records.

### *Prepare a Threat Management Plan*

It is important to prepare a threat management plan so that when a threat occurs everyone will know that there is a policy and will understand what to do. The plan might include:

- Designating a threat management team;
- Providing guidance concerning liaison with outside assistance;
- Providing guidance developed in concert with local authorities for collecting and preserving evidence, including interviews of involved parties;
- Managing of communications regarding the incident, for example, media relations, internal communications, and possible use of a rumor control desk;
- Managing the release of sensitive information where appropriate;
- Assigning responsibilities for contacting the families of victims;
- Managing clean-up and repairs;
- Making decisions about returning to work;
- Notifying customers and suppliers about changes in orders;
- Providing employees and their families with information about their benefits; and
- Managing operations and trauma care after the crisis.

The threat management team is a critical component of every successful threat management plan. For more information about the composition and role of the threat management team, see the following box.

### ***Threat Management Team***

The threat management team consists of representatives from security, human resources, legal, medical services (or EAP) and safety. It may include external consultants such as psychologists, psychiatrists or threat assessment experts.

The primary responsibility of this team is to develop a plan of action to resolve bona fide threats or acts of violence. Team members provide liaison with outside resources such as police, threat assessment professionals, and trauma teams. In addition, team members may be responsible for managing violence prevention programs, including needs assessment and awareness training.

## **II. Addressing Violent or Threatening Incidents**

### *Use All Available Resources*

When an incident occurs, bring together all the necessary resources, which may include help from outside the company.

- When a serious threat is made, consult the sources available to you to help evaluate the level of risk posed by the threat-maker.
- When appropriate, obtain fitness-for-duty evaluations of employees exhibiting seriously dysfunctional behaviors at the workplace.
- Maintain an internal tracking system of all threats and incidents of violence.

- When a threat has been made or an incident has occurred, evaluate the situation and, if warranted, notify the potential victims and/or police (see Case 3 below).

**Case 3**  
***Small Business Threatened by Former Employee***

The partners of a firm never dreamed that a former member of their small family-like business would ever turn against them.

One afternoon an anonymous caller made a death threat against one of the managers. The recipient of the call recognized the caller's voice as a former long-term employee who had recently been laid off by the firm because of a downturn in business.

The police were phoned immediately and began their investigation by contacting the suspected former employee. The man indicated his despair over the loss of his job and quickly confessed to making the threatening phone call.

Fortunately, intervention occurred before the perpetrator had a chance to carry out his threat. However, the remaining employees, already in a state of low morale due to the layoffs, were terribly shaken by the incident. Use of sick leave increased and productivity was negatively affected for several weeks following the threat.

***Evaluate Security After a Threat***

The threat management team should review risks and determine what additional security measures, if any, should be put in place after an incident.

- If warranted, provide increased work-site protection when serious threats of violence have been made. Such protection might include requesting additional police patrols, hiring security guards, and/or alerting organizations or people who might be affected.
- Consider the costs and benefits of providing increased protection to threatened employees. This could include changing their phone numbers, relocating them, loaning them a cellular phone, or providing them with a quick response distress button or information about where this device can be obtained.
- Seek guidance and training on what procedures should be taken to screen mail and packages after a threat has been made or after a large-scale layoff. Contact the U.S. Postal Service or local police for guidance.
- After a violent incident evaluate the potential for further violence at your workplace and reassess your threat management plan.
- Counsel potential victims about the various civil and criminal options available to them, such as obtaining a restraining order.

***Considerations Regarding Restraining Orders and Other Interventions***

The potential reactions of the offender need to be considered when deciding whether or not to seek a restraining order. At a minimum, additional security precautions should be taken if the offender is likely to respond negatively to the intervention chosen, especially during the period immediately following that intervention.

### III. Managing the Aftermath of an Incident

#### *Trauma Plan*

Helping employees with the psychological consequences of workplace violence is the humane thing to do. It also greatly helps to reduce financial losses caused by absence, loss of productivity among employees, and workers' compensation claims.

After a violent incident, provide information and offer counseling services to employees and their families which may include:

- Providing a debriefing 24 to 72 hours after a serious incident of violence to include all affected employees so that the cause of the violence and expectations can be discussed, a plan of action can be addressed, and those needing further counseling can be identified;
- Providing a group debriefing after a serious incident of violence for immediate coworkers in how to communicate with the victim/coworker who is re-entering the job after absence; and
- Providing ongoing follow-up treatment, as needed.

The case which follows describes how a company successfully coped with a terrible incident because it had made plans in advance.

#### **Case 4** ***Preparation Pays Off***

A major manufacturing company on the West Coast with over 300,000 employees has over the years been developing a coordinated management plan for dealing with workplace violence.

During the incident, one employee shot his lover and wounded another individual before turning the gun fatally on himself. This incident occurred at a plant where training had recently been received and an action plan developed. Although in this particular case the death and injury probably could not be *prevented*, at least the planned system for coping with the aftermath worked flawlessly: police were immediately on the scene, next of kin promptly informed, press releases written, the plant closed temporarily, and employees and relatives counseled. Only thorough training and advanced planning could account for the excellent manner in which the aftermath was handled.

#### *Support Prosecution of Offenders*

To prevent further incidents from occurring and to show their support of the victims, employers should support prosecution of offenders.

- Accommodate employees after a violent incident so they can make court appearances and work with the prosecution.
- Cooperate with law enforcement authorities to help identify and prosecute offenders through the use of any means at your disposal, such as crime stoppers, rewards.

## IV. Legal Obligations and Duties of Employers

The duty of an employer to provide a reasonably safe workplace may arise from a variety of federal or state statutes, regulations, or judicial decisions. Employers seeking to avoid liability for acts of workplace violence should become familiar with the legal requirements. The following highlights provide a foundation for the legal audit of your current business policies and practices for reducing workplace violence.

### *Workplace Safety*

- Compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and similar state laws, may contribute positively to reduction of the risk of workplace violence.
- Many state courts have ruled that an employer is liable for the dangerous acts of employees if such harm was foreseeable. The employer must use reasonable care in hiring, training, supervising and retaining employees.
- Case law in some jurisdictions suggests that the employer may be liable for the negligent acts of independent contractors, where such contractors are incompetent, negligently selected, or engaged in abnormally dangerous activities.
- Under both federal and state statutes, the employer may be liable for failure to intervene in situations of harassment of employees by supervisors or management, and in situations involving coworkers where the employer was aware of the harassment.

- The employer may be liable for the acts of an employee who is intoxicated or otherwise a risk to others, if the employer exercises control over the employee and is negligent in exercising that control.
- Employers are expected to use reasonable security precautions and other measures to minimize the risk of foreseeable criminal intrusion (based upon the prior experience of the employer, its location in a dangerous area, or industry victimization base rates).
- Employers should be cautious about reducing the level of security because of financial pressures. To avoid or reduce liability the employer should first assess whether the level of security risk justifies reducing security measures.

### *Training Issues*

- Various federal and state laws or case law may require the employer to establish written policy and procedures dealing with harassment, as well as the training of employees as to company policies prohibiting sexual or racial harassment, fighting, and the use of drugs or alcohol in the workplace.
  - The employer may avoid or reduce liability for acts of violence in the workplace where it is shown that the employer conducted training for employees on the recognition of warning signs of potentially violent behavior, and on precautions which may enhance the personal safety of the employee at work.
-

### *Duty to Warn*

- In some jurisdictions, an employer, employment counselor, or therapist may have a duty to warn an identified employee, spouse, or third party of a threat made by another to do bodily harm to that person.

### *Nondiscrimination*

- Under state and federal law, the employer must refrain from retaliation against employees who express their concerns regarding unsafe working conditions, such as threats of violence.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and related state statutes prohibit employers from discriminating against qualified individuals with physical or mental disabilities. An employee could claim that his violent or threatening behavior was the result of a disability and request reasonable accommodation from the employer. While federal law and judicial decisions provide that an employer may disqualify an employee who is a danger to self or others, the employer may be obliged to investigate a claim of disability to determine whether dismissal is necessary for the protection of the employee or others in the workplace.

### *Respecting Employee Rights*

- In the event that an employer warns employees of an individual's threat of violence, the employer could be liable for defamation if the employer is subsequently proved to be mistaken. The employer can minimize this liability by conducting a prompt investigation of all allegations and by notifying only those individuals who have a need to know of the risk.
- An employee terminated for having violent tendencies could file a wrongful discharge suit against the employer if the employee disputes his employer's characterization. A thorough investigation of complaints against an employee should be conducted prior to termination. Employers should consider suspension of the employee with pay while the charges are being investigated. The employer might also consider offering the employee a chance to resign as an alternative to termination.
- The employer must respect the privacy rights and confidentiality rights of employees during any investigation.

The above list of legal obligations is not meant to be comprehensive. To find out more about the requirements in your state, refer to your state statutes or ask your legal counsel.



## Section 3. Guidelines for Law Enforcement Agencies

Fifteen years ago police agencies provided little or no service to the victims of domestic violence because such intervention was not considered appropriate. Today nearly every police department has a policy, procedures and resources dedicated to addressing domestic violence. Workplace violence warrants a similar response from law enforcement, given the rise of violent crime by nonstrangers in the workplace, the heightened concern of employers, the high risk for injury associated with these crimes, and the inappropriateness of using traditional police strategies when confronting multiple-victim workplace shooting situations.

Many police executives have concluded that their existing domestic violence programs provide a useful framework for structuring new policies and procedures concerning workplace violence. This strategy was used by many of the police officials who developed the following guidelines for law enforcement agencies. These guidelines should help police address workplace violence in their communities without overtaxing departmental resources. Employers may also wish to read this section so that they can better understand how police agencies might assist them in combating workplace violence.

### I. Pre-Incident Violence Prevention and Preparation

#### *Policy and Organization*

Large, medium and small law enforcement agencies--should consider the following policies for combating violence in the workplace.

- Encourage police executives to implement exemplary violence prevention policies and practices within their own department.
- Encourage the formation of regional law enforcement coalitions to develop and coordinate prevention resources and provide liaison to assist employers.

- Work closely with other law enforcement groups, prosecutors, and legal advisors to keep abreast of changes affecting the prosecution of workplace violence cases.

#### *Police Training*

Workplace violence issues can be incorporated into police training in the same way as domestic violence.

- Incorporate into police academy curricula training on workplace relationships and the conditions that result in violence.
- Incorporate into general in-service training exercises recognition of the causes of workplace violence, conflict resolution technique training, workplace violence scenarios, and police response guidelines.

- Provide and improve officer training in workplace violence and conflict resolution techniques.
- Train chiefs and officers to handle liaison with employers.

### *Police Services to the Public*

Police agencies should be prepared to assist employers in the following ways:

- Provide employers with information concerning police department resources.
- Provide employers with these guidelines and examples of when to contact the police department in matters involving workplace violence.
- Assist employers in their efforts to improve their physical security and the prevention of acts of violence.

### *Seek Cooperation from Employers*

Encourage employers to keep law enforcement informed of potential problems and to be prepared with information that will aid responding officers.

- Request advance warnings from employers and unions of pending strikes or other events affecting security.
- Encourage employers to maintain current threat management plans, evacuation and building plans, and lists of contact people placed in a location where the documents will be immediately available to the law enforcement officers who respond to an incident.

### *Encourage the Following Preventive Measures*

Police chiefs and crime prevention officers frequently make presentations to community groups. Listed below are several items that could be covered in such presentations to address concerns about workplace violence.

- Recommend that employers, in consultation with their local law enforcement agency, design policies and procedures for handling threats or assaults made against or by their employees.
- Encourage and cooperate with business and community organizations to compile, regularly update, and distribute a list of community resources, such as law enforcement and crime prevention services, mental health services, and women's shelters, for use by their members and employees.
- Encourage local newspapers and telephone companies to list current community resources in a centralized location.
- Recommend that employers implement procedures to have their organization be a drug-free workplace.
- Encourage employers to adopt a zero tolerance policy for violent behavior or threats among their employees. Make the policy part of their new employee orientation sessions, and enforce it. Refer to the example of a model policy on page 7.

- Encourage employers to obtain a thorough work history from all prospective employees, and inquire about periods of unexplained employment; conduct as thorough background and work-related reference checks as possible, including checking court records and other repositories; and thoroughly interview job candidates before offering them a position.
- Suggest employers become educated on state, local, and federal laws applicable to assault, domestic violence, trespassing, stalking, and threats.
- Encourage employers to train their employees in conflict resolution techniques.
- Recommend that employers offer employee training in personal security awareness, to avoid being victimized.
- Suggest employers establish an employee assistance referral system for dealing with potentially violent individuals that not only helps the troubled employee, but also serves to protect the other members of the organization.
- Encourage employers to form or participate in an incident resolution team for prevention, intervention, and dealing with the aftermath of incidents.
- Strongly encourage employers to report threats and incidents of violence to their local law enforcement agency.
- Encourage employers to maintain an internal tracking system of threats and incidents (refer to the threat incident report elements listed on page 11).

## II. In-Progress Violent or Threatening Incidents

Law enforcement should take the following types of actions after an initial act of violence or a threat has occurred.

- Conduct local criminal history checks of reported threat-makers when a criminal investigation is conducted.
- Have a police officer make contact with a reported violent threat-maker.
- Advise the employer, victims, or potential victims how to obtain restraining or protection orders or other victim services.

### III. Managing the Aftermath of an Incident

#### *Policy and Organization*

The following policy and organizational measures improve police responsiveness to workplace violence as well as to other forms of violent crime.

- Encourage coordination between the agencies that deal with workplace violence.
- Encourage the development and use of regional Critical Incident Stress Debriefing teams for first responders (see side bar for more information).
- Undertake a coordinated critique of the department's response after each serious incident of workplace violence.

#### *Police Services to the Public*

Law enforcement plays a crucial role in disseminating information after serious incidents of violence in the workplace. These items concern ways to improve performance in that area.

- Provide the employer with a central point of contact in the department who will answer questions and address concerns.
- Coordinate with the affected organization and other agencies to assist victims' families in locating survivors of a violent incident.

#### ***Critical Incident Stress Debriefing***

Following a threat or an act of violence in the workplace, employees, witnesses and their families often suffer from stress-related ailments such as insomnia, depression, anger, headaches and ulcers. These conditions translate into higher rates of absenteeism, loss of productivity and higher rates of turnover for the employer. Much of this suffering and economic loss can be reduced if the affected individuals receive debriefings from experienced counselors 24 to 72 hours after the traumatic incident.

The purpose of such a debriefing is to provide employees and others affected by the event with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about what happened and how it was handled. It also gives the debriefing team the chance to educate employees about the symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and to identify individuals who might need further counseling.

#### *Encourage Employers to Take the Following Actions*

Police should encourage employers to follow the recommendations listed below to help minimize the impact of an incident and prevent further violence.

- Encourage employers to use Critical Incident Stress Debriefing teams for employees and other victims affected by workplace violence.

- Encourage employers and labor organizations to participate in aftermath debriefings.
- Encourage the department and the employer to coordinate news releases.
- Encourage employers to support their employees in the prosecution of violent crime incidents.

### ***Reducing vs. Displacing Violence***

Many of the steps often taken to reduce violence in the workplace do not prevent violence, they displace it. For example, a person who is screened out from being hired by one employer will probably be hired by another employer who has a less thorough screening procedure.

In order to actually *reduce* violence, communities need to prevent children from developing into violent adults. Some children get involved with violence because they lack adequate supervision and support, especially after school. Offering these kids an alternative to gangs, drugs and other criminal activities can help to steer them away from a life of violence.

Law enforcement agencies should encourage local organizations to participate in community violence prevention programs. Organizations can assist in many ways that need not be expensive. Taking advantage of school, church, public housing, and park district facilities that are underutilized during certain periods is one way to keep down the costs. Peer programs where participants help provide instruction (more advanced pupils teaching the less advanced) can be both successful and cost-effective. Some businesses provide their employees and managers opportunities to donate their time as paid or unpaid volunteers. Another way organizations can help is by donating services, equipment or funds to a program. Contact any of the applicable resources listed in the next section for more information on joining or starting a violence prevention program in your community.

## Where to Get Additional Information

1. For information regarding a wide variety of topics, including violence issues and delinquency prevention.  
  
National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Tel. 800-851-3420  
Fax 301-251-5212  
E-mail [askncjrs@aspensys.com](mailto:askncjrs@aspensys.com)  
World Wide Web site at <http://ncjrs.aspensys.com:81/ncjrshome.html>
2. PAVNET (Partnerships Against Violence Network) Online provides information on promising programs, technical assistance, teaching materials, and funding sources to Internet users. Point your browser to: "[gopher://cyfer.esusda.gov:70/11/violence](http://gopher://cyfer.esusda.gov:70/11/violence)". The information in PAVNET Online is also available on diskette from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 800-851-3420.
3. For listings of violence prevention and treatment programs available to the public, topical database searches, information on violence-related curricula and videos, etc. :  
  
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence  
University of Colorado at Boulder  
Institute of Behavioral Science  
Campus Box 442  
Boulder, CO 80309-0442  
Tel. 303-492-1032  
E-mail [IBS@Colorado.edu](mailto:IBS@Colorado.edu)
4. Nonprofit corporation established by the parents of four teenagers who were murdered at work. Provides brochures, videotapes and other information regarding the risks of workplace violence.  
  
"We Will Not Forget SAJE, Inc."  
P.O. Box 650124  
Austin, TX 78765  
Tel. 512-448-6972
5. The USC Center for Crisis Management has conducted a national survey on workplace violence, and conducts management training for preventing and/or responding to workplace violence. A summary report of the research may be obtained by contacting the Center.  
  
Center for Crisis Management  
Graduate School of Business  
University of Southern California  
Bridge Hall 200  
Los Angeles, CA 90084-1421  
Tel. 213 740-8504
6. The IACP sponsors a number of publications concerning topical crime prevention issues such as combating drug crimes in the workplace.  
  
The International Association of Chiefs of Police  
515 N. Washington St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2357  
(703) 836-6767



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

*National Crime Victimization Survey*

December 2001, NCJ 190076

# Violence in the Workplace, 1993-99

Detis T. Duhart, Ph.D.  
*BJS Statistician*

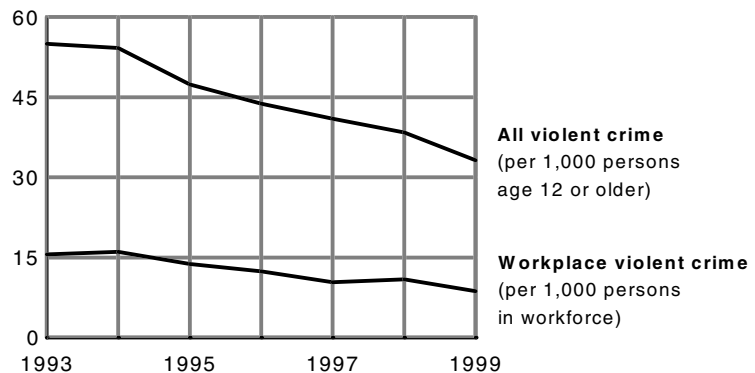
Between 1993 and 1999 in the United States, an average of 1.7 million violent victimizations per year were committed against persons age 12 or older who were at work or on duty, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). In addition to the nonfatal violence measured by the NCVS, about 900 work-related homicides occurred annually. Workplace violence accounted for 18% of all violent crime during the 7-year period.

Of the occupations examined, police officers experienced workplace violent crime at rates higher than all other occupations (261 per 1,000 police officers). College or university teachers were victimized the least among occupations examined (2 per 1,000 college teachers).

This report focuses on nonfatal violence in the workplace — rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault — as measured by the NCVS. In addition, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics are included to describe the nature of workplace homicide. All tables describe nonfatal victimizations occurring while at work or on duty, unless otherwise noted as including homicide.

## Highlights

**1993-99, violent crime in the workplace declined 44%, compared to a 40%-decrease in the overall rate of violent crime**



- Of the occupations examined, police officers experienced workplace violent crime at rates higher than all other occupations (261 per 1,000 persons).
- The workplace violent crime rate for whites (13 per 1,000 in the workforce) was 25% higher than the black rate (10 per 1,000) and 59% higher than the rate for other races (8 per 1,000). This contrasts with overall violent crime (including both workplace and non-workplace violence) for which blacks have the highest rates.
- Most workplace victimizations were intraracial. About 6 in 10 white and black victims of workplace crime perceived their assailant to be of the same race.
- Private sector and Federal Government employees were victimized at similar rates.
- Elementary school teachers experienced workplace violence at a rate lower than junior high and high school teachers (17 versus 54 and 38 per 1,000 in the workforce, respectively).
- Almost 4 of every 10 robberies occurring while the victim was at work or on duty were committed against persons in retail sales or transportation.
- More than 80% of all workplace homicides were committed with a firearm. From 1993 to 1999 the number of workplace homicides declined 39%.

## Violence in the workplace

Rape and sexual assault, robbery, and homicide accounted for a small percentage (6%) of all workplace violent crime occurring between 1993 and 1999 (table 1). The majority of workplace violent incidents, almost 19 of every 20, were aggravated or simple assaults. (See *Glossary* for definitions.) Violent crime was experienced by persons at work or on duty at a rate of 13 per 1,000 persons in the workforce. The simple assault rate (9 per 1,000 persons in the workforce) was more than 4 times the rate of all other categories of violent workplace crime. Homicides were less than 1% of all workplace violent crimes.

### Trends in workplace violence

The percent decreases in the rates of workplace violence and of violent crime overall were similar between 1993 and 1999 (*Highlights* figure). There were 16 workplace violent victimizations (per 1,000 persons in the workforce) in 1993 compared to 9 in 1999 — a 44% decrease. During the same period, overall violent crime victimization rates fell significantly (40%) from 55 to 33 per 1,000 persons. Each category of

#### The National Crime Victimization Survey

The NCVS is the Nation's primary source of information on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization. One of the largest continuous household surveys conducted by the Federal Government, the NCVS collects information about crimes, both reported and not reported to police. The survey provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and the characteristics of violent offenders.

This report updates *Workplace Violence, 1992-96*, a BJS Special Report, July 1998, NCJ 168634. Findings from the NCVS are also on the BJS website:

[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/).

**Table 1. Average annual number, rate, and percent of workplace victimization by type of crime, 1993-99**

Crime category	Average annual workplace victimization	Rate per 1,000 persons in the workforce	Percent of workplace victimization
All violent crime	1,744,300	12.5	100%
Homicide	900	0.01	0.1
Rape/Sexual assault	36,500	0.3	2.1
Robbery	70,100	0.5	4.0
Aggravated assault	325,000	2.3	18.6
Simple assault	1,311,700	9.4	75.2

Sources: Homicide data are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault data are from the NCVS.

**Table 2. Workplace violence victimization rate per 1,000 persons in the workforce, by crime category, 1993-99**

	Rate of violent victimization in the workplace per 1,000 persons in the workforce				
	Total	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
1993	15.6	0.5	0.7	3.2	11.3
1994	16.1	0.1*	0.7	3.1	12.2
1995	13.8	0.3	0.7	2.3	10.5
1996	12.5	0.4	0.5	2.5	9.2
1997	10.4	0.2	0.4	2.2	7.6
1998	11.0	0.2	0.3	1.9	8.6
1999	8.7	0.2*	0.3	1.4	6.8

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

violent workplace crime was lower in 1999 than it had been in 1993 (table 2).

For example, persons working or on duty experienced 7 simple assaults per 1,000 persons in the workforce during 1999 versus 11 in 1993.

**Table 3. Average annual rate of workplace victimization, by demographic characteristics of the victims, 1993-99**

Characteristic of victim	Rate per 1,000 in the workforce
<b>All</b>	12.5
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	15.0
Female	9.6
<b>Race</b>	
White	13.0
Black	10.4
Other	8.2
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic	9.7
Non-Hispanic	12.7
Unknown	19.9
<b>Age</b>	
12-19	11.5
20-34	16.0
35-49	12.3
50-64	7.8
65 or older	3.9
<b>Marital status</b>	
Never married	14.1
Married	11.3
Widowed	4.7
Divorced or separated	15.8

### Characteristics of victims of workplace violence

Males were victimized more than females for both workplace violent crime and violent crime overall during 1993-99. The violent crime victimization rate for working or on duty males was 56% higher than the female rate (15 versus 10 per 1,000 in the workplace) (table 3). Overall, 18% of violent crimes were workplace victimizations; 22% of all male and 15% of all female violent crimes were committed while the victim was working or on duty.

Gender	Percent of violent victimizations		
	All	Workplace	Non-workplace
All victims	100%	18%	82%
Male	100	22	78
Female	100	15	85



**Table 4. Average annual rate and percentage of workplace crime, by gender, race, and crime category, 1993-99**

Characteristic of victim	Violent victimizations in the workplace							
	Rape and sexual assault		Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	Rate	Percent	Rate	Percent	Rate	Percent	Rate	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		100%		100%		100%		100%
Male	0.1	20.0	0.7	70.2	3.1	71.4	11.2	64.1
Female	0.5	80.0	0.3	29.8	1.5	28.6	7.3	35.9
<b>Race</b>		100%		100%		100%		100%
White	0.3	88.4	0.5	80.7	2.4	85.6	9.9	89.0
Black	0.2*	9.0*	0.7	16.0	2.1	10.4	7.4	8.9
Other	0.2*	2.6*	0.4*	3.3*	2.5	4.0	5.1	2.0

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding. Percentages are of total workplace victimization; rates are per 1,000 persons in the workforce. \*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

Although NCVS data have consistently shown that blacks experience violent crime at rates higher than whites and persons of other races, violent workplace crime rates were highest among whites. While working or on duty, whites experienced 13 workplace victimizations per 1,000 in the workforce, a rate 25% higher than the black rate (10 per 1,000 in the workforce) and 59% higher than the rate among persons of "other" races.<sup>1</sup> The black workplace victimization rate was similar to that of Hispanics (10 per 1,000 in the workforce) and slightly higher than the rate for persons of "other" races.

Persons age 20-34 experienced workplace violence at a rate higher than any other age group considered. Workers age 12-19 and 35-49 experienced workplace crime at similar rates (12 per 1,000 in the workforce).

<sup>1</sup>In this report, "other races" and "others" are defined as Asians, Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, Alaska Natives, and American Indians considered together.

Workplace victimization rates for never married and divorced or separated persons were similar, and both were higher than the rates for married or widowed persons.

**Type of crime and gender**

Except for rape and sexual assault, males experienced all categories of workplace violent crime at higher rates and percentages than did females (table 4). About two-thirds of all robberies, aggravated assaults, and simple assaults in the workplace were committed against males. The rates of victimization (per 1,000 in the workforce) for these crimes were at least 54% higher for males when compared to those for females.

**Type of crime and race**

Whites experienced more than four-fifths of all rapes and sexual assaults (88%), robberies (81%), aggravated assaults (86%), and simple assaults (89%) occurring in the workplace.

Per capita rates of aggravated assault in the workplace were similar for all racial categories. The rate of workplace simple assault for whites was higher than that for blacks and persons of other races. Blacks and whites were robbed while working or on duty at similar rates (1 per 1,000 in the workforce).

**Average annual rate of victimization in the workplace, by occupation, 1993-99**

Occupation was measured by categorizing the victim's reported job at the time of the victimization into broad occupational fields. (See *Methodology* on page 11 for definitions.) Between 1993 and 1999 the rates of workplace violence for all occupational categories fell, and all the declines were statistically significant except for mental health (table 5). The percentage decline in the workplace victimization rate for the law enforcement field (55%) was somewhat greater than the decline in percentage among mental health employees (28%).

**Table 5. Rate of violent victimization in the workplace, by occupational field, 1993-99**

	Rate per 1,000 persons in each occupation						
	Medical	Mental health	Teaching	Law enforcement	Retail sales	Transportation	Other occupation
1993	20.3	64.4	25.8	163.1	21.9	20.6	8.1
1994	16.7	63.7	19.3	156.4	22.8	24.1	9.6
1995	16.0	56.7	15.4	157.2	22.2	13.8	7.4
1996	11.8	63.9	16.6	125.9	20.4	12.6	7.3
1997	8.4	39.7	14.9	122.0	20.5	15.4	5.1
1998	9.2	49.3	18.9	88.5	16.2	18.3	6.6
1999	10.0	46.1	12.4	74.1	14.1	8.4	5.3
1993-99 Percent change	-51%	-28%	-52%	-55%	-36%	-59%	-35%

**Average annual rate of violent victimization in the workplace, by occupation, 1993-99**

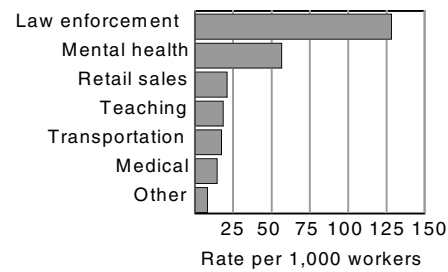


Figure 1

Persons employed in law enforcement were victimized while at work or on duty at the highest rate of all occupations examined — followed by persons working in the mental health field (figure 1). Retail sales workers were victimized in the workplace at a somewhat higher rate (20 per 1,000 in the workforce) than those employed in the teaching, transportation, or medical field.

Among the occupational groups examined, police officers accounted for 11% of all workplace victimizations and were victimized while at work or on duty at a rate higher than all other occupations examined (261 per 1,000), while college or university teachers were victimized the least (2 per 1,000) (table 6).

The workplace violent crime victimization rate for nurses was not significantly different from that for physicians; however, nurses experienced workplace crime at a rate 72% higher than medical technicians and at more than twice the rate of other medical field workers (22 versus 13 and 9, respectively). Professional (social worker/psychiatrist) and custodial care providers in the mental health care field were victimized while working or on duty at similar rates (68 and 69 per 1,000, respectively) — but at rates more than 3 times those in the medical field.

**Table 6. Average annual rate of violent victimization in the workplace, by occupation of the victim, 1993-99**

Occupational field of victim	Violent victimizations in the workplace		
	Number	Rate per 1,000 workers	Percent of total
<b>Total</b>	12,328,000	12.6	100%
<b>Medical</b>			
Physician	71,300	16.2	0.6%
Nurse	429,100	21.9	3.5
Technician	97,600	12.7	0.8
Other	315,000	8.5	2.6
<b>Mental health</b>			
Professional	290,900	68.2	2.4%
Custodial	60,400	69.0	0.5
Other	186,700	40.7	1.5
<b>Teaching</b>			
Preschool	32,900	7.1	0.3%
Elementary	262,700	16.8	2.1
Junior high	321,300	54.2	2.6
High school	314,500	38.1	2.6
College/university	41,600	1.6	0.3
Technical/industrial	7,400	12.2*	0.1*
Special education	102,000	68.4	0.8
Other	169,800	16.7	1.4
<b>Law enforcement</b>			
Police	1,380,400	260.8	11.2%
Corrections	277,100	155.7	2.3
Private security	369,300	86.6	3.0
Other	359,800	48.3	2.9
<b>Retail sales</b>			
Convenience store	336,800	53.9	2.7%
Gas station	86,900	68.3	0.7
Bartender	170,600	81.6	1.4
Other	1,383,100	15.3	11.2
<b>Transportation</b>			
Bus driver	105,800	38.2	0.9%
Taxi cab driver	84,400	128.3	0.7
Other	350,500	11.7	2.8
<b>Other</b>	4,720,100	7.0	38.3%

Note: Rates are calculated using population estimates from the NCVS for occupations, 1993-99. The total number of victimizations in this table and all other tables with detail for occupation differs from the total in tables without occupational detail because of the way teacher victimization was computed. See *Methodology*, page 11. Details may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology*, page 11.

Except for junior high school teachers, the workplace victimization rate for persons employed in special education facilities was highest among teachers. Elementary school teachers experienced workplace violence at a rate lower than that for junior high and high school teachers (17 versus 54 and 38 per 1,000 in the workforce, respectively). Junior high school teachers' workplace violent crime rate was somewhat higher than that of high school teachers.

Private security workers' workplace violent crime rate was the lowest of all law enforcement workers (87 per 1,000 private security workers). Within the retail sales field, bartenders were victimized while working at a rate similar to that of gas station attendants and somewhat higher than that of convenience store workers. Within the transportation field, taxi cab drivers were victimized while working or on duty at the highest rate.

**Table 7. Average annual rates of aggravated and simple assault in the workplace, by occupation, 1993-99**

Occupational field	Violent victimizations in the workplace				Ratio of simple to aggravated assault	
	Total assault	Aggravated assault		Simple assault		
		Number	Rate per 1,000	Number		Rate per 1,000
<b>All assault</b>	11,579,400	2,286,900	2.3	9,292,500	9.5	4:1
Medical	878,700	96,200	1.4	782,500	11.4	8:1
Mental health	495,700	75,100	7.7	420,600	43.2	6:1
Teaching	1,211,200	121,300	1.7	1,089,900	14.9	9:1
Law enforcement	2,348,500	548,400	29.2	1,800,100	95.8	3:1
Retail sales	1,833,700	420,600	4.2	1,413,100	14.1	3:1
Transportation	455,800	115,100	3.5	340,700	10.2	3:1
Other	4,355,900	910,300	1.4	3,445,600	5.1	4:1

Note: Rates are per 1,000 persons in the workforce.

*Assault, by occupation*

Simple and aggravated assaults accounted for 94% of all workplace violent victimizations. There were 4 simple assaults for every aggravated assault occurring while the victim was at work or on duty (table 7). The rate at which persons in law enforcement experienced aggravated assault (29 per 1,000 in the workforce) was more than 3 times the rate for all other occupational fields. The workplace aggravated assault rate among mental health workers was somewhat higher than the rate among retail sales employees and significantly higher than the rate for the medical, teaching, transportation, or other fields.

Mental health workers experienced simple assault at rates higher than all other occupational fields except law enforcement; persons working in the law enforcement field experienced simple assault at a rate at least twice that of all other occupational fields.

*Robbery, by occupation*

Almost 4 of every 10 robberies occurring while the victim was at work or on duty were committed against persons in the retail sales or transportation field (table 8). Transportation workers were robbed at a higher rate than any other occupational field reported (3 per 1,000 in the workplace).

**Employers of workplace violence victims**

For every 1,000 State, city, or local government employees, there were 33 workplace violent crimes experienced between 1993 and 1999 (table 9). The victimization rate of these workers was highest when considering type of employer, while the self employed were victimized the least (7 per 1,000). Private company and Federal Government employees were victimized at similar rates. The rate of workplace

**Table 8. Average annual rate of robbery in the workplace, by occupation, 1993-99**

Occupational field	Robbery in the workplace		
	Number	Percent of total	Rate per
			1,000 workers
<b>All robbery</b>	490,900	100%	0.5
Medical	8,200	2*	0.1*
Mental health	9,300	2*	1.0*
Teaching	32,300	7*	0.4*
Law enforcement	15,600	3*	0.8*
Retail sales	100,700	21	1.0
Transportation	82,600	17	2.5
Other	242,300	49	0.4

Note: Details may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

victimization for government agency employees — Federal, State, city, and local combined — (29 per 1,000) was higher than the rate of victimization among private company employees and the self employed.

**Table 9. Employers of workplace violence victims, 1993-99**

Type of employer	Average annual workplace	Rate per 1,000 persons in the victimization workforce
Total	1,743,400	12.5
Private company	987,600	9.9
Government	612,800	28.6
Federal	53,800	12.1
State/city/local	559,000	33.0
Self-employed	112,900	7.4
Other	30,200	11.0

**Table 10. Time of violent victimization in the workplace, by occupation of victim, 1993-99**

Time of occurrence	Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace							
	All workplace crime	Medical	Mental health	Teaching	Law enforcement	Retail sales	Transportation	Other
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Day (6 a.m.-6 p.m.)	59.5	52.2	71.1	91.2	38.3	48.7	57.3	67.3
Night (6 p.m.-6 a.m.)	35.7	43.5	22.0	4.9	54.8	47.6	37.8	28.5
Do not know	4.8	4.3	7.0	3.9	6.9	3.7	4.9	4.2

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

**Characteristics of victimization**

*Time of victimization*

Overall, more workplace crimes occurred between noon and 6 p.m. than in any other 6-hour period of the day.

Time of occurrence of violent crime in the workplace	Percent of victimizations
<b>Day</b>	59.5%
6 am-noon	21.6
Noon-6 p.m.	37.9
<b>Night</b>	35.7%
6 p.m. to midnight	24.7
Midnight-6 a.m.	11.0
Did not know	4.8%

About 55% of all workplace crimes occurring against employees in the law enforcement field were committed at night. Law enforcement was the only field experiencing more workplace crime at night (between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.) than during the day (between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.) (table 10). Retail sales workers experienced workplace crime at similar percentages regardless of the time of their shift.

*Victim's reaction to attack*

More than three-quarters of all workplace violent crime victims did not physically resist (no resistance, unarmed confrontation, and nonconfrontational tactics during the attack).<sup>2</sup>

Victim's reaction to assailant	Violent victimizations in the workplace, 1993-99	
	Number	Percent
Total	12,328,000	100%
No physical resistance	9,535,400	77.3
Threatened or attacked offender	333,200	2.7
Unknown method	2,459,400	19.9

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Three percent of workplace violence victims defended themselves by threatening or attacking their assailant with a firearm or other weapon.

Law enforcement officers victimized while working or on duty were more likely to threaten or attack their assailant with a weapon or firearm than any other victims of workplace violence (9% of all workplace crimes committed against them).

Occupational field	Victims of workplace violence who threatened or attacked the offender with a weapon	
	Number	Percent
Medical	0*	--
Mental health	0*	--
Teaching	4,600*	0.4%*
Law enforcement	218,700	9.2
Retail sales	31,200	1.6
Transportation	12,800*	2.4*
Other	65,900	1.4

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

<sup>2</sup>Actions such as keeping still during the incident, yelling for help, attempting to appease or persuade the offender, and bargaining with the offender are all classified as "no physical resistance."

*Victim's injury*

Twelve percent of all workplace violence victims sustained injuries from the incident (table 11). Of those injuries sustained from workplace violence incidents, about 10 out of 11 were minor injuries.<sup>3</sup> Fifty-three percent of all injured victims were not treated or did not receive medical care for injuries sustained, while 26% received treatment from a medical office, clinic, or hospital.

<sup>3</sup>Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, chipped teeth, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization.

**Table 11. Injury from workplace violence and treatment received, 1993-99**

Injury type and treatment	Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace
<b>Uninjured</b>	88.2%
<b>Injured</b>	11.8
<b>Type of injury, as percent of all victims</b>	
Serious	1.2
Minor	10.2
Other	0.4
<b>Treatment, as percent of injured</b>	
Injured but not treated	53.0
Treated at scene/home	14.8
Treated at medical office, clinic, or hospital	26.2
Treated at other location	3.7
Hospitalized 1 night or more	2.1*
Did not know location	0.2*

Note: Minor injuries include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, chipped teeth, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Serious injuries include gunshot or knife wounds, broken bones, loss of teeth, internal injuries, loss of consciousness, and undetermined injuries requiring 2 or more days of hospitalization. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

**Table 12. Weapon present during victimizations in the workplace, 1993-99**

	Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace
Weapon present	20.7%
Firearm	8.1
Knife	5.7
Other*	5.7
Unknown	1.2
No weapon present	72.6%
Presence not known	6.7%

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.  
\*Blunt objects such as rocks, clubs, and blackjacks.

**Weapon use**

Armed assailants committed a fifth of all workplace crimes (table 12). Armed assailants were more likely to use a firearm than a knife or other weapon such as rocks, clubs, bottles, or other objects (8% versus 6%, respectively). Transportation workers were victimized on the job by offenders with a weapon at a percentage somewhat higher (32%) than any other occupational field.

Victim's occupational field	Percent of workplace victims victimized by offender with a weapon
Transportation	31.7%
Retail sales	23.3
Law enforcement	23.2
Other	22.0
Mental health	14.9
Teaching	10.9
Medical	10.5

**Characteristics of offenders as reported by victims**

Although males made up 48% of the 1993-99 population, they were the offender in more than four-fifths of all workplace crime. Females were the offender less often than males (13% of all workplace crimes) and comprised 52% of the population during the period (table 13).

Males were more likely to be victimized by males than by females in workplace violence. Males committed about 9 out

of 10 male victimizations. In workplace violence against females, the offender was also more likely to be a male than a female. The percentage of males victimizing females (71%) was more than twice the percentage of females victimizing females (25%).

Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace:  
Gender of victim

Gender of offender	Male	Female
Male	88.5%	70.8%
Female	6.4	25.2
Unknown	5.1	4.0

Whites made up 84% of the 1993-99 population and were the offender in 55% of all workplace victimizations. Blacks comprised 12% of the 1993-99 population and were the assailant in 30% of all workplace crime. Most victimizations were intraracial for blacks and whites. In about 6 of every 10 workplace violence incidents involving a white or black victim and offender, the offender was perceived to be of the same race as the victim.

Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace: Race of victim

Race of offender	White	Black	Other
White	58.2%	25.5%	40.4%
Black	27.0	58.6	35.3
Other	9.0	8.7	21.0
Unknown*	5.9	7.2	3.2

\*Includes groups with offenders of more than one race.

In addition, the percentages of black and white victims who perceived their offender to be of a different race were similar. Persons of other races were victimized by blacks and whites at similar percentages while working or on duty.

Between 1993 and 1999 persons age 30 or older, when compared to younger persons, were perceived to have committed the highest percentage (43%) of crimes occurring at work or on duty (table 13). About a fifth of workplace offenders were perceived to be younger than age 20. A lone offender committed more than 8 of every 10 workplace crimes.

**Table 13. Demographic characteristics of offender(s) committing workplace violence, as reported by victims, 1993-99**

Characteristic of the offender	Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace
<b>Gender</b>	100%
Male	82.3
Female	13.0
Male and female	2.0
Unknown	2.7
<b>Race</b>	100%
White	54.7
Black	30.2
Other	9.2
More than one race	1.8
Unknown	4.0
<b>Age</b>	100%
Under 17	13.5
18 to 20	7.0
21 to 29	26.1
30 or older	43.0
Mixed ages	5.0
Age unknown	5.3
<b>Number of offenders</b>	100%
One	85.7
Two	5.9
Three	2.5
Four or more	3.3
Number unknown	2.6

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

About a third of victims of workplace violence believed the offender was drinking or on drugs at the time of the incident. About 36% of workplace victims did not know if the offender had been drinking or if the offender was on drugs at the time of the incident. Victims perceived that more than a quarter of all workplace violence offenders had not been drinking or were not on drugs.

Percent of workplace victims perceiving whether the offender was drinking or using drugs

Total	100%
No	27.4
Yes	35.1
Did not know	35.8
Unknown	1.7

**Table 14. Perceived offender use of drugs or alcohol, by occupation of victims of violence in the workplace, 1993-99**

Victim occupation	Percent of offenders perceived to be using alcohol or drugs				
	Total	Yes	No	Did not know	Unknown
Medical	100%	35.0%	37.0%	26.5%	1.4%*
Mental health	100	14.4	67.9	15.0	2.7*
Teaching	100	7.6	54.7	37.0	0.7*
Law enforcement	100	46.8	28.1	23.5	1.6
Retail sales	100	30.8	20.5	47.6	1.1*
Transportation	100	11.5	31.3	56.2	0.9*
Other	100	23.1	35.8	38.9	2.2

Note: Details may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

Law enforcement and retail sales were the only occupations for which the offender was perceived to have used alcohol or drugs more than they were perceived to have not used alcohol or drugs (table 14). A higher percentage of offenders of workers in the mental health field were perceived to have not been drinking or on drugs than the offenders of workers in any other occupational field.

Workplace violence victims were more likely to be victimized by a stranger than by someone they knew. In more than half of all workplace victimizations, a stranger was the perpetrator. About 1% of all workplace crime was committed by a current or former boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse — an intimate — of the victim.

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of workplace violence
Total	100%
Intimate	1.1
Other relative	0.5
Casual acquaintance	39.4
Stranger	55.6
Do not know	3.5

Workers in the mental health field and teachers were the only occupations more likely to be victimized by someone they knew than by a stranger (table 15). Law enforcement employees were victimized by a stranger more than any other occupation; about three-quarters of all law enforcement victimizations were committed by a stranger.

### Who reports workplace victimizations to the police

Workplace victimizations against males were equally likely to be reported as not reported to the police (table 16). In contrast, workplace victimizations against women were less likely to be reported. Of the 4 million workplace crime incidents committed against females from 1993 through 1999, 40% were reported to the police.

Workplace violence was reported to the police in similar percentages, regardless of race or Hispanic origin. Less than half of all workplace violence against whites was reported to the police. When comparing the percentage of reported and not reported victimizations for blacks, other races, and Hispanics, the apparent differences for these groups were not statistically significant.

Workplace crime incidents in which the victim sustained an injury were reported to the police more than those workplace incidents occurring without injury to the victim (62% versus 44%, respectively). Workplace victimizations in which the victim was injured were more likely to be reported to the police than not reported.

**Table 15. Victim-offender relationship in violent victimizations in the workplace, by victim occupation, 1993-99**

Victim's occupational field	Percent of violent workplace victimizations in which offender was —				
	Total	Known	Stranger	Victim unsure	Unknown relationship
Medical	100%	36.4%	56.0%	0.8%	6.8%
Mental health	100	68.7	24.6	0.4	6.3
Teaching	100	68.6	19.5	1.8	10.2
Law enforcement	100	13.4	73.2	1.4	12.0
Retail sales	100	25.5	52.3	1.0	21.2
Transportation	100	28.2	50.8	0.8	20.2
Other	100	47.2	35.7	1.8	15.3

**Table 16. Workplace violence reported to the police, by victim characteristic, 1993-99**

Victim characteristic	Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace —			
	Total	Reported to the police	Not reported	Unknown whether reported
<b>All victims</b>	100%	46.3%	52.1%	1.6%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	100%	49.6%	49.1%	1.3%
Female	100	40.2	57.7	2.1
<b>Race</b>				
White	100%	46.3%	52.2%	1.5%
Black	100	45.1	52.3	2.7
Other	100	50.1	49.9	0
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	100%	47.0%	51.8%	1.1%
Non-Hispanic	100	46.2	52.2	1.6
Other	100	48.9	48.8	2.3
<b>Victim injury</b>				
Not injured	100%	44.2%	54.2%	1.5%
Injured	100	61.6	36.4	2.1

## Crimes reported to the police

Rape and sexual assaults were reported to the police at the lowest percentage (24%) when compared to other violent crimes in the workplace. The percentage of robberies and aggravated assaults reported to the police were similar. These crimes were reported to the police at a higher percentage than were other workplace violent crimes. About 4 in 10 simple assaults sustained while working or on duty were reported to the police.

Category of violent victimization in the workplace	Percent reported to the police
Rape/sexual assault	23.6%
Robbery	71.4
Aggravated assault	64.3
Simple assault	41.1

More than 936,000 of the nearly 2 million workplace crimes committed yearly were not reported to the police. About 56% of all victimizations not reported to the police were reported to another official (table 17). About 5% of the workplace crimes not reported to the police were not reported because the victim believed the police could or would not help.

**Table 17. Reasons for not reporting workplace victimization to the police, 1993-99**

Reason for not reporting to police	Violent victimizations in the workplace	
	Average annual number	Percent
Total not reported	936,600	100%
Reported to another official	524,700	56.0
Not important enough	146,000	15.6
Police could/would not help	42,900	4.6
Other reason	191,900	20.5
Did not know	31,200	3.3
Reported to police	806,800	

When reporting is examined by occupational fields, victimizations against persons working in law enforcement (including the police) were most likely to be reported to the police, followed by victimizations of retail sales workers.

Occupational field	Crime reported to police
Medical	39.6%
Mental health	22.9
Teaching	28.1
Law enforcement	74.8
Retail sales	53.9
Transportation	37.0
Other	38.7

Except for victims working in the mental health field, victims in the teaching profession were more likely than any other workers to report the crimes to a non-law enforcement official (table 18). Victims reporting to officials other than law enforcement most often informed persons such as guards and apartment managers of the crime.

**Table 18. Reporting violent crime in the workplace to the police, by job category and reasons for not reporting, 1993-99**

Victim's job category	Percent of violent victimizations in the workplace								
	Total	Not reported to the police					Crime reported to police	Do not know if crime reported	Un-known
		Dealt with in another way	Not important enough	Police could not help	Police would not help	Other reason			
Medical	100%	36.6%	6.3%	0*	1.0%*	15.1%	39.6%	1.4%*	0*
Mental health	100	45.6	8.0	0.4*	0.5*	21.7	22.9	0.8*	0*
Teaching	100	52.1	5.7	0.9*	0.5*	8.9	28.1	3.9	0*
Law enforcement	100	14.1	2.6	0.1*	0.3*	7.8	74.8	0.2*	0*
Retail sales	100	23.6	10.6	1.3*	2.6*	7.3	53.9	0.8*	0*
Transportation	100	26.7	15.3	2.3*	3.6*	13.4	37.0	1.6*	0*
Other	100	32.3	10.7	1.0	2.4	12.8	38.7	1.3	0.8*

\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology* on page 11.

**Table 19. Average annual workplace homicides, by victim characteristics, 1993-99**

Victim characteristic	Average annual	Percent of total
<b>Gender</b>		100%
Male	730	81
Female	176	19
<b>Age group</b>		100%
Under 18 years	8	1
18 to 19 years	18	2
20 to 24 years	70	8
25 to 34 years	228	25
35 to 44 years	236	26
45 to 54 years	181	20
55 to 64 years	105	12
65 years or over	56	6
<b>Race</b>		100%
White	500	55
Black	163	18
Hispanic	126	14
Other/not reported	115	13

Note: Data obtained from the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Totals for each subcategory may not be the same because categories with 5 or fewer work fatalities or less than 0.5% are not included in the total.

## Workplace homicides

### Trend in workplace homicide

Similar to the trend in nonfatal violent crime, the number of work-related homicides decreased between 1993

and 1999 (figure 2). There were 651 work-related homicides in 1999, a 39%-decrease from the 1,074 in 1993.

### Characteristics of victims of homicide in the workplace

Males accounted for four-fifths of all workplace homicide victims (table 19). Persons between ages 25 and 44 were the victims of more than half of all workplace homicides. Whites experienced more workplace homicides than blacks or persons of other races between 1993 and 1999.

### Homicide victim/offender association

During 1993-99, 84% of all workplace homicides were committed by offenders who were strangers to the victim, primarily during robberies or attempted robberies (table 20). Coworkers or former coworkers committed a higher percentage of homicides in the workplace when compared to customers or clients (7% versus 4% of all workplace homicides, respectively). The number of work-related homicides committed by a husband over the 7-year period was 40 times the number committed by a wife (122 versus 3, respectively).

**Number of homicides in the workplace, 1993-99**

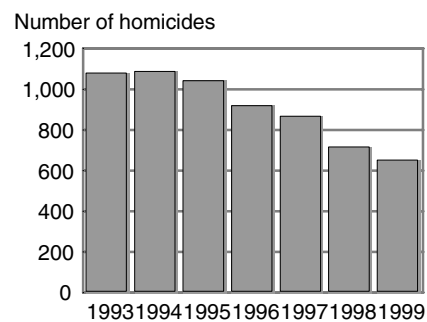


Figure 2

Personal acquaintances such as boyfriends or other acquaintances committed similar percentages of work-related homicides (1%).

### Characteristics of incidents of workplace homicide

Most workplace homicides were committed with guns. Shooting accounted for more than 80% of all workplace homicides (table 21). Of all 4-hour periods in the day, the highest percentage of work-related homicides occurred between 8 p.m. and midnight, accounting for more than a fifth of all workplace homicides.

**Table 20. Average annual workplace homicide, by victim-offender association, 1993-99**

Association of offender to victim	Average annual number	Percent of total
<b>Work association</b>	899	100%
<b>Stranger</b>	753	84%
<b>Work associate</b>	103	11%
Coworker, former coworker	67	7
Customer, client	36	4
<b>Intimate</b>	28	3%
Husband	17	2
Wife	--	--
Boyfriend	10	1
<b>Other relative</b>	5	1%
<b>Other acquaintance</b>	9	1%

Note: Data obtained from the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Totals for each subcategory may not add to the overall total because categories with 5 or fewer work fatalities or less than 0.5% are not included. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding or excluded cases. --Less than 0.5.

**Table 21. Average annual number of workplace homicides, by type of incident and time of victimization, 1993-99**

Incident characteristic	Average annual number	Percent of total
<b>Method of homicide</b>		100%
Hitting, kicking, beating	46	5
Shooting	733	82
Stabbing	71	8
Other event	48	5
<b>Time of incident</b>		100%
12 a.m. - 3:59 a.m.	129	15
4 a.m. - 7:59 a.m.	86	10
8 a.m. - 11:59 a.m.	150	18
12 p.m. - 3:59 p.m.	147	18
4 p.m. - 7:59 p.m.	134	16
8 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.	188	22

Note: Data were obtained from the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Totals for each subcategory may not be the same because categories with 5 or fewer work fatalities or less than 0.5% are not included in the total. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding or excluded cases.



## Methodology

Data for nonfatal crimes in this report come from the Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS measures personal and household offenses, including crimes not reported to the police.

Information is obtained from a continuous, nationally representative sample of around 86,000 households comprising nearly 156,000 persons age 12 or older in the United States. The sample for this report includes those respondents who reported that they were working or on duty during the week prior to the interview. Victimization measured are those violent crimes that occurred while working or on duty. Only for the occupational category of teaching, those crime victims who stated that they were on their way to or from work were also included in the analysis. This is done to make data for teachers comparable to estimates presented in *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*. Violent crimes against teachers in transit to or from work account for 10% of all workplace violent crime against teachers.

Because the NCVS does not measure murder, the homicide data included in this report were drawn from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI).

### *Standard error computations for NCVS estimates*

Comparisons of percentages and rates in this report were tested to determine if differences were statistically significant. Differences described in the text as higher, lower, or different and changes over time characterized as having increased or decreased passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (95%-confidence level). That is, the tested difference in the estimates was greater than twice the standard error of that difference. For comparisons which were statistically significant at the 0.10 level of

statistical significance (90%-confidence level), the terms *somewhat different*, *marginally different*, or *slight difference* is used to note the nature of the difference.

Caution is required when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in the text. What may appear to be large differences may not test as statistically significant at the 95%- or the 90%-confidence level. Significance testing calculations were conducted at the Bureau of Justice Statistics using statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS by the U.S. Census Bureau. These programs take into consideration many aspects of the complex NCVS sample design when calculating generalized variance estimates.

Estimates based on 10 or fewer sample cases have high relative standard errors. Because calculated standard errors for such estimates may not be accurate, care should be taken when comparing estimates based on 10 or fewer cases to other estimates. It is not advisable to make comparisons between estimates when both are based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

### *Calculation of rates and annual levels*

The rates in this report are average annual rates for 1993-99. The numerator of a given number is the sum of violent crime that occurred while at work or on duty for each year from 1993 through 1999; the denominator is the sum of the annual workforce population of persons for these years (or the number falling within the particular demographic group being measured). The resulting proportions are multiplied by 1,000 to obtain the average annual rates. Average annual levels of workplace victimization are obtained by summing the number of workplace victimizations each year between 1993 and 1999 and dividing by seven.

Population totals used in this report are calculated from estimates derived from the victimization survey. Included in

the population are persons age 12 or older living in the households, including group quarters such as dormitories. Population estimates do not include children under 12, institutionalized persons, U.S. citizens living abroad, crew members of merchant vessels, and Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks. The percentages are calculated using the method similar to the one used for average annual rates.

### *Terminology*

**Workplace violence** - The terms *workplace violence*, *work-related violence*, and *violence occurring while working or on duty* are used interchangeably in this report.

**Occupation** - The terms *occupation*, *field*, *job category*, and *occupational field* are interchangeable.

### *Measurement of occupation by the NCVS*

Victims reported their job at the time of the victimization by answering the following question:

Which of the following best describes your job at the time of the incident?

Medical profession — as a —

01. Physician
02. Nurse
03. Technician
04. Other

Mental health services field — are your duties —

05. Professional (social worker/psychiatrist)
06. Custodial care
07. Other

Teaching profession — were you employed in a —

08. Preschool
09. Elementary
10. Junior high or middle school
11. High school
12. College or university
13. Technical or industrial school
14. Special education facility
15. Other

Law enforcement or security field — were you employed as a —

16. Law enforcement officer
17. Prison or jail guard
18. Security guard
19. Other

- Retail sales — were you employed as a —
20. Convenience or liquor store clerk
  21. Gas station attendant
  22. Bartender
  23. Other

- Transportation field — were you employed as a —
24. Bus driver
  25. Taxi cab driver
  26. Other
- OR
27. Something else
  98. Residue
  99. Out of universe

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawrence A. Greenfeld is acting director.

Detis T. Duhart, Ph.D., BJS Statistician, wrote the report under the supervision of Michael Rand. Craig Perkins provided statistical review. Tom Hester edited and produced the report. Jayne Robinson prepared the report for printing.

December 2001, NCJ 190076

### Glossary

Homicide — the willful unlawful killing of one human being by another.

Rape — forced sexual intercourse, including both psychological coercion and physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle. Also included are attempted rapes, male and female victims, and heterosexual and homosexual rape.

Sexual assault — A wide range of victimizations distinct from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include completed or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between the victim and offender. Sexual assault may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. Sexual assault also include verbal threats.

Robbery — completed or attempted theft directly from a person, of property or cash by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without an injury.

Aggravated assault — a completed or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether or not an injury occurred, and an attack without a weapon in which the victim is seriously injured.

Simple assault — an attack without a weapon resulting in either no injury, minor injury (such as bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, or swelling) or an undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Simple assaults also include attempted assaults without a weapon.

This report and others from the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available free of charge through the Internet —  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

### Further reading

*Workplace Violence, 1992-96*, BJS Special Report, July 1998, NCJ 168634

*Violence and Theft in the Workplace*, BJS Special Report, July 1994, NCJ 148199.

# **One Hour Safety Presentation**

## *One Hour Safety Presentation*

The main goal of the Division of Safety & Hygiene is the reduction of accidents and illnesses in the workplace. Toward this goal, the *One Hour Safety Presentation* is designed to support the delivery of a presentation to co-workers in your workplace to help them understand and promote safer and healthier work environments. It is recommended that you take the DSH Training Center course as a background for using *One Hour Safety Presentation* to train others at your workplace. Call 1-800-OHI OBWC, option 2, 2, 3, for class dates and locations.

The *One Hour Safety Presentation* contains:

- **Transparency Masters** from which films can be made to use on an overhead projector,
- **Instructor Notes** which gives the instructor suggestions and script notations to use during the presentation, and
- **Student Handouts** which can be copied for those attending the presentation.

Materials are included for a one-hour presentation on each of these topics:

- ✓ Accident Analysis
- ✓ Bloodborne Pathogens
- ✓ Developing an Ergonomics Process
- ✓ Hazard Communication
- ✓ Lockout/Tagout
- ✓ Respiratory Protection
- ✓ Violence in the Workplace

Applications used:

- 1) Text documents (ending in **.txt**) can be opened with any word processing program.
- 2) Microsoft PowerPoint slides (ending in **.ppt**) can be opened with the Microsoft PowerPoint program. If you do not have PowerPoint and you do have Windows 95, 98, 2000 or Windows NT operating system, you can view the PowerPoint slides by downloading a free PowerPoint Viewer from the following website:  
<http://office.microsoft.com/downloads/default.aspx?Product=PowerPoint&Version=95|97|98|2000|2002&Type=Converter|Viewer>
- 3) Adobe Reader document (ending in **.pdf**) contains the *One Hour Safety Presentation* in read-only format. It can be opened when you download Adobe Reader, which is available free of charge at the following website:  
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

If you have comments or questions about these materials for *One Hour Safety Presentation*, please e-mail us: OCOSHTrng@bwc.state.oh.us

# Transparency Masters

# **Violence in the Workplace**

## **Types, Warning Signs & Prevention**

**Ohio Division of Safety & Hygiene**



# How serious is the problem?

- Homicide is the first leading cause of death in the workplace for women, 2nd cause of death for men. 80% of homicides are during robberies.
- Each week, an average of 20 people are murdered and 18,000 are assaulted in US workplaces.



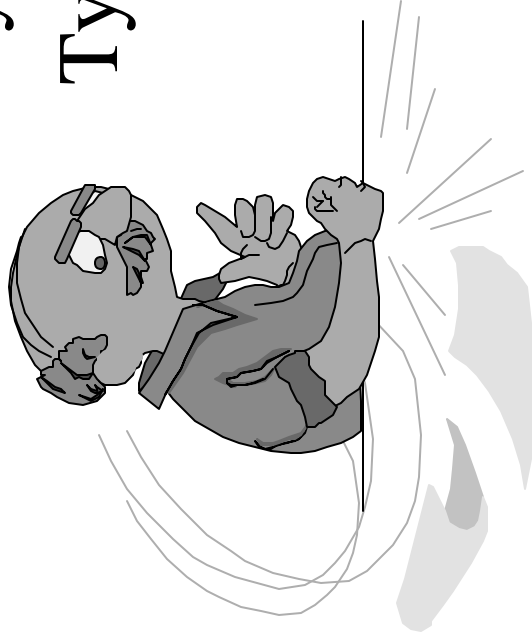
# Definition

**Workplace violence:** Unwelcome harassment, threats, or attacks causing fear, mental or physical harm, or unreasonable stress in the workplace.

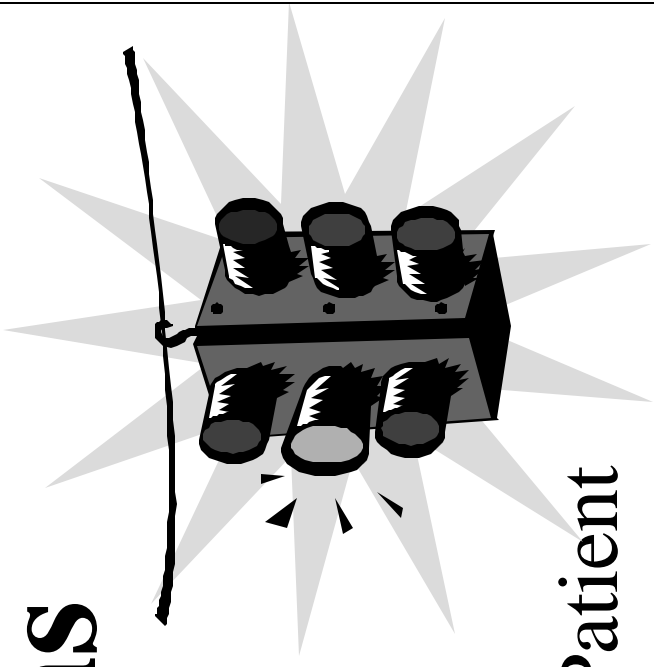


# VIWP Types

Type I	Criminal
Type II	Client, customer, patient
Type III	Employee
Type IV	Personal relationship

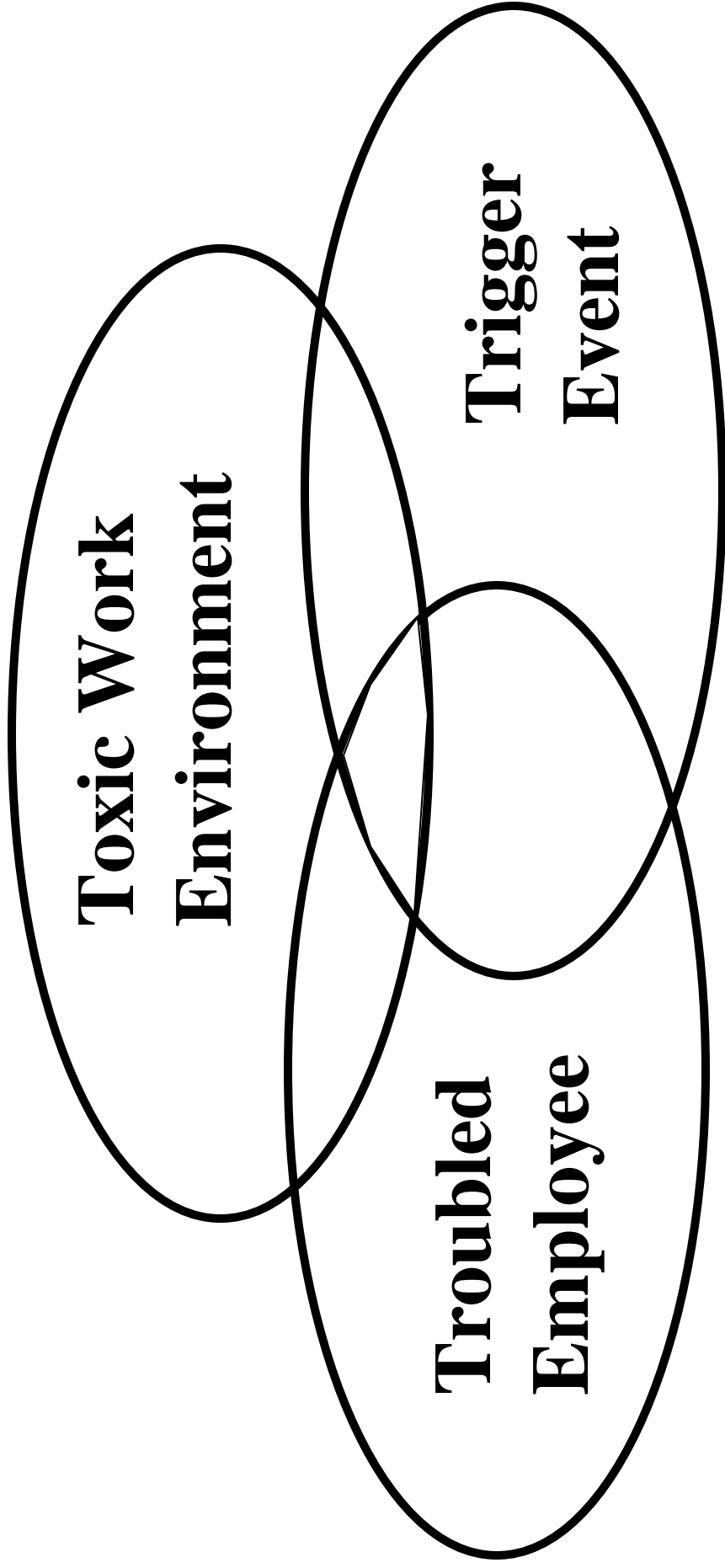


# Warning Signs

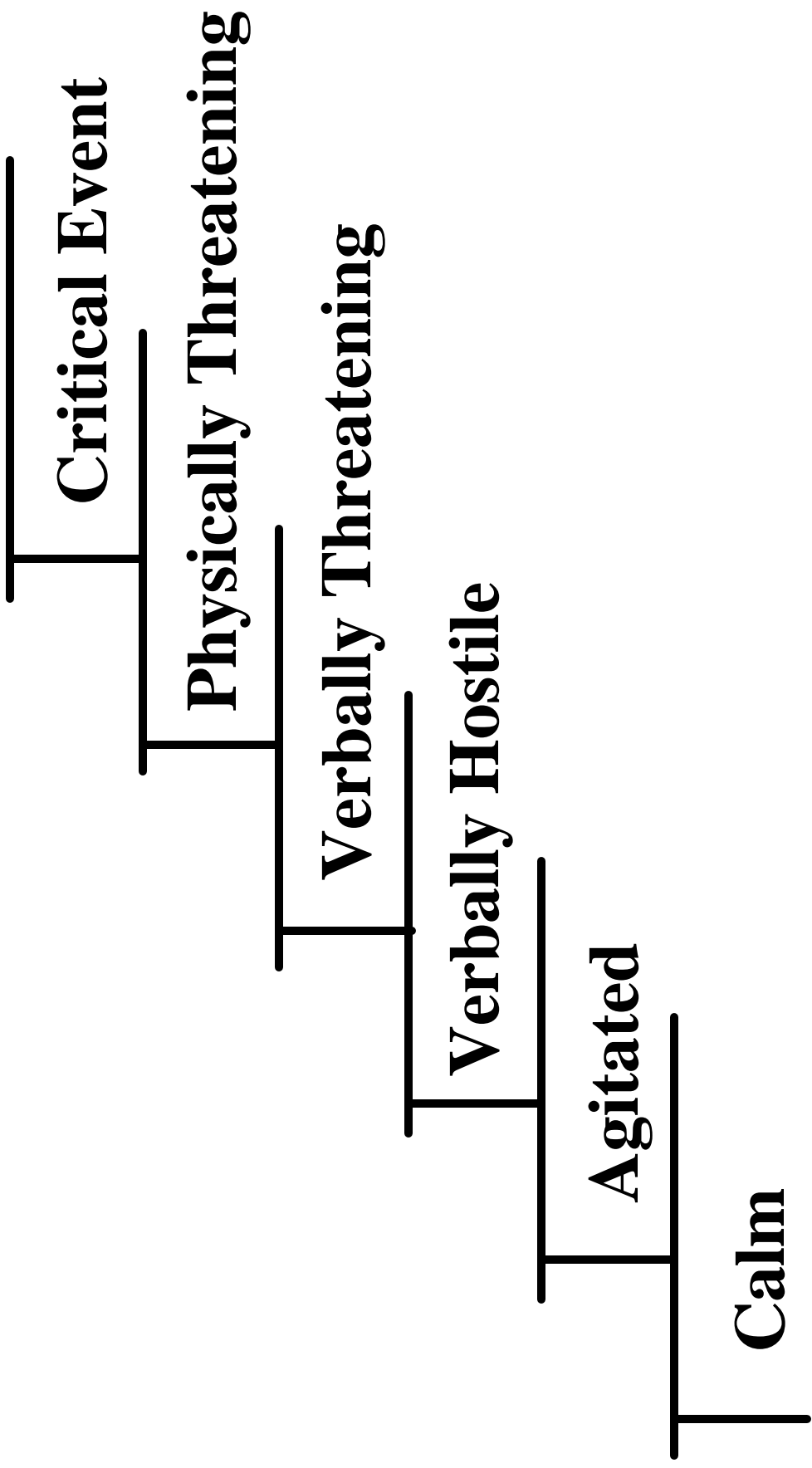


- Type I Criminal
- Type II Client, Customer, Patient
- Type III Employee
- Type IV Personal Relationship

# **Dangerous Ingredients**

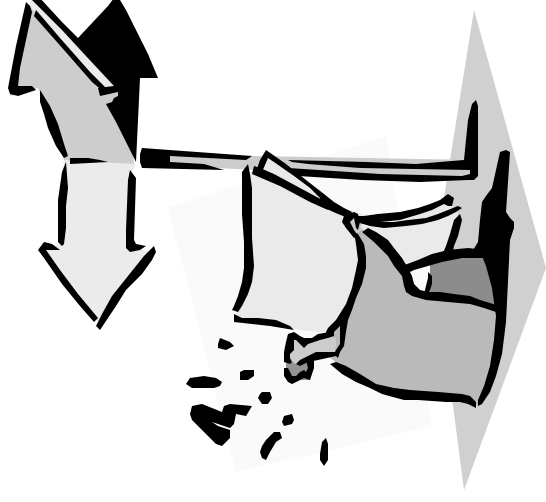


# Personal Anger Escalation



# Prevention

- Management commitment & leadership style
- Pre-hiring checks
- Employee involvement
- Zero Tolerance Policy



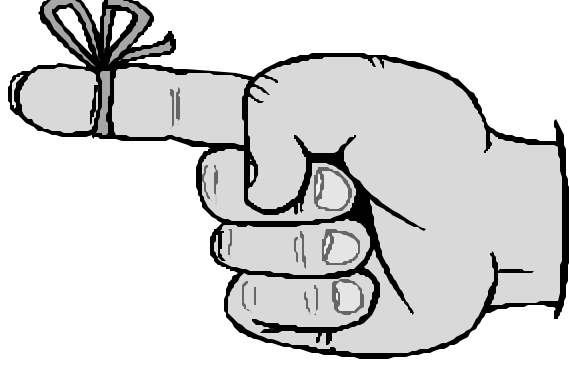
# Prevention continued

- Risk assessment
- Crisis team
- Training
- Documentation



# Summary

- Actively address VIWP issues
- Assess the risk of violence
- Involve employees
- Consistently apply standards
- Document incidents & take threats seriously
- Create a zero tolerance policy
- Train all employees



# Instructor Notes



# Violence in the Workplace

## Types, Warning Signs & Prevention

**Ohio Division of Safety & Hygiene**



This presentation is designed for a one-hour awareness-level overview of the topic to employees in Ohio companies.

### **Suggestions for the presenter**

#### **Prior to presentation**

- Research the status of a written Violence in the Workplace policy at your workplace.
- Consult with Management on content to be presented. Hopefully, Management will not only attend, but participate in the presentation.
- Prepare transparencies, handouts.
- Notify participants of the topic, time, location for the presentation.

#### **During the presentation**

- Try to involve the audience, asking for their input, affirming their suggestions.
- (Optional) Ask for a volunteer to write on a flipchart all suggestions for improvement that emerge during the discussion.

#### **After the presentation**

- Follow-up with Management on audience suggestions.
- If your company does not already have a VIWP Crisis Team, organize one (with Management's approval).

## How serious is the problem?



- Homicide is the first leading cause of death in the workplace for women, 2nd cause of death for men. 80% of homicides are during robberies.
- Each week, an average of 20 people are murdered and 18,000 are assaulted in US workplaces.

### Discussion Questions

Is violence in the workplace (VIWP) a social issue?

Is VIWP a symptom of other social problems?

What department should take responsibility for VIWP prevention?

Who is responsible for violence prevention in our organization?

Information from NIOSH available at 1-800-35 NIOSH or  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

# Definition

**Workplace violence:** Unwelcome harassment, threats, or attacks causing fear, mental or physical harm, or unreasonable stress in the workplace.

Ask the audience to suggest examples that fit this definition.

- Verbal threats to inflict bodily harm
- Attempting to cause physical harm: Hitting, kicking, striking, pushing, biting, scratching or other aggressive acts
- Disorderly conduct such as shouting, throwing or pushing objects, punching walls, and slamming doors.
- Verbal harassment; abusive or offensive language; gestures or other discourteous conduct
- Making false, malicious, or unfounded statements against co-workers to damage their reputation or undermine their authority
- Bringing guns or other weapons to the workplace
- Unwelcome sexual advances

# VIWP Types

Type I	Criminal
Type II	Client, customer, patient
Type III	Employee
Type IV	Personal relationship



Ask the audience to suggest examples of each type.

Type I: robber, arsonist, terrorist, rapist, sociopath, “road rage” maniac, any stranger doing harm

Type II: client, customer, patient, student, inmate, relative, vendor, contractor

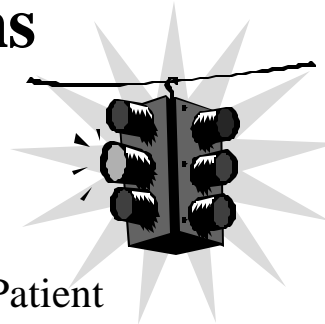
Type III: employee, supervisor, former employee

Type IV: Someone having a personal relationship with an employee (real or imagined), boyfriend/girlfriend, spouse, former spouse, parent, in-law, supposed friend, acquaintance, admirer

Ask the audience: Is it important to classify them by types? If so, why?

**Answer: Different types may require different solutions to prevent them.**

# Warning Signs



- Type I Criminal
- Type II Client, Customer, Patient
- Type III Employee
- Type IV Personal Relationship

Ask Audience to suggest examples or warning signs of each type

Type I Criminal (robberies, assaults, personal attacks, arson, etc.)

Increased crime in the area

Incidents in similar industry or workplace

Employee concerns

Special or unique conditions: time of year, local events

Poor or no security

Poor environmental design (lack of adequate lighting, obstructed view)

Type II Client, Customer, Patient

Increased number of complaints from a client, customer, patient

Increased number of complaints with one product or service

Security breaches

“Close call”

Employee concerns

Type III Employee

Has a history of interpersonal conflict, is argumentative or uncooperative

Has difficulty accepting authority or criticism

Tends to blame others for problems

Decreased social connection with little or no family support

Significant changes in behavior, performance, or appearance

Substance abuse

Type IV Personal Relationship

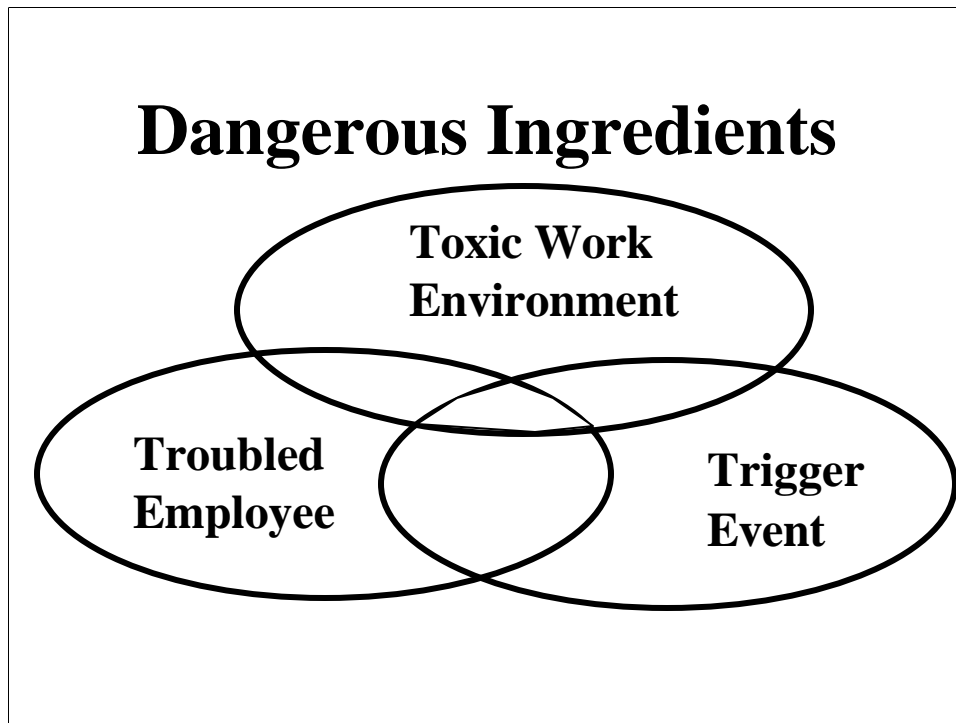
distraught employee

evidence or claims of harassment

suspicious person on property

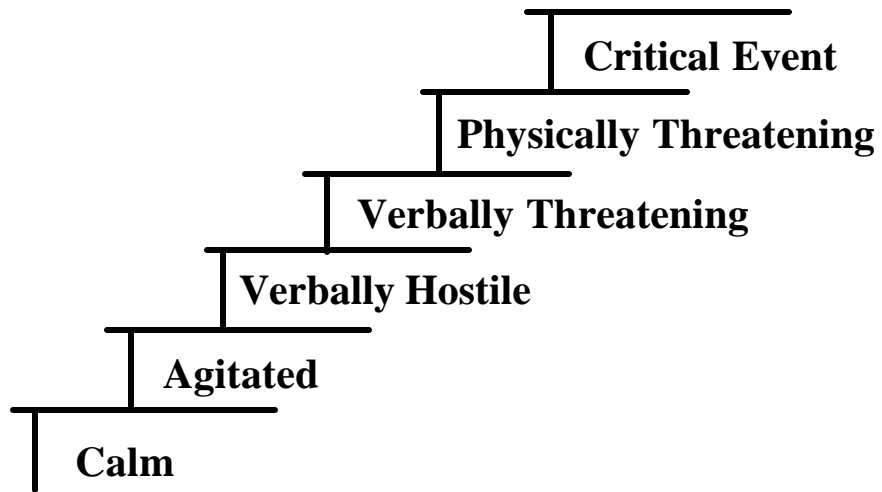
domestic spillover

# **Dangerous Ingredients**



When these 3 items exist in the workplace, there is the potential for an incident to occur.

# Personal Anger Escalation



Sometimes we can see a person getting increasingly angry.

Does your company have a policy on when to call for outside help?

# Prevention

- Management commitment & leadership style
- Pre-hiring checks
- Employee involvement
- Zero Tolerance Policy



Ask audience to suggest preventive subpoints for each bullet item.

## Management commitment & leadership style

Recognize potential problem, commit organizational resources

Use labor-management partnership

Be a skilled communicator, facilitator, expeditor

Be fair, honest, open

Implement a VIWP Policy,

## Pre-hiring checks

Criminal background check

Driving record (if applicable)

Check references carefully from previous employers, supervisors, coworkers

Ask open-ended questions during the interview

Verify credentials

Test for drug use

## Employee involvement

Participation and support in determining policies

Assist with risk assessment

Helping co-workers deal with stress

Communication throughout the organization

Input on training needs

Zero tolerance policy – written down and approved by management

Elements (purpose, definitions, reporting procedure, investigation, disciplinary action)

Non-retaliation

Clear expectations

Forms for reporting incidents

Organizational “buy-in”



# Prevention continued

- Risk assessment
- Crisis team
- Training
- Documentation



## Risk assessment

Workplace security analysis / Police reports

Analysis of accident and medical reports

Customer flow / Hours of operation

Restricted areas

Treatment of customers / clients

Training of personnel

Organizational climate (caring, trusting, positive environment)

Installation of panic-buttons in high risk areas (receptionist station)

## Crisis team

Represents the entire organization

Serves as employees' liaison to management/union

Addresses policies and procedures, training needs, documentation, etc.

Coordinates and communicates to employees

## Training Topics

VIWP: what it is

Workplace violence prevention policy

Assault risk factors

Recognizing warning signs

Diffusing volatile situations

Ways to protect oneself & co-workers

Incident reporting

## Documentation

Purpose of documentation (to determine severity, to evaluate control methods, to identify training needs)

Injuries, incident reports

Risk assessment results

Corrective actions

Training

# Summary

- Actively address VIWP issues
- Assess the risk of violence
- Involve employees
- Consistently apply standards
- Document incidents & take threats seriously
- Create a zero tolerance policy
- Train all employees



## Additional resources

Bensimon, Helen Frank. "What to Do About Anger in the Workplace." *Training & Development*, September 1997, 28-32.

*Combating Workplace Violence: Guidelines for Employers and Law Enforcement*. International Association of Chiefs of Police, Private Sector Liaison Committee, 1997. Public Domain.

Warchol, Greg. *Workplace Violence, 1992-1996*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report (NCJ 168634). U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 1998. Public Domain.

*Workplace Violence: Don't Be Caught Offguard!* BWC Focus Magazine. Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Columbus, Ohio. Vol.1, Issue 4, Summer 1998, pp. 4-9. Public Domain.

*Violence in the Workplace: Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies*. NIOSH Current Intelligence Bulletin 57, June 1996. NIOSH Publication No. 96-100. Cincinnati, Ohio. U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Public Domain.

# Student Handouts

# Violence in the Workplace

## Types, Warning Signs & Prevention

Ohio Division of Safety & Hygiene



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### How serious is the problem?



- Homicide is the first leading cause of death in the workplace for women, 2nd cause of death for men. 80% of homicides are during robberies.
- Each week, an average of 20 people are murdered and 18,000 are assaulted in US workplaces.

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### Definition

**Workplace violence:** Unwelcome harassment, threats, or attacks causing fear, mental or physical harm, or unreasonable stress in the workplace.

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## VIWP Types

- Type I Criminal
- Type II Client, customer, patient
- Type III Employee
- Type IV Personal relationship



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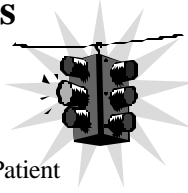
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## Warning Signs

- Type I Criminal
- Type II Client, Customer, Patient
- Type III Employee
- Type IV Personal Relationship



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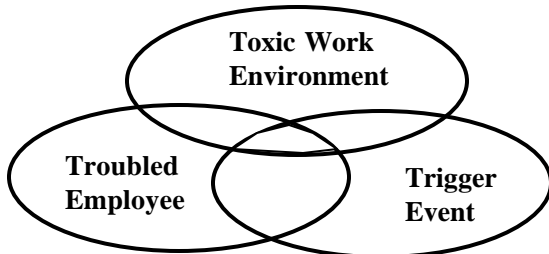
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## Dangerous Ingredients



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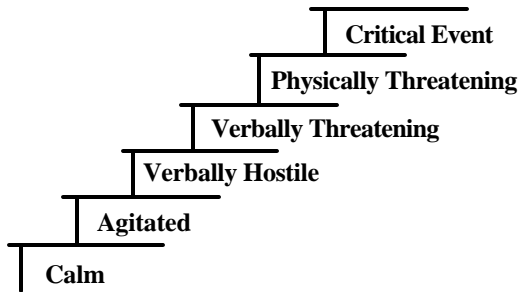
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## Personal Anger Escalation



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## Prevention

- Management commitment & leadership style
- Pre-hiring checks
- Employee involvement
- Zero Tolerance Policy



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## Prevention continued

- Risk assessment
- Crisis team
- Training
- Documentation



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# Summary

- Actively address VIWP issues
- Assess the risk of violence
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