


Understanding the Dynamics of Violence in the Workplace

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Know WPV When You See It

Workplace Violence is:

Violent Acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault or intimidation and harassment including sexual harassment, directed toward persons at work or on duty where an employee is verbally or physically attacked, harassed, injured or killed

OSHA – WPV Research Center

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Agenda for Today:

- Examine the “complete” picture of Workplace Violence
- Recognize the potentially violent or troubled Employee, victim or situation
- Look at the physical security “tools” available to prevent incidents of Workplace Violence.
- Examine ways to deal with potentially volatile situations (Early warning signs)
- Conducting security surveys, writing WPV policies, and other resources

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“Types” or Classes of WPV

- OSHA divides Workplace Violence into three distinct categories.
- Determining the correct type of potential or actual Workplace Violence can sharpen the focus of the investigation or prevention effort.

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Type I Workplace Violence - Stranger Violence

The offender has no legitimate relationship to the workplace or victim and enters the workplace to commit a criminal act (robbery, theft, truck or aircraft hijacking). Usual victims are late night retail, restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, taxi drivers etc.

60% of all Workplace Violence Homicides are Type I


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Type II Workplace Violence - Customer / Client

The person who commits the act of workplace violence is either the recipient or object of service provided by the affected workplace or victim (current or former client, patient, customer, welfare or social service recipient, criminal suspect or prisoner).

30% of all WPV homicides are Type II

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Type III Workplace Violence - Employee Violence

Term “employee” can include temporaries and sub contractors located within the affected workplace. Also included are domestic violence incidents which “travel” into the workplace. Type III incidents involve and act of WPV by current or former employee, manager or executive.

Incidents may be committed by a current or former lover, spouse, significant other, relative or friend or some other person who has a dispute with an employee in the workplace.

10% of all WPV homicides are Type III

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Self Assessment

Knowing “Types” of Workplace Violence gives managers and others charged with resource management direction into assessing their own

“Risk & Vulnerability.”

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Additional Assessment “Tools”

Employee Safety Committee

A company / organization wide committee representing most of the segments of the organization to provide input to managers and decision makers regarding the perceptions of safety and security on the part of the employees and communication of company policies concerning safety & security.

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Term Definition: “Risk”

What is the likelihood that this “site” will be targeted by an offender as the venue for a criminal act?

Are there controllable factors at this site that may be manipulated to lessen the exposure to Risk of an incident occurring here?


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Term Definition: “Threat”

- Active “intelligence” information that indicates that there is a likelihood that there likely will be some type of an incident occurring at a specific location to a specific individual or group.


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Term Definition: “Vulnerability”

The extent to which a potential target is susceptible to attack. A vulnerability assessment survey is intended to systematically reduce the possibility of attack by determining security shortcomings and developing methods to lessen or eliminate them.


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Domestic Violence & Workplace Violence

- Annual Cost to Business - \$3 – 5 billion
- Rated “High” as a security problem in 94% of workplaces
- 74% of battered women employees harassed @ work
- 25% absenteeism and medical benefit expense is Domestic Violence related
- Average annual medical expense resulting from Domestic Violence in USA - \$4 billion

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Who’s Responsible for a “Safe” Workplace ?

While different positions in every organization have different duties and areas of control, according to OSHA and the Department of Agriculture – a safe workplace is:

Everyone's Responsibility

(See Employee Safety Committee)

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Divide the Work

The following division of work, by corporate division or job assignment, is an effort to eliminate duplication of effort and establish boundaries and areas of responsibility regarding Workplace Violence prevention and effectively investigating issues which have occurred in the workplace.

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Responsibility - Employee

- Be familiar with organization policy regarding Workplace Violence.
- Responsible for securing their own workplace.
- Responsible for reporting / questioning of strangers to supervisor.
- Report threats, physical or verbal or disruptive behavior.
- Know local procedures for dealing with threat
- Remember EAP and take threats seriously.

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Responsibility - Managers / Supervisors


- Inform employees of Workplace Violence policy and procedures
- Ensure procedures dealing with threats and emergencies and reporting to local authorities are specifically covered.
- Special needs employees must be accommodated and assisted as needed
- Respond to potential threats and escalation and use proper resources within and outside organization.
- Take all threats seriously
- Conduct background investigations prior to hire
- Coordinate with neighboring entities – Workplace Violence

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Responsibility - Agency Head

- Develop a “no tolerance” policy statement regarding all classes of Workplace Violence.
- Ensure all policy handbooks and other support materials are available and employees know their applicable rules.
- Ensure that proper Law Enforcement or safety consultant has completed on site review of security & safety of buildings.
- Ensure resources are there for Workplace Violence training of employees and also new employee orientation.
- Ensure performance standards reflect importance of WPV training.
- Require Workplace Violence briefings @ staff meetings.


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Responsibility - H.R. Staff

- Provide for supervisory training including basic leadership skills, clear standards of conduct and performance, prompt attention to employee concerns, probationary periods, counseling, discipline, alternative dispute resolution etc.
- Provide case specific technical expertise to management.
- Determine if sufficient evidence exists to justify disciplinary action
- Help supervisors determine reasonable accommodation.

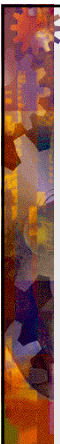
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Responsibility - EAP

- Provide short term no cost counseling & referral.
- Help prevent WPV by:
 - Involvement early in organizational change.
 - Training employees on methods to deal with angry customers – co workers.
 - Train supervisors to deal with & not diagnose employee problems.
 - Consult with supervisors to ID specific problem areas early and encourage employees to EAP.
 - Consult with incidence responders re: potential for violence.
 - Participate in critical incident debriefings.


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Responsibility - Unions

- Be familiar and actively support policy and contract language on Workplace Violence prevention.
- Remain aware of security issues, procedures addressing threats Workplace threats and emergencies
- Stay familiar with EAP policy including union ability to refer.
- Ensure all employees are up to date on Workplace Violence policies.
- Membership on Workplace Violence prevention education team & threat assessment and response team.


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Responsibility - Security/Facilities

- Liaison with law enforcement / local security experts
- Conduct regular threat assessment surveys, with company staff, to determine readiness and gaps in preparedness.
- Be company security expert and advise management of risk of violence, security gaps and methods to close gaps including latest technology.
- Work with facilities to close gaps including parking lots, grounds and buildings
- Keep management informed re: security preparedness, budget requests and justifications.


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Responsibility - LEA Liaison

- Inform company in advance of possible situations that may occur and how Law Enforcement will respond.
- Establish jurisdiction and possible alternate Law Enforcement support
- Provide crime prevention personnel who can assist company with possible threat and security assessments
- Arrange to train employees on Workplace Violence at employee meetings and in service trainings.

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Responsibility - Conflict Resolution Offices

- Provide medication & alternate dispute resolution (ADR) services to assist employees in resolving disputes.
- Provide training in conflict resolution, communications and negotiation skills.

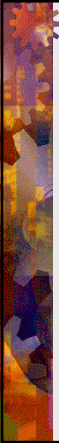
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Conducting a Security Survey

- Take a security “tool box” inventory.
- Establish “partnerships” within the organization.
- Collect incident reports and written data and determine correlation of location, victim types, times etc.

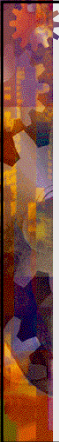
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Workplace Violence Doesn’t “Just Happen”

- “Slow Burn” waiting to detonate when:
 - Personal Relationship fails / death
 - Economic hardship – Wages attached
 - Feelings of Failure – No advancement
 - Injustice in the Workplace – real or not
 - Males fail to ask for help (95% male offenders)
 - Access to Weapons / Firearms

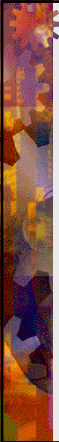
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Contributing Factors to Violence in the Workplace

- Non existent of weak policies prohibiting workplace violence
- Lack of employee training on all levels in recognizing and acting on signs of workplace violence.
- Failure of employer to intervene
- Not taking reports of threats seriously
- Poor or non existent physical security

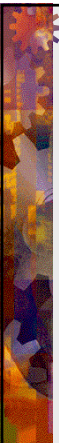
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Early Warning Signs of a Possible Volatile Employee

- Newly acquired negative traits
- Decrease in productivity
- Sudden changes in personal behavior
- Newly acquired poor personal hygiene
- Sudden withdrawal or over reaction to stimuli
- Poor impulse control or talks of suicide including giving away valued items
- Unexplainable anxiousness with co workers or poor impulse control (snapping)

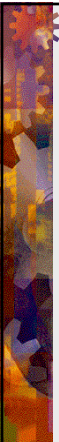
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Corporate Positions Most Often Targeted for Violence

- Incidents of Type III Workplace Violence are not “random”
 - Offender specifically targets those who have had something to do with his current plight. Positions can include:
 - Human Resources personnel
 - Co Workers
 - Immediate Supervisor
 - Security Personnel
 - Corporate President – Senior Staff


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Basics of Workplace Security

- There are Three (3) options to consider when planning security in the workplace
 - Organized Methods
 - Mechanical Methods
 - Natural Methods


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Organized Methods are:

- Labor intensive, people intensive and rule intensive methods which clearly indicate to those persons occupying the workplace site that this area is visibly under control. Examples:
 - Uniformed Security
 - Employee Safety Committee
 - Expected Behaviors Communicated with Conspicuous signage


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Mechanical Methods are:

- Device related measures used to establish or enhance the security of the workplace. Examples:
 - Locks
 - Lights
 - Alarms
 - Cameras
 - Gates
 - Fences


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Natural Methods are:

- Reinforcing the sense of safety, security and territoriality on the part of the normal and intended users of the workplace by proper application of the CPTED principles:
 - Natural Surveillance
 - Natural Access Control
 - Territorial Reinforcement
 - Maintenance


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Risk Assessment Scale

- How likely is what we are planning to prevent – going to REALLY happen here?

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Site Specificity

- Remember that all security plans and enhancement plans are Site Specific and may not be interchangeable with other locations or similar business environments.


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Security Considerations - Workplace Interior

- Potential Weapons in the Workplace
- Designation of Interior Space
- Arrangement of Individual Office Space
- Interior Interview Areas


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Dealing with Angry Customers / Employees

- Remember to use proper interview style and proper interview location.
- Avoid using trigger words and phrases:
 - Can't
 - You don't understand
 - Not my job
 - Demeaning or uninterested tone or expression


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Resources

- "Workplace Violence 101 by Larry J. Chaves B.A., M.P.A. Critical Incident Associates
- "The Rockem – Sockem Workplace" by Ronald Taylor www.venable.com
- "Domestic Violence in the Workplace" www.endabuse.org


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Resources (cont'd)

- Workplace Violence Research Center – OSHA
- "Stalking, Harassment and Murder in the Workplace: Guidelines for Protection and Prevention" by Bernadette Schell and Nellie Lanteigne Quarum Books


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Resources (cont'd)

- Domestic Violence: A Union Issue, A Workplace Training Kit by Mariama Diao and Jeffrey Betcher
www.endabuse.org
- Family Violence – Awareness for People in the Workplace – National Clearing House on Family Violence, Canada

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Resources (cont'd)

- “A Partnership to End Domestic Violence” – Montgomery County Maryland Police Domestic Violence Unit
- City of Los Angeles “Workplace Violence Policy and Guidelines” www.ci.la.ca.us.org
- Sample Violence in the Workplace Prevention Policy – Office Depot Small Business Center www.officedepot.com

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