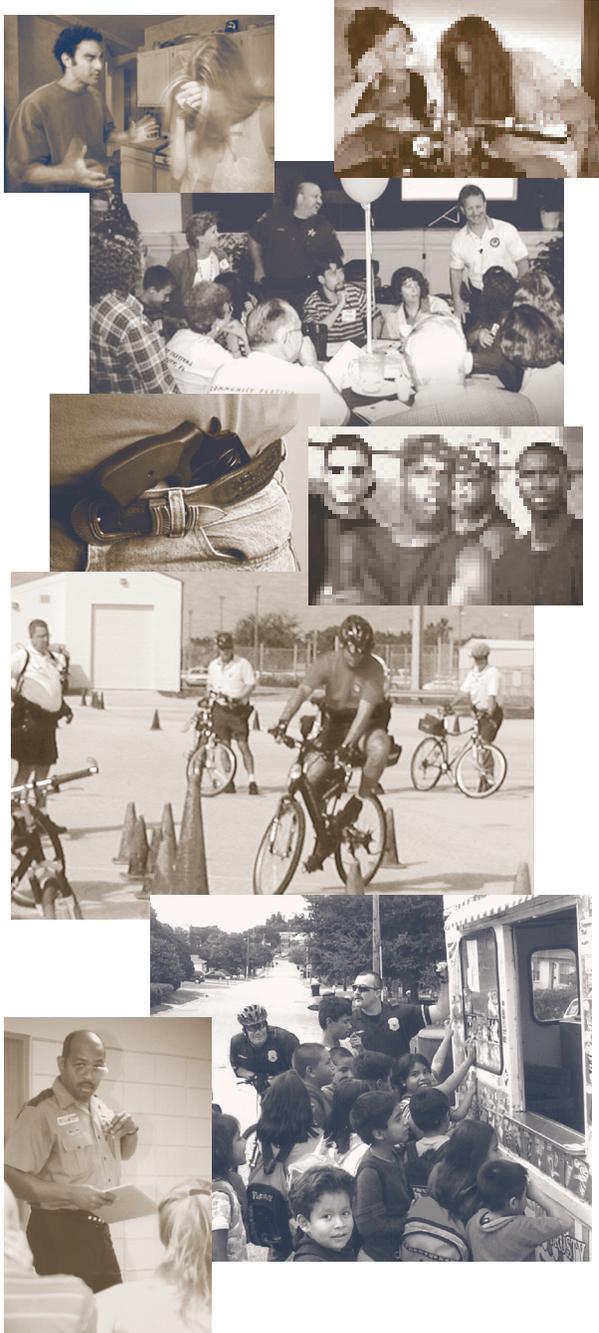


St. Petersburg College

FLORIDA REGIONAL COMMUNITY POLICING INSTITUTE



Understanding the Dynamics of Violence in the Workplace



Course Manual

St. Petersburg College

Understanding the Dynamics of Violence in the Workplace



Eileen LaHaie, Program Director
Florida Regional Community Policing Institute, COPS
St. Petersburg College
3200 34th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33711
Phone: (727) 341-4502 Fax: (727) 341-4524
Reservations: (727) 341-4581
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Who We Are

The Florida Regional Community Policing Institute (RCPI) at St. Petersburg College (SPC) operates under a cooperative agreement from the Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). RCPI provides FREE community policing training to law enforcement officers, community residents, city employees, social services agencies, and private sector representatives throughout Florida.

Basic Courses

- Introduction to Community Policing
- Police-Community Partnerships
- Problem Solving for the Community Police Officer and Citizen
- Survival Skills for Community Policing Officers
- Ethical Issues and Decisions in Law Enforcement
- Reaching your Goals Through Code Compliance
- Planning a Win for the Good Guys: Crime Prevention/Crime Displacement and Environmental Design
- Managing Encounters with the Mentally Ill
- Building Bridges: Community Policing Overview for Citizens
- Changing Roles: Supervising Today's Community Policing Officer
- Grantsmanship 101
- Sexual Predator and Offender Awareness in Your Neighborhood and on the Internet
- Effective Media Skills for Law Enforcement
- Citizens' Community Policing Academies

Specialty Courses

- Protecting, Serving and Supervising through Community Partnerships
- Three-Part Community Policing Management Series

Domestic Violence Courses

- Dynamics of Domestic Violence
- Legal Aspects of Domestic Violence
- Resources for Domestic Violence Teams

Ethics Courses

- Citizen Complaint Intake and Investigation Issues
- Bias-Based Policing: Issues and Dilemmas
- Use of Force Issues in a Community Policing Environment
- Early Identification and Intervention Strategies (EIIS)

Online Courses

- Ethical Issues & Decisions in Law Enforcement
- Introduction to Community Oriented Policing
- Dynamics of Domestic Violence
- Understanding the Dynamics of Violence in the Workplace

Course Material

Course material is provided at no charge to all participants. We can adapt our training to fit your agency/ community/business needs. Evening and weekend classes are available. Most training modules are eight or 16 hours but may be modified to allow for limited time allotments.

Training Locations

Generally, classes are conducted at our SPC training site. However, we will arrange training at your facility or a training center in your area. Students who travel more than 50 miles may be eligible for lodging reimbursement.

Who Can Attend?

- Any law enforcement officer (community policing patrol, crime prevention, campus police), civilian employees, probation officers, and social service agencies
- Community leaders and citizens
- Chiefs and Sheriffs who are interested in starting and maintaining community policing in their communities
- Business managers, executives and employees
- Mayors, City Managers, Council members, trustees and government leaders
- Middle, high school youth, college students

Registration

To register for classes, schedule on-site training or become part of our mailing list, please call:

Eileen LaHaie - RCPI Program Director
Florida Regional Community Policing Institute
3200 34th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33711
Phone: (727) 341-4581 or (727)341-4502
Fax: (727) 341-4524
E-mail: lahaiee@spcollege.edu
Web site: <http://cop.spcollege.edu>

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Acknowledgements

This textbook was written for the Florida Regional Community Policing Institute (RCPI) at St. Petersburg College (SPC) by Dan Bates. Dan retired after more than 26 years with the St. Petersburg Police Department. During the last 11 years with St. Petersburg, he worked as the department's Environmental Design and Business Crime Prevention Officer. During his first 16 years he worked as both an undercover and plain clothes detective with a variety of assignments including an undercover crimes in progress unit, vice and narcotics, robbery/homicide, burglary and economic crimes investigations. Dan also specialized as a polygraph examiner and taught Advanced Criminal Investigations and the Kinesic Interview Technique. He was also a charter member of the Florida Association of Computer Crimes Investigators (FACCI).

He transferred to the Community Awareness Division with the advent of community policing in St. Petersburg in 1991, taking an assignment in the Community Awareness Division - Crime Prevention Unit. He is a certified Florida Crime Prevention Practitioner (FCPP) and received his initial instruction in the concepts of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) from International CPTED authority, Timothy Crowe, author of the basic textbook on CPTED. Dan has taught several advanced CPTED courses and was the long time chair of the City of St. Petersburg CPTED Taskforce; a multi-disciplinary problem solving group representing nearly all of the major disciplines in the city infrastructure. Dan also served as the public information officer for the St. Petersburg Police Department from January 2000 through March 2001.

He developed the curriculum and wrote the training manual for *Planning a Win for the Good Guys: Crime Prevention - Displacement and*

Environmental Design. This course is offered by the Florida RCPI at SPC. Dan has instructed extensively in the state of Florida as well as in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Colorado. Dan also teaches CPTED and Advanced CPTED as well as related crime prevention subjects for the Florida Crime Prevention Training Institute; Attorney General's Office, State of Florida.

He is a guest lecturer with the University of South Florida College of Criminal Justice and the University of Tampa and has presented to many professional groups and organizations. Dan is a member of the Tampa Bay Professional Traffic Calmers Group as well as a charter member and officer of the Florida CPTED Network.
<http://www.flcpted.org>

Dan also teaches extensively on the subjects of Workplace Violence Prevention, Crimes against the Elderly and Domestic/Homeland Security as it relates to comprehensive site assessments and Critical Infrastructure Protection.

Dan received his associate's degree from the Milwaukee Area Technical College and his bachelor's degree from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dan is currently enrolled in a Masters in Education program (University of Phoenix) majoring in Adult Education and Distance Learning and will complete that program in December 2004.

The author wishes to acknowledge the staff that envisioned and implemented this textbook for the Florida RCPI at SPC. Finally, the support of COPS personnel who assisted and were committed to the dissemination of this textbook is gratefully acknowledged.

Unit One:

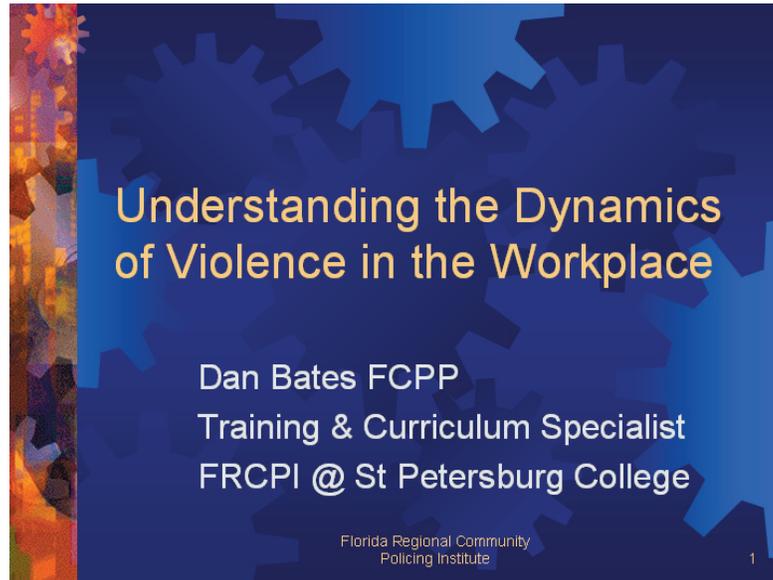
Introduction to Workplace Violence

The issue of workplace violence is a far reaching and pervasive concern in any workplace, regardless of the size or sector of the organization.

From suggestive jokes on the corporate e-mail to horrific multiple homicides committed mercilessly and violently in front of multiple witnesses, the potential for an incident of workplace violence occurring on the job is a concern for risk managers, human resources personnel and supervisors. The problem is so large and the potential so high, how can any organization realistically hope to minimize its exposure?

Understanding the Dynamics of Violence in the Workplace has been designed specifically for those individuals or groups whose task it is to develop and operationalize an effective Workplace Violence prevention policy and program. The challenges, obstacles and hurdles which one may encounter in accomplishing this task, regardless of the size of the organization, have been examined and accounted for in this course and useful tools and practical exercises needed to assist the student in thoughtfully handling an assignment of this size have been provided.

By investing the time to complete this study, students will come away from this course with a more thorough understanding of the dynamics of workplace violence and many useful resources that will assist them in developing and customizing their own workplace violence prevention program with confidence.

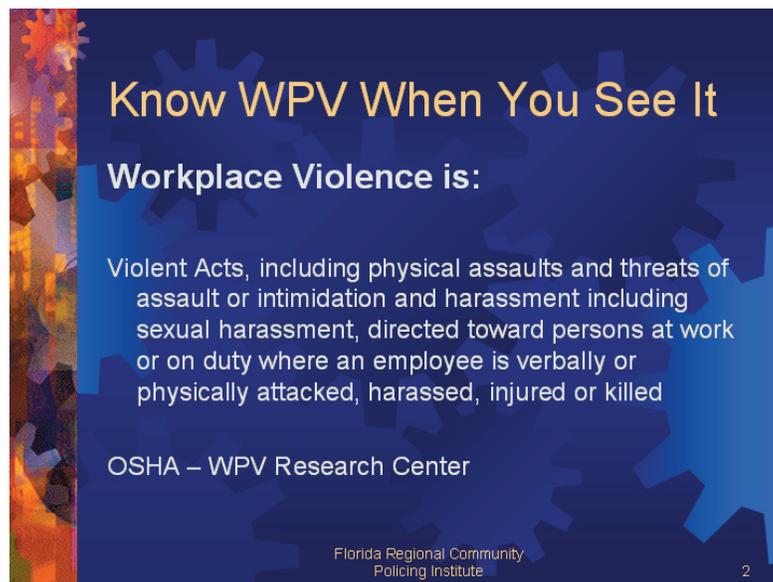


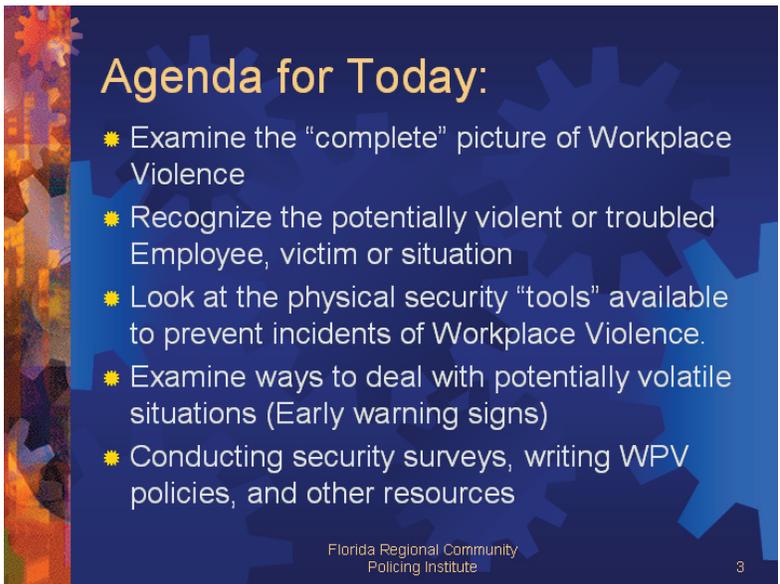
What is workplace violence?

Workplace violence can be any act of physical violence, threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, or contractors.

A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence or “road rage.” Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, co-worker, customer, family member, or even a stranger.

United States Department of Agriculture





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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***Why be concerned with workplace violence?
some relevant federal statistics:***

“Some 2 million American workers are victims of workplace violence each year. Workplace violence can strike anywhere, and no one is immune. Some workers, however, are at increased risk. Among them are workers who exchange money with the public; deliver passengers, goods, or services; or work alone or in small groups, during late night or early morning hours, in high-crime areas, or in community settings and homes where they have extensive contact with the public. This group includes healthcare and social service workers such as visiting nurses, psychiatric evaluators, and probation officers; community workers such as gas and water utility employees, phone and cable TV installers, and letter carriers; retail workers; and taxi drivers.”

United States Department of Occupational Health and Safety Administration OSHA

“Among all workplace victims of violent crimes or threats of violence, 67 percent were male and 33 percent were female. About 12 percent of the victimizations resulted in injuries, about half of which received medical attention.

The estimated annual victimizations for the years 1992 through 1996 for workplace crimes counted in Bureau of Justice Statistics: National Crime Victimization Survey and by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) were, as follows:”

Simple assaults	1.5 million
Aggravated assaults	396,000
Robberies	84,000
Rapes and sexual assaults	51,000
Homicides	1,000

The rate of violence per 1,000 workers during the five-year period for selected occupations was, as follows:

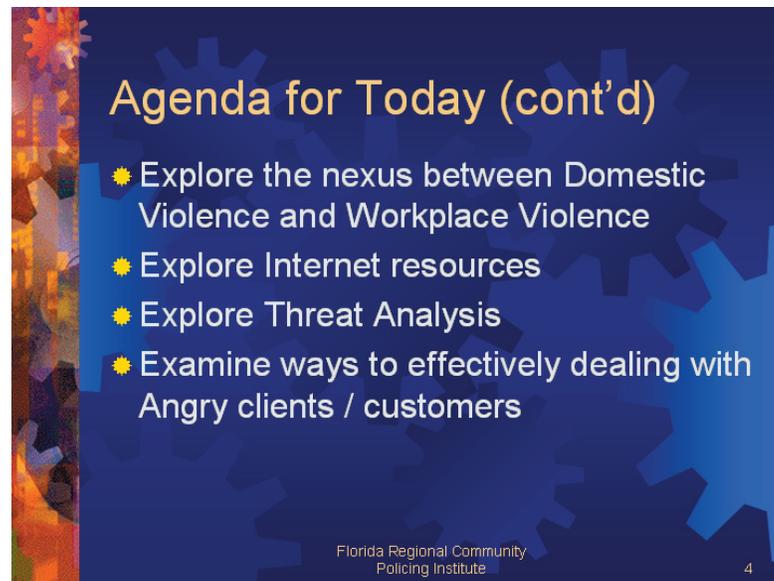
Law enforcement officer	306
Prison or jail corrections officer	218
Taxi driver	184
Private security guard	117
Bartender	91
Mental health professional	80
Gas station attendant	79
Convenience or liquor store clerk	68
Mental health custodial worker	63
Junior high/middle school teacher	57
Bus driver	45
Special education teacher	41
High school teacher	29
Elementary school teacher	16
College or university teacher	3

Bureau of Justice Statistics – United States Department of Justice

Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure for major private industry in all of the United States during 2001 is available at the following Web site:

<http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0153.pdf>

Bureau of Labor Statistics – United States Department of Labor



Agenda for Today (cont'd)

- Explore the nexus between Domestic Violence and Workplace Violence
- Explore Internet resources
- Explore Threat Analysis
- Examine ways to effectively dealing with Angry clients / customers

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Step one: let's get organized

The Department of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has sorted the many different occupational groups and their corresponding locations into three general **categories of workplace violence**.

“A problem well defined – is a problem half solved”

Albert Einstein

“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 employees of late night retail, restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, taxi drivers, etc. Sixty percent of all workplace violence homicides are Type I.

Type I Workplace Violence – Stranger Violence

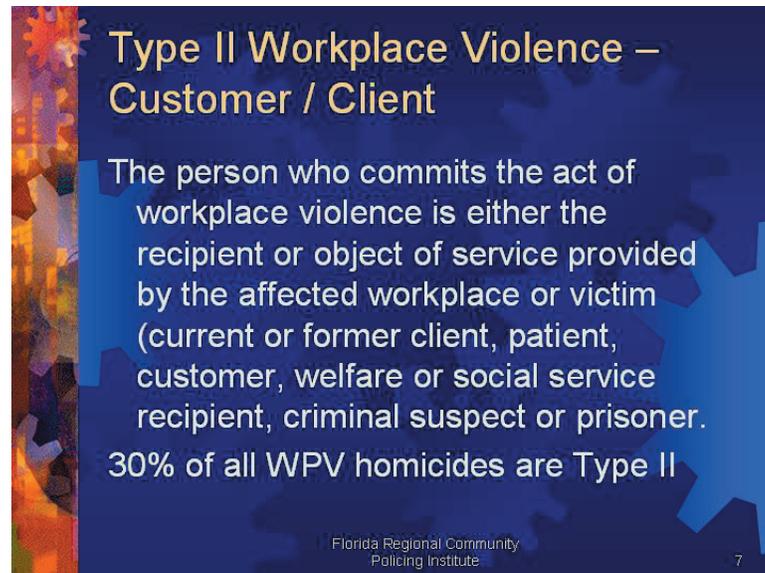
The offender has no legitimate relationship to the workplace or victim and enters the workplace to commit a criminal act (robbery, theft, truck or aircraft hijacking). Usual victims are late night retail, restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, taxi drivers etc.

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.) Thirty percent of all workplace violence homicides are Type II.



- **Type III Workplace Violence - Employee on Employee**

Temporaries and sub contractors are included in the workplace violence term “employee.” The term “workplace” can include incidents which might not start in the workplace itself, but can include problems that “travel” into the workplace from other locations. Type III incidents involve an act of workplace violence by a 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. Ten percent of all workplace violence homicides are Type III.

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

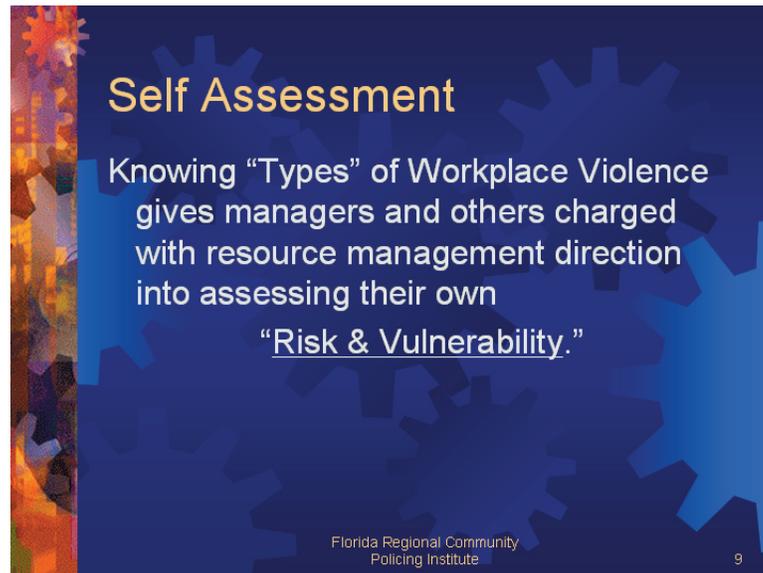
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Practical review and exercise:

First and foremost, we must understand that an incident of workplace violence goes far beyond the media version of an employee “going Postal.” By examining the statistical section of this manual, we are able to see quite clearly the broad scope of this multi-faceted subject.

From an employee being assaulted by an armed robber while exchanging cash with the public, or a purse snatcher assaulting an employee in the business parking lot (Type I) to an angry customer, client or patient assaulting the person performing a service (Type II) or an ongoing domestic quarrel spilling over into the workplace (Type III) – workplace violence is a pervasive and recurring problem from which no employee is immune.

Armed with the understanding of the scope of workplace violence, we are assisted by OSHA’s Classifications of Workplace Violence from which we can organize the potential for incidences of workplace violence in our own place of employment.



Exercise:

One of the goals of this course is to enable each student to obtain a hands-on and practical feel for the details of assessing risk and the best place to start is your own place of employment, and the best time to start is NOW!

Armed with an accurate definition of workplace violence and a knowledge of the types and description of each type of workplace violence, conduct a cursory assessment of your own workplace or sample workplace.

This need not be a daunting or laborious task. Depending on your present knowledge of your sample organization’s functions and physical plant – develop a simple bulleted page (see sample provided on page 10) outlining each category of workplace violence and where within your sample organization the risk might be.

EXAMPLE: Type I - Stranger Workplace Violence:

My company has a bookstore, payment desk, and cashier station where cash money is openly exchanged.

My company has drivers delivering, collecting money, pharmaceutical narcotics, jewelry, computers, (other items commonly thought to have “street value”) and the drivers carry a high profile for potential workplace violence.

EXAMPLE: Type II - Potential for violence while delivering a service:

My company deals with clients, patients or customers in potentially adversarial situations.

Representatives of my company's human relations (HR) department are charged with firing difficult employees.

Employees from my company deal with persons who potentially suffer from severe mental or behavioral disorders.

EXAMPLE: Type III - Potential for Employee on Employee Violence

My company allows people who have been dismissed from the organization to walk back into the workplace at any time without restriction.

There have been incidents in my corporation where employees and their "significant others" have been seen arguing / fighting in the company parking lot / lobby / offices.

Don't Forget to include the location within the workplace - if applicable

Remember: Each location (site) is unique and the combinations of possibilities at each location result in analysis / conclusions and recommendations that are *site specific*.

To further assist in organizing the initial workplace survey – please see the following student aid (on the next page) or fashion your report along the following format. Please expand this form as needed.

Workplace violence incident / profile checklist:

Workplace Violence Classification:

- **TYPE I: (committed by stranger – target: valuables)**

Location within Workplace: _____

Potential Incidents or Prior Incidents: _____

- **TYPE II: (victim assaulted while attempting to deliver service)**

Location within Workplace: _____

Potential Incidents or Prior Incidents: _____

- **TYPE III: (Employee or former employee assault or involved or formerly in a relationship with employee or domestic quarrel / assault within the workplace)**

Location within Workplace _____

Potential Incidents or Prior Incidents: _____

Unit Two:

Workplace Security Basics

Peeling the onion

To further assist in organizing our thinking regarding the various aspects of workplace violence and the prevention of potential acts of workplace violence in our own workplace, please consider how the pieces and elements fit together in an organized fashion and can be applied to our individual circumstances and workplaces.



Please notice the hierarchy or order that the elements appear. These are elements that we will need to consider in order to “get our arms around” the subject / problem of workplace violence and understand how these elements are prioritized and related to each other.

Workplace Security Basics

One of the most common questions security professionals are always asked is, “How do you know for sure you are using all the possible security options available to you at a specific location?”

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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The simple answer is: There are three general classifications that comprise any and all possible security options available to the employer addressing the workplace violence prevention phenomenon.

They are, as follows:

- **Organized Methods**
- **Mechanical Methods**
- **Natural Methods**

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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Organized methods

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 can include:

- Uniformed law enforcement officers and conspicuously marked vehicles
- Uniformed security and conspicuously marked vehicles
- Employee safety committee studying and responding to real and perceived problems within the workplace. (PLEASE NOTE – We will see this option again in this study.)
- Expected behaviors communicated with conspicuous signage at the location where the behavior is expected. (Examples of signage include: Please use front entrance, employees only beyond this point, all visitors must sign in, proper identification required, etc.)

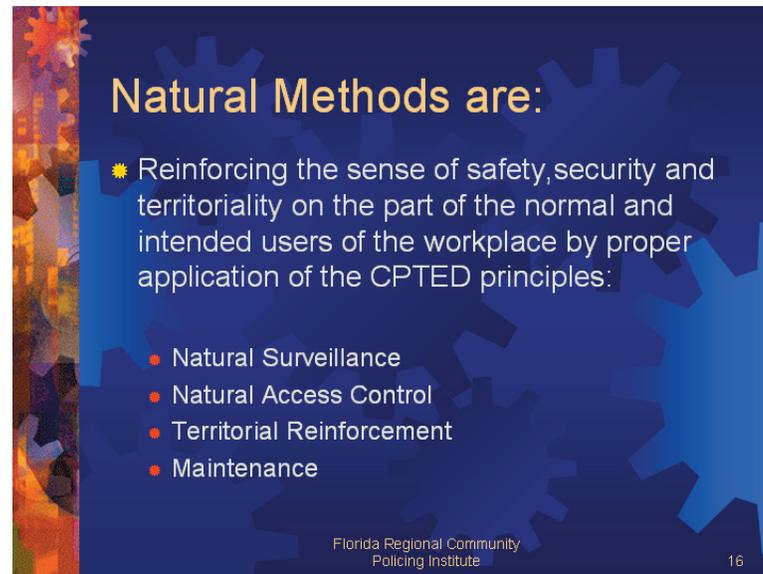


Mechanical methods

Device-based measures used to establish or enhance the security of the workplace.

Examples can include:

- Locks (all types – including, hard keys, electro-magnetic, card entry, biometric, etc.)
- Lights – (with the appropriate Color Rendering Index (CRI) rating)
- Alarms
- Cameras
- Gates
- Fences



Natural methods

Natural methods reinforce the sense of safety, security and territoriality on the part of the normal and intended users of the workplace (employees) by proper application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles listed below:

Natural Surveillance – The ability for the intended user of space to see and be seen.

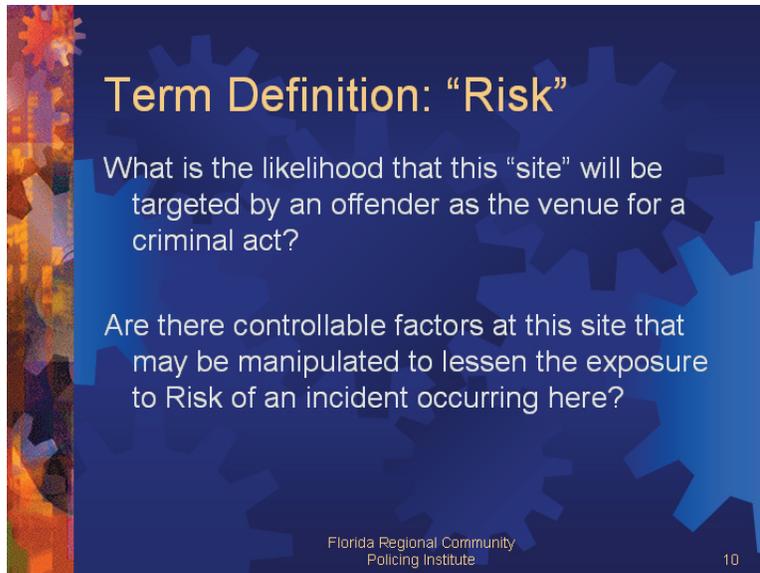
Natural Access Control – The predictable movement of persons into, through and out of a defined site by the judicious placement of entrances, pathways and exits.

Territorial Reinforcement – Reinforcing and clearly marking the “edges” or boundaries of a site so that ownership of each area is easily identifiable and clearly defined.

Maintenance – Maintaining the site so that it is fully functional and able to be used in the effective manner in which it was originally designed to be used.

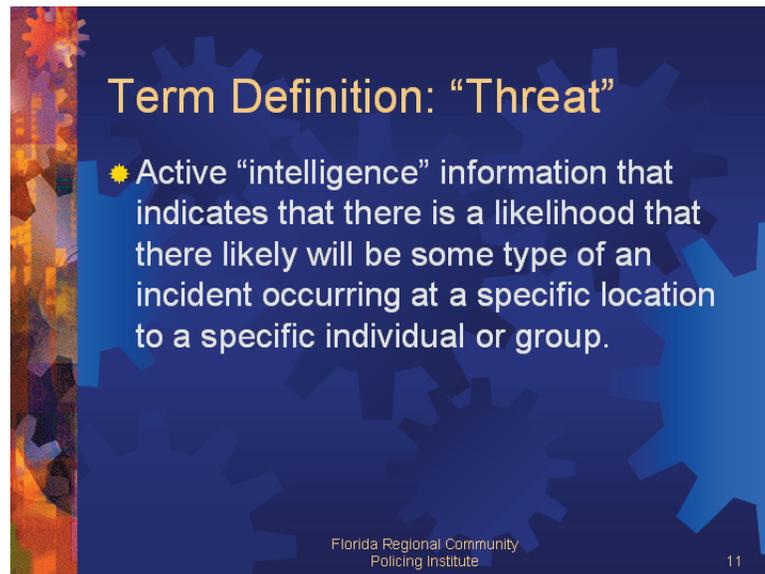
PLEASE NOTE: For additional information regarding the proper application and correct use of CPTED principles, consider enrolling in the Florida Regional Community Policing Institute's (RCPI) 16-hour course entitled *Planning a Win for the Good Guys: Crime Prevention, Displacement and Environmental Design*. You may review the course description and register for the next course offering by accessing the RCPI web site at <http://cop.spcollege.edu>.

Commonly used and misused security related terms and definitions



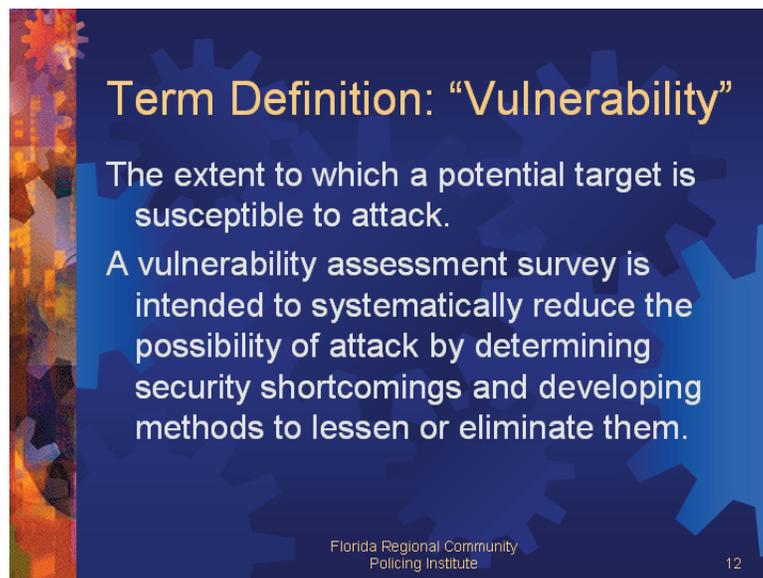
Term Definition: "Risk"

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?



Term Definition: "Threat"

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



Term Definition: "Vulnerability"

The extent to which a potential target is susceptible to attack.

A security assessment survey is intended to systematically reduce the possibility of attack by determining security shortcomings and developing methods to lessen or eliminate them.

Review and practical exercise

Review the section and become familiar with the material in the section entitled “Peeling the Onion.”

Notice that the first “layer” of the onion concerns itself with the “exterior” functionality (or lack thereof) of the workplace site itself.

In our first exercise we reviewed the different types of workplace violence incidents which might occur at our work place and we documented that profile information by location within the site.

In this section we reviewed what kinds of security options are available to us and we will build upon our first documentation by noting the types and condition of the existing site security and we will follow up with our own recommendations in each security option at your own workplace or sample workplace.

Workplace Violence Incident and Security Option Checklist

Location: _____

Incident: _____

Workplace Violence Classification:

- TYPE I: (Committed by Stranger – Target: Valuables) _____

- TYPE II: (Example: Victim Assaulted while attempting to deliver goods or service) _____

- TYPE III: (Suspect: Employee or Former Employee assaulting each other OR involved or formerly involved in a relationship with employee – (Domestic Quarrel) _____

What Type of Existing Security is currently in place at this location?:

Organized: (High Visibility, Labor Intensive, and Rule Intensive – Reinforced with signage such as Uniformed Security and identifiable vehicles – are there applicable rules in place and reinforced with conspicuous signage and evidence of enforcement

(Is there an Employee Safety Committee at this location?) _____

Possible Improvements? _____

Mechanical: (Locks, Lights, Alarms, Cameras, Gates, Fences and device related controls.) _____

Possible Improvements? _____

Natural: (Reinforcing space so that the intended lawful users of the space are encouraged to take control, feel safe and secure in that space and will display challenging behaviors when appropriate)

Existing CPTED Principles:

Natural Surveillance: (The ability for “legitimate users” to see and be seen): _____

Possible Improvements? _____

Natural Access Control: (Predictable movement into, through and out of a site): _____

Possible Improvements: _____

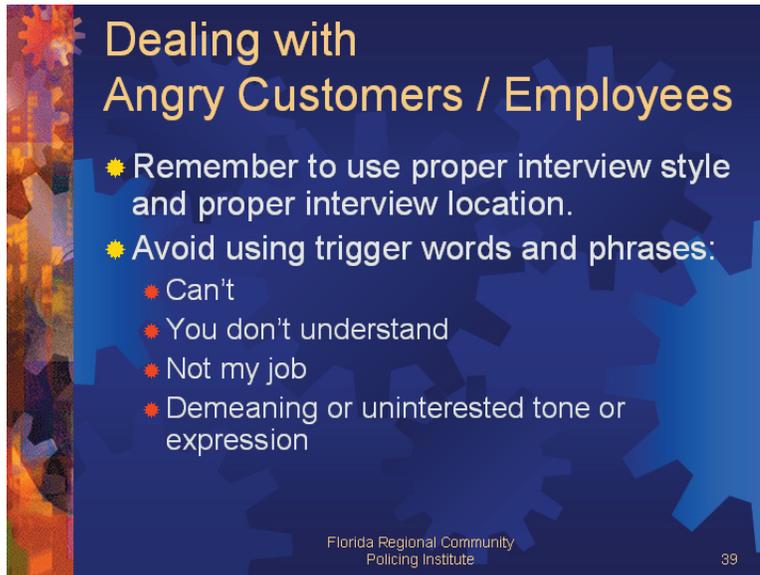
Territorial Reinforcement: (The boundaries of the controlled space are clearly visible and readily identified): _____

Possible Improvements: _____

Maintenance: (The ability to use the site in the manner it was originally designed to be used): _____

Possible Improvements: _____

Unit Three: Dealing with Angry People



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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Introduction

No study of workplace violence would be complete or worthwhile without examining the nearly continuous potential of having to deal with an angry customer, client, co-worker or stranger in the workplace environment. Possibly no other workplace threat source is the subject of more repeated questions or concerns by employees at all levels than is the possibility of having to deal with another person who is upset, angry or enraged. Let's take this problem apart and examine what, if anything, we can do to predict, prevent or diffuse the possibility of a Type I, II or III incident occurring in our workplace.

What do we have to work with?

In our previous modules, we have discussed several situations and referred to several resources that we will elaborate on further in this module.

What makes a person “difficult?”

Generally speaking, “difficult” is considered the least overtly dangerous behavior to deal with in the workplace. A general description of a difficult person might include a person who:

- Works out of the negative side of his/her personality without a conscious desire to difficult
- Displays a “How dare you question me,” or, “We’ve tried all that before” attitude
- Uses arrogance as a defense against vulnerability
- Never seems to want to cooperate with co-workers
- Is not a team player
- Acts argumentative / belligerent, obnoxious or abusive
- Generally is challenging and uncooperative

The end result:

- Co-workers avoid socializing, communicating or dealing with this employee.
- Employees will discount this employee’s opinion.
- People doubt the veracity of what this employee says.
- Employees doubt that this employee really knows his / her job.
- This employee risks disciplinary action and / or termination.

Ways to deal with a difficult person:

- Don’t take hurtful things he / she says to heart
- Accept that you as a co-worker are helpless to change his or her behavior
- Carefully speak up without anger. Clearly identify what feelings or beliefs this person has offended.
- Define your boundaries. Tell this person what you will and will not accept and why.
- Try dealing with this person in new locations. Change your approach and write a letter, rather than deal face to face.
- “Kill” this person with kindness – don’t let their behavior annoy you.
- Show them that you understand.

Angry people

Non-verbal behavior

Generally speaking, a reasonably alert individual can detect or, at the very least, sense that someone they are dealing with is angry – even before that person says his first word. Kinesics, or non-

verbal behavior, represents the unspoken physical behavioral manifestations of anger. What physical signs can we look for that might indicate a person is angry?

- Reddened skin on face and neck
- Clenching and unclenching jaw
- Blood vessels visible on temples and / or sides of neck
- Rapid blinking or no blinking
- Squinting or eyes open exceptionally wide
- Shifting feet, boxer-like posture
- General unsettled appearance
- Pointing fingers
- Clinching and un-clinching fists

Possible verbal responses of an angry person

- Short responses, yes / no, clipped answers
- Voice volume high
- Verbally direct, attacking, abusive or demanding
- Verbalizing threats
- Extreme words such as: “hate, mad, always, you people, I’ll get even.”

How to deal with an angry person

Now is the time to **make a plan.**

- Try not to appear visibly intimidated. Remain calm, serious, and speak softly and slowly.
- Maintain good eye contact. Make this person your primary focus – nod and use physical gestures that reassure the angry person that you really are listening.
- Speak in a non judgmental tone. Avoid blaming, judgmental or patronizing language.
- Get another person to be “visible” in the room.
- Respectfully use the person’s name.
- Don’t be pressured to make promises you cannot keep.
- Take advantage of your environment – find barriers or ways to create distance between you and the angry person.
- Monitor the angry person’s reaction to you. Is this person starting to de-escalate? (Most will calm down.) Is this person getting angrier despite your best efforts to calm and reassure him or her?
- Never respond with anger of your own.

DANGEROUS WARNING INDICATOR: If the subject is becoming increasingly angry – despite all efforts to calm or reassure – you must not hesitate to separate yourself from the situation!

What factors may indicate an incident of workplace violence may potentially occur?

Stress generating events (sometimes called trigger events) which occur in the workplace may include:

- Termination
- Forced lay off
- Extended unemployment
- Forced retirement
- Denied promotion
- Poor evaluation
- Perceived discrimination
- Abrupt management style
- Variety of stress-inducing personal problems
- Employee impairment

What are the common characteristics of employees who are capable of committing workplace violence:

*Source: Workplace Violence Research Institute
www.NoWorkViolence.com*

Common traits possibly identified with potential offenders

- White male, 35 to 45 years of age
- Migratory job history
- Loner with little or no family or social support
- Chronically disgruntled
- Externalizes blame; rarely accepts responsibility for things gone wrong
- Takes criticism poorly
- Identifies with violence
- More than a casual user of drugs and/or alcohol
- Keen interest in firearms and other dangerous weapons
- Hates women or objectifies women
- Demonstrates chronic emotional instability
- Can demonstrate over commitment / over identification with position

Additional warning signs of a potentially problematic employee

Source: Workplace Violence Research Institute – www.noworkviolence.com

Research of more than 200 incidents of workplace violence revealed that, in each case, the suspect exhibited multiple pre-incident indicators that included some of the following behaviors:

- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
- Depression and withdrawal
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
- Threaten or verbal abuse of co-workers and supervisors
- Repeated comments that indicate suicidal tendencies
- Frequent, vague physical complaints
- Noticeably unstable emotional responses
- Paranoid behavior
- Preoccupation with previous incidents of violence
- Increased mood swings
- Has a plan to “solve all problems”
- Resistance and over-reaction to changes in procedures
- Increase of unsolicited comments about firearms and other dangerous weapons
- Empathy with individuals committing violence
- Repeated violations of company policies
- Fascination with violent and/or sexually explicit movies or publications
- Escalation of domestic problems
- Large withdrawals from or closing his/her bank account.

Baron’s Levels of Warning: A forecasting tool used for analyzing employee behavior

Level One:

- Refuses to cooperate with immediate supervisor
- Spreads rumors and gossip to harm others
- Consistently argues with co-workers
- Is belligerent towards customers / clients
- Constantly swears at others
- Makes unwanted sexual comments

Note: One characteristic is NOT indicative of a problem; the following material is provided and intended as a guideline – NOT a hard and fast rule or a factual certainty of future incidents or problems.

Level Two:

- Argues increasingly with customers, vendors, co-workers and management
- Refuses to obey company policies and procedures
- Sabotages equipment and steals property for revenge
- Verbalizes wishes to hurt co-workers and management
- Sees self as victimized by management (me against them)

Level Three:

Frequently displays intense anger resulting in:

- Recurrent suicide threats
- Recurrent physical fights
- Destruction of property
- Utilization of weapons to harm others
- Commission of murder, rape, and/or arson

Source: People Wise: Preventing Violence in the Workplace

Basic principles

Source: www.Work911.com

1. Conflict/Angry situations become negative and destructive when they are not dealt with promptly and effectively. When the situations are dealt with properly, there is a tendency for a team to get stronger and better.

2. While angry employees may appear to want a specific issue addressed, they are looking for something else that they see as equally or more important. They want to be heard. If you don't provide a means for them to be heard, they will find other more subversive ways to be heard (and you won't like it much).

3. Staff will watch very closely to see how you handle anger directed at you. Even if you have a private discussion with an angry employee, staff will know about it. Your ability to lead will depend on your behavior, and the interpretation of your behavior.

4. Most people react to anger directed at them with a fight or flight reaction. That is there is a gut reaction which, unchecked, results in "firing back" with an aggressive manner, defending oneself, OR, avoidance. Only in rare occasions will these gut reactions result in dealing with anger effectively.

Tips & techniques for dealing with angry behavior

1. When an employee expresses anger, deal with it as soon as possible. That doesn't mean in two weeks! By showing a desire to make time to discuss the situation, you are showing that you are concerned, and value the employee and his or her perceptions and feelings. Many performance problems reach crisis proportions as a result of delay in dealing with anger.

2. Certain situations require privacy for discussion since some people will be unwilling to air their feelings at a public staff meeting. However, if anger is expressed in a staff meeting, you can develop a positive climate in the organization by dealing effectively with it in public. One technique is to ask the angry employee whether they would like to discuss it now, or prefer to talk about it privately. Let them call the shot.

3. Always allow the employee to talk. Don't interrupt. If they are hesitant to talk, encourage them by using a concerned, non-defensive tone and manner, and gently use questions. For example:
"You seem a bit upset. I would like to help even if you are angry at me. What's up?"

4. If an employee refuses to talk about what's bothering them, consider adjourning by saying:
"I can understand that you are hesitant to talk about this, but we would probably both be better off if we got it out in the open. Let's leave it for a few days and come back to it."

Then follow up on the conversation.

5. Respond to the employee's feelings first, not the issue underlying the feelings. Use empathy first by saying something like:
"It sounds like you are pretty annoyed with me. I would like to hear your opinion".

6. Before stating "your side" or your perception of the situation, make sure you have heard what the person said. Use active listening.
"George, if I understand you correctly, you are angry because you feel that I have not given you very challenging assignments, and you feel that I don't have any confidence in your abilities. Is that right?"

7. If the employee's perceptions do not match your perceptions express your perceptions in a way that tries to put you and the employee on the same side. Your job is not to prove the employee wrong (even if they are). Trying to prove the employee is incorrect is likely to increase the anger level even if you are right.

“George, I am sorry you feel that way. Let me explain what I think has happened so you can understand my thinking. Then we can work this out together.”

8. A technique used by expert negotiators is to establish agreement about something. Before getting into the issues themselves, lay the groundwork by finding something the two of you agree on. Again, the point here is to convey the message that you are on the same side.

For example:

“George, I think we agree that we don't want this issue to continue to interfere with our enjoyment of our work. Is that accurate?”

9. At the end of a discussion of this sort, check with the employee to see how they are feeling. The general pattern is:

- a) Deal with feelings first**
- b) Move to issues and problem-solving**
- c) Go back to feelings (check it out)**

Ask the employee if they are satisfied with the situation, or simply ask “Do you feel a bit better?” You may not always get a completely honest response, so be alert to tone of voice and non-verbal cues.

If it appears that the employee is still upset or angry, you may want to let it pass for the moment. Allow the person to think about the situation away from you, THEN follow-up in a day or two. This is important because someone who is angry initially may “lose face” by letting the anger go immediately. Or, the employee might just need time to think about your discussion.

Exercise

You are at a community meeting and one of the participants begins to speak loudly and confrontationally to you regarding some of what he thinks are your biased political views. He is sitting in a chair with a rigid posture and clinched fists and wide eyes and tight jaws. His voice level starts to rise as his comments become laced with obscenities and verbal abuses and his behavior is creating quite a disruption in this meeting. The rest of the meeting participants are obviously shocked and are looking to you to see how you are going to respond.

Choose your response:

A. You raise your voice in an attempt to get this person's attention and show that you are "in charge." Once you have gotten this person to stop talking, you openly and publicly reprimand this person for disrupting the meeting and tell the person to leave the meeting immediately as you stare the person down with authority.

B. It is obvious that this person is passionate about his beliefs and the current topic. You consciously make an effort not to make any "sudden" movements. In a calm and confident tone of voice, you tell this individual that you will not continue this discussion. You return the discussion to a neutral topic and you are careful not to open the meeting to any discussion from the "floor."

C. You remain calm and explain to the vocal person that he is welcome to express his opinion, however disruptive, argumentative and obscene language are not acceptable at a public meeting. You tell the person that they need to attempt to collect themselves as you make a conscious effort to display the type of behavior you would like this person to display. You ask this person to present his point of view again as you remain "connected" to him by giving him reassuring eye contact. If the person continues to be disruptive, you calmly summon authorities and take corrective action.

Pre-employment policies and procedures related to preventing and documenting incidents of workplace violence

The importance of comprehensive pre-employment screening and hiring policies cannot be overstated. Thorough and complete hiring practices pay for themselves in terms of:

- Prevention of workplace violence incidents
- Documentation of potential problems and situations
- Threat analysis in the event an incident of workplace violence takes place

Elements of a sound pre-employment procedure

The following elements have proven valuable in the prevention / documentation of workplace violence incidents:

- A comprehensive employment application that is notarized by the employer at the time the application is reviewed and accepted
- A criminal history check is completed by employer
- A civil records check is completed by employer
- A credit check is completed by the employer
- A traffic violation check (if applicable) is completed by employer
- Drug screening is completed by employer

Additionally, employers might consider:

- Personally interviewing references listed on the employee's application
- Personally interviewing neighbors or former neighbors of employee
- Personally interviewing employee's spouse
- Medical examination of employee
- Psychological screening of employee

Although this list may seem daunting and perhaps overdone, we will see in our next section how the knowledge and information generated by a complete employee screening process can prove to be invaluable for several reasons.

The requirements of the established pre-employment screening process will also be factored into an effective workplace violence prevention policy which we will be formulating a little later in this course.

Threat assessment

All threats, in any manner in which they are received (personal, mail, telephone, e mail) *should be taken seriously* and always reported to management and law enforcement.

General Rule: The *more specific* the threat – the *more dangerous* the person making the threat.

Review and practical exercise:

Up to this point:

- We have come to understand the total picture of workplace violence beyond the popularly held worst case incident so often sensationalized in the media.
- We have assimilated an understanding of the OSHA “Categories of Workplace Violence” (Categories I, II, III) and found benefit in the ability to conduct a cursory profile or survey of our own workplace or sample workplace.
- We have documented the potential for the different categories of workplace violence and where within our own workplace they might occur.
- We have been exposed to the “layered security hierarchy” analogous with “Peeling the Onion.”
- We have been exposed and now understand the three basic security options or Basic Tools of Site Security (Organized, Mechanical and Natural) AND we have expanded our conditions survey to include the present condition of those security options in our own workplace and also made suggestions for site improvement in our documentation.
- We have examined the second layer of the “onion” dealing with important pre employment practices and considerations which can prove critical in the prevention of potential workplace violence incidents.
- We have reviewed some possible employee characteristics and workplace behavioral indicators that might forecast an occurrence of workplace violence.

Exercise

Obtain a copy of the workplace violence prevention plan at your place of employment (it may be called some other name) and get familiar with the *basic outline* sections of the document.

Q: What if your place of employment has not developed a workplace violence prevention plan yet?

A: All the better – you will be “in” on the ground floor of assisting in developing a plan from the very beginning.

A place to get started:

Some large corporations and organizations have placed their workplace violence prevention policies on their organizational Web sites. Attempt a web search on any of the popular search engines (I like Google www.google.com – but there are many others) and see how many different workplace violence prevention policies you can come up with. How do they compare with the policy in your own workplace?

Q: Would you like a great resource you could use to build your own workplace violence prevention policy?

A: There are several office resource Web sites on the Internet – so let’s start with one of the most comprehensive sites that I am aware of:

Try: www.officedepot.com and go to the “free downloadable forms” section of the homepage.

Once on the site you will see an excellent resource for many of the common forms used in organizations and businesses for many reasons – not the least of which pre-employment and hiring purposes. Take a close look at the comprehensive list of downloadable forms.

Business Finance

[Balance Sheet Template](#)

[Cash Flow Budget Worksheet](#)

[Customer Statement of Account](#)

[Daily Cash Sheet](#)

[Income Statement Template](#)

[Loan Application, Bank Review Form](#)

[Monthly Bank Reconciliation](#)

[Personal Statement Package](#)

[Present Value Tables](#)

[Sample Collection Letters](#)

[Trial Balance Worksheet](#)
[Unsecured Promissory Note](#)

Compensation & Benefits

[Compensable Work Chart](#)
[Initial Notification of COBRA Rights](#)
[Overtime Guidance](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)
[Profit-Sharing Plan](#)
[Simplified Employee Pensions](#)
[Time-Off Policies](#)
[Workers' Comp Policies](#)

Employee Management

[Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization](#)
[Employee Coaching Script](#)
[Employee Disciplinary Action Form](#)
[Drug Test Policy](#)
[Employee Discipline Aids](#)
[Employee Feedback Script](#)
[Employee Work Rules](#)
[Long Distance Call Log](#)
[No compete Agreement](#)
[Employee Time Sheets](#)
[Sample Absence Policies](#)
[Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
[Smoking Policy](#)

Marketing

[Business Plan Components: Sample Plans Illustrate Required Content](#)
[Customer Satisfaction Survey Form](#)
[Customer Service Action Form](#)

Recruiting & Hiring

[Applicant Information Release](#)
[Applicant Rejection](#)
[Driving Record Check](#)
[Drug Testing Consent Form](#)
[Educational Record Check](#)
[Employer Reference Check](#)
[Employment Reference Phone Script](#)
[Employment Reference Release](#)
[Fair Credit Disclosure Act Notice](#)
[Job Analysis Questionnaire](#)

[Job Description Form](#)
[Job Requirements Checklist](#)
[Personal Reference Check Letter](#)
[Reference Checking Documentation Form](#)
[Sample Employment Application Form](#)
[Sample Independent Contractor Agreement](#)
[Sample Interview Script](#)
[Temporary Help Agency Checklist](#)

Vehicles & Equipment

[Annual Lease Table](#)
[Checklist for Evaluating Used Cars](#)
[Equipment Inventory List](#)

Worker Safety

[Hazard Communication Program Package](#)
[OSHA Form 174 - Material Safety Data Sheet](#)
[OSHA form 300 - Injury & Illness Log and Summary](#)
[OSHA Form 301 - Supplemental Illness and Injury Report](#)
[Sample Emergency Procedures](#)
[Sample Safety Policy](#)
[Sample Workplace Aids Policy](#)
[Sample Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#)

Starting Your Business

[Business Selection Checklist](#)
[Cash Flow Sensitivity Analysis](#)
[Cost Assessment Checklist](#)
[Equipment Lease Checklist](#)
[Family Monthly Budget Form](#)
[Franchise Agreement Checklist](#)
[Projected Staffing Schedule](#)
[Real Property Lease Checklist](#)
[Start-up Checklist](#)
[Strengths/Weaknesses Assessment Checklist](#)

Firing & Termination

[Employment Reference Release](#)
[General Release for Employment Termination](#)
[Termination Checklist and Form](#)

If you are tasked with making your own workplace violence prevention policy, download the “Sample Violence Prevention Policy.” It’s a great place to start.

Now that we have our current employer's workplace violence prevention policy; or, a corporate policy we've found on the Internet that we would like to model, adapt or revise; or, a downloadable workplace violence prevention policy, we now have a place to start as we address creating, revising or retrofitting necessary elements intended to prevent workplace violence incidents from occurring in our own workplace.

Please see the Office Depot Sample workplace violence prevention policy below:

Violence in the workplace prevention policy

Zero tolerance

This company has a policy of zero tolerance for violence. If you engage in any violence in the workplace, or threaten violence in the workplace, your employment will be terminated immediately for cause. No talk of violence or joking about violence will be tolerated.

“Violence” includes physically harming another, shoving, pushing, harassing, intimidating, coercing, brandishing weapons, and threatening or talking of engaging in those activities. It is the intent of this policy to ensure that everyone associated with this business, including employees and customers, never feels threatened by any employee's actions or conduct.

Workplace security measures

In an effort to fulfill this commitment to a safe work environment for employees, customers, and visitors, a few simple rules have been created. These are:

- Access to the company's property is limited to those with a legitimate business interest.
- All employees and employee vehicles entering the property must display company identification.
- All visitors and visitor vehicles must register and display identification while on the property.

All Weapons Banned

The company specifically prohibits the possession of weapons by any employee while on company property. This ban includes keeping or transporting a weapon in a vehicle in a parking area, whether public or private. Employees are also prohibited from carrying a weapon while performing services off the company's

business premises.

Weapons include guns, knives, explosives, and other items with the potential to inflict harm. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

Inspections

Desks, telephones, and computers are the property of the business. We reserve the right to enter or inspect your work area including, but not limited to, desks and computer storage disks, with or without notice.

The fax, copier, and mail systems, including e-mail, are intended for business use. Personal business should not be conducted through these systems. Under conditions approved by management, telephone conversations may be monitored and voice mail messages may be retrieved in the process of monitoring customer service.

Any private conversations overheard during such monitoring, or private messages retrieved, that constitute threats against other individuals can and will be used as the basis for termination for cause.

Reporting Violence

It is everyone's business to prevent violence in the workplace. You can help by reporting what you see in the workplace that could indicate that a co-worker is in trouble. You are in a better position than management to know what is happening with those you work with.

You are encouraged to report any incident that may involve a violation of any of the company's policies that are designed to provide a comfortable workplace environment. Concerns may be presented to your supervisor.

All reports will be investigated and information will be kept confidential.

[The following additional provisions deal with programs that, in general, are limited to larger businesses with a substantial workforce. They may be included, as applicable.]

Training Programs

As part of its commitment to preventing workplace violence, the company has established training programs for all employees. Training will be included as part of your orientation. Thereafter, you will be scheduled for annual refresher training during the month that you initially joined the business.

Please be advised that training is mandatory and attendance will be taken. If you fail to attend training or make-up sessions, you will be subject to suspension without pay until training is completed.

Education Offerings

In order to promote a peaceful working environment, we encourage supervisors and employees to enroll in courses to learn more about working with each other. Courses covering communication, problem solving, building effective working relationships, stress management, and related or similar course topics are supported by tuition reimbursement, offered by our training department and, where appropriate, supported for attendance at outside seminars.

Employee Assistance Program

The company provides an employee assistance program (EAP) for all full-time and part-time employees. This EAP offers services to these employees and their eligible dependents. While we receive periodic reports on the number and types of visits or calls made to the EAP, we do not receive information about individual contacts with the EAP.

You are encouraged to use the EAP whenever you feel the need for guidance in coping with life's difficulties. If you have difficulty handling drugs or alcohol, the EAP can provide information on treatment. The EAP is a confidential service to be used when you need help.

Violence Prevention Team

We have created a violence prevention team to create and implement our workplace violence prevention program. The team will also handle the consequences of any incidents of violence that we experience, providing assistance to employees and information to the media. The team will take the steps necessary to continue or resume business. We believe that a multidisciplinary approach is best suited to handle workplace violence problems.

If you have suggestions for ways to improve the safety and

security at work, please pass them along to a team member or leave a suggestion in any one of their mail boxes.

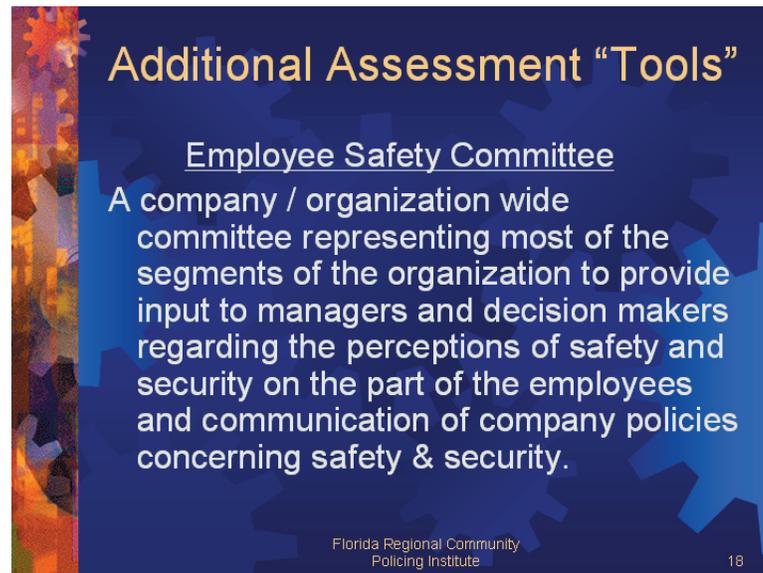
Incident Management

In the event of a major workplace incident that affects, or has the potential to affect, the mental health of our workforce, we will provide initial counseling and support services to you and your immediate family members.

As the crisis passes and support systems are put into place for individuals affected by the incident, the company will make every effort to return to normal business operations. A reasonable effort will be made to notify employees, customers, stockholders, and others who need to know of the status of business operations directly whenever possible. In cases where direct contact is not possible or practical, an effort will be made to communicate through the news media and other available resources.

*Source: Office Depot Business Center – downloadable forms
www.officedepot.com*

Key elements of the workplace violence policy



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.

Florida Regional Community Policing Institute 18

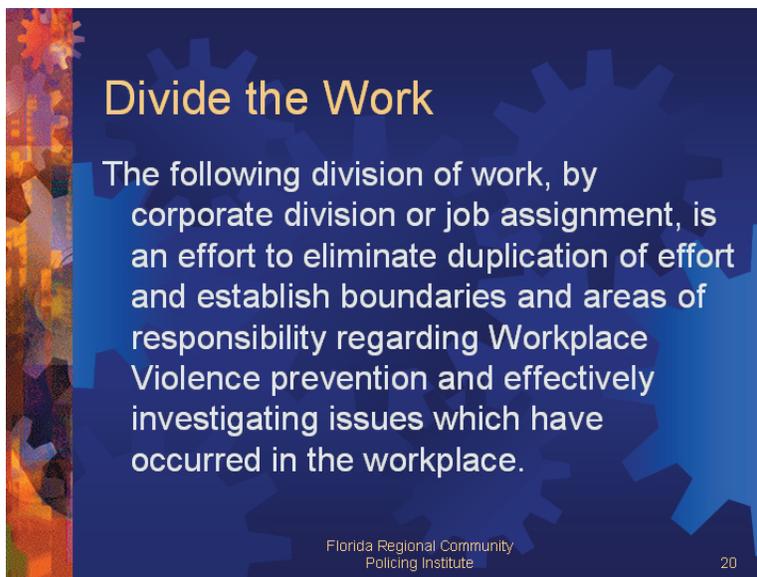
Employee Safety Committee

Whether this vital group is known as the “employee safety committee”, the “violence prevention team,” or any other similar name, this group is integral to the development and implementation of all facets of workplace violence education and management and the importance of this group cannot be overstated. As stated

in the sample workplace violence prevention policy in the section entitled “Violence Prevention Team” – “the multidisciplinary approach is best suited to handle workplace violence problems.” A multi-disciplinary group actively involved in developing, revising and contributing to all things related to workplace violence in your workplace is vital to the success of any employee safety related program.

Training Programs and Educational Offerings

Formalizing an organizational commitment to annual workplace violence prevention training conveys the organizational priority which is necessary for the extended life of a sound prevention program.



How to logically divide the work of implementing a workplace violence plan

The United States Department of Agriculture has formulated a logical division of work in the sometimes daunting task of implementing a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan:

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.

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

Responsibility – Managers / Supervisors

- Inform employees of workplace violence policy and procedures
- Ensure procedures dealing with threats, 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 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 and safety of buildings
- Ensure resources are there for workplace violence training of employees and also new employee orientation
- Ensure performance standards reflect importance of workplace violence training
- Require workplace violence briefings at staff meetings

Responsibility – Human Resources 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

Responsibility – EAP

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

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 and threat assessment and response team

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
- Provide company security expertise 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 regarding security preparedness, budget requests and justifications

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 the company with possible threat and security assessments
- Arrange to train employees on workplace violence at employee meetings and in-service trainings

Responsibility – Conflict Resolution Offices

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

Unit Four:

Examining the Workplace Environment

Domestic violence and the workplace

Nine in ten corporate leaders (91 percent) believe that domestic violence affects both the private lives and the working lives of their employees, according to a survey conducted for Liz Claiborne, Inc. as part of the company's domestic violence awareness campaign. The survey finds that America's corporate leaders have grown more aware of domestic violence as a national problem, and as a problem that affects their employees. Despite the increase in awareness, just 12 percent of corporate leaders say their corporations should play a major role in addressing domestic violence.

Source: Family Violence Prevention Fund at www.endabuse.org

Suffice it to say that domestic violence is a pervasive and persistent problem that affects any workplace. If an abused co-worker seeks intervention in her cycle of abuse and is removed from the abusive environment, her abuser may not know where she is living, however her place of employment remains as a place to make contact with her. This contact holds a high potential for an act of Type III Workplace Violence being committed in the workplace.

For additional information on the many the beneficial courses offered by the Florida RCPI concerning the many aspects and facets of domestic violence, please go to our web site at <http://cop.spcollege.edu>.

Conducting potentially problematic interviews

The environment of the interviewer's work space can either help or hinder the effectiveness and productivity of the interview as well as ensuring the personal safety of all parties involved in the process. The key to achieving safety and effectiveness is *planning ahead*.

Here are some things to think about and avoid if possible:

- Don't conduct potentially difficult interviews in "hard to reach" or remote office spaces. Conduct difficult interviews in neutral areas near the main entrance of the building.



Figure 1: Avoid Long Lonely Hallways

- Plan ahead. Make sure the interviewer has help in the room or nearby. The interviewer must be cognizant of personal dress, personal space and office configuration and decoration. Simple things worn or personal and office decorations and adornments can be potentially used as weapons against the interviewer.

Example: Necktie, scarf, name badge holder, decorative pins, etc.



Figure 2: Many potential weapons?

If the office arrangement cannot be altered – plan ahead. The interviewer must consider personal ability to escape. Questions: Can I jump over my desk? Can I throw something through a window to make an escape? Can I physically defend myself until help arrives?



Figure 3: Space arrangement poorly determined by wall outlets.



Figure 4: Poor planning: Interviewer in armchair - exit is blocked.



Figure 5: Even poorer planning - interviewer is boxed in.



Figure 6: Thinking ahead - Interviewer may leave at any time.

Use space to your advantage. High counter tops present a formidable barrier and provide a margin of safety.



Figure 7: High Counter tops can be a barrier by simply backing away.

Open areas generally provide more opportunities to avoid dangerous situations.



Figure 8: Large open areas afford more security.

Difficult interviews are best handled in neutral areas near exits where distractions and interference can be kept to a minimum.



Figure 9: Neutral areas work best for challenging interviews.

Resources:

Workplace Violence Prevention Resources

Schell, Bernadette H. and Nellie M. Lanteigne. *Stalking, Harassment, and Murder in the Workplace: Guidelines for Protection and Prevention*. Quorum Books: New York. 2000.

- This book presents practical advice on how to recognize, understand, cope with, and prevent stalking and harassment in organizations. Includes detailed analyses of the literature, court cases, and accounts by victims.

The Rockem-Sockem Workplace: By Ronald W. Taylor

- An article discussing legal concerns and tips for employers. It is one of many articles addressing a variety of legal topics provided by Venable, a business law firm.

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