



Did you know that assaults are the fourth leading cause of workplace deaths? According to the National Safety Council, there were more than 18,000 injuries and 450 fatalities that occurred in 2017 alone as a result of workplace violence. Workplace violence can happen at any time. Knowing the behaviors and warning signs that indicate potential violence is necessary in order to stay safe.

This week we will discuss the causes of workplace violence, what warning signs to look for, and how to report unusual behavior. Additionally, we will discuss emergency preparedness in the case of an active shooter.

Monday – Causes of Workplace Violence

There are many causes behind workplace violence. These can range from stress and conflict, to anger and revenge. Having the ability to identify warning signs and respond appropriately puts your company in a better position when it comes to preventing workplace violence incidents.

Here are some of the most common causes of workplace violence:

- **Disgruntled Former Employees and Customers:** Disgruntled former employees and customers can often feel that they were wronged in some way. This may lead to lashing out or attempting to seek revenge against the company.
- **Denial:** It's easy to assume that a violent incident will never occur in your workplace. However, a company in denial is a company most vulnerable to violence.
- **Lack of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):** If a company does not provide Employee Assistance Programs, employees are often left with no resources to address the stressors in their lives.
- **Stress:** Stress from personal life combined with work overload can cause a hostile environment.

Tuesday – Know the Warning Signs

Before any act of violence, there are usually some things that can indicate its potential.

Here are some behaviors that might signal future violence:

- Depression or drastic mood swings
- Absenteeism or withdrawal from duties
- Unusual change in behavior
- Declined job performance
- Frequent policy violations
- Verbalization of wanting something bad to happen to someone within the company



If you notice a coworker displaying any of these warning signs, do not hesitate to notify a supervisor. While these warning signs do not automatically mean a violent incident will occur, ignoring them could lead to negative outcomes.

Wednesday – Reporting Unusual Behavior

We all share a responsibility to create a safe workplace that is free from harassment and violence. Coming face to face with a violent situation is scary and it's easy to let fear take over. However, it is necessary that you do what you can to alleviate the situation.

If you find yourself in a violent situation, here are some steps you must take:

- **Contact Authorities:** Call 911 immediately. Notifying authorities as soon as you are safely able to can minimize the effects of the situation.
 - Ensure your own safety first by removing yourself from the situation if possible.
- **Contact a Supervisor or Human Resources Personnel:** For non-urgent threats, unusual behavior, or suspected domestic violence, talking to a supervisor or human resources personnel is a good course of action.

Unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of an individual or individuals, it's better to report unusual behavior to supervisors or human resources personnel.

Thursday – Active Shooter

Active shooter incidents are unpredictable and can happen in the blink of an eye. They are not localized to any one place as they can occur in the places where we work, learn, shop, and play. Most active shooter incidents are over within a matter of minutes so smart thinking and quick decision making is necessary to keep you safe.

Homeland Security advises on some actions you should take to keep yourself safe in an active shooter situation:

- **Run:** Workplaces should communicate evacuation plans and routes to all employees. Evacuating the area is the first step you should take.
- **Hide:** If you can't evacuate the area, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.
- **Fight:** As a last resort, and if your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter.

How you react in an active shooter emergency can make a significant difference on the outcome.



Friday – Emergency Preparedness Activity

This week we discussed some emergency situations and provided you with ways to act accordingly. Take a moment to identify where some key items are located for emergency preparedness:

- Where is the closest phone to make an emergency call?
- What number would you dial for emergency services?
- Where are the exits? Hiding places?
- Where is the fire extinguisher? First aid kit?