Workplace Violence

It Happens Here, Too

Guidelines for Adoption of Policies for Governmental Entities

MAS Fall Educational Workshop
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A workplace is…

- …any location either permanent or temporary where an employee performs any work-related duty.
    - Includes, but is not limited to, the building, surrounding perimeters, parking lots, field locations, client's homes and traveling to and from work assignments.

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Workplace violence is…

- …any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in a work setting including…
    - …aggravated assault, sexual assault, product tampering, sabotage, homicide, includes acts committed during robberies
- … the second leading cause of death in the workplace overall
- …the leading causes of death in the workplace for females
    - *1 out of 20 women will be the victim of a stalker*

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Violent acts are caused by…

- …disgruntled employee(s)

- …domestic disturbance(s)

- …delusional person(s)

  (i.e. Employees, former employees, contractors, customers & vendors)

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Disgruntled Employee(s)…

- Long Tenure

- Stressor causes violence

- End of the line

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Domestic Disturbance(s)…

Violence spills over into the workplace

80% of workplace violence is domestic violence related.

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Delusional Person(s)…

- Acts against perceived to be wrong

- No connection to organization

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Predictability

Violence doesn't usually just happen,
like the weather, ***it's predictable***.

Patterns and Profiles…

- Look for patterns rather than individual warning signs

- Profiles can help identify potential problems – HOWEVER – they are not all inclusive or exclusive

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Perpetrator "Profile"

- Problem Employee
- History of violent behavior
- Intimidates others
- Possible substance abuse
- Obsessed with guns
- Interested in past acts of violence in the workplace
- Makes open and veiled threats
- Obsessed with work
- Loner

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Perpetrator "Profile"

- Usually Male

- Paranoid

- Can't take criticism

- Holds a grudge

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Perpetrator "Profile"

NO SUPPORT SYSTEM

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Is workplace violence an epidemic?

- CDC says…
  - Violence has reached "epidemic proportions"

  - 111,000 violent incidents occur per year

  - 750 – 1,000 workplace homicides occur per year

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Costs to companies…

- Lose 1,751,100 work days a year
- Domestic violence cost $31 billion a year
- 75% use of company time for personal business
- 54% of battered women miss work an average of 18 days
- 74% of abused women are harassed at work
- 56% of abused women are late for work at least 60 days a year
- 28% of abused women leave work early 60 days a year
- ½ of abused women are disciplined for low job performance

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What can you do?

- Review/modify/implement policies
- Develop a response team
- Create a safe work environment
- Management Commitment and Employee Involvement
- Provide training
- Provide counseling
- Conduct threat assessments

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Management Commitment and Employee Involvement

- Complementary and essential
- Management commitment provides the motivating force to deal effectively with workplace violence
- Employee involvement and feedback-enable workers to develop and express their commitment to safety and health

Management Commitment

- System of accountability for involved managers, and employees
- Create and disseminate a clear policy of zero tolerance for workplace violence
- Encourage employees to promptly report incidents and suggest ways to reduce or eliminate risk
- Ensure no reprisals are taken against employees who report incidents

Management Commitment (cont'd)

- Outline a comprehensive plan for maintaining security in the workplace
- Assign responsibility and authority for program to individuals with appropriate training and skills
- Affirm management commitment to worker supportive environment
- Set up company briefings as part of the initial effort to address safety issues

Employee Involvement

- Understand and comply with the workplace violence prevention program and other safety and security measures
- Participate in employee complaints or suggestion procedures covering safety and security concerns
- Prompt and accurate reporting of violent incidents

Preparation

Policy Review:

- Do your policies address workplace violence? What do they say?
- How responsive are you to workplace violence?
- What are your personnel policies with regard to workplace violence?

WHAT SHOULD POLICIES INCLUDE?

- ZERO TOLERANCE STATEMENT
- Definitions
- Prohibited acts
- Consequences
- Establish Response Team
  - Employee assistance personnel
  - Personnel specialists
  - Medical professionals
  - Law enforcement
- Safety plans
- Reporting mechanisms
- Regular evaluation
- Employee assistance

Administrative and Work Practice Controls

- State clearly to *clients/employees/others*; **violence will not be tolerated or permitted**
- Establish liaison with *local police* and *state prosecutors*
- Require *employees* to **report all assaults and threats**
- Set up *trained response teams* to **respond to emergencies**

Security Responses/Options

- Quick identification and reporting
- Clear instructions
- Lock doors
- Check-in
- Isolate public access areas
- Security guards
- Safe room
- Electronic access control

Security Responses

- Local law enforcement
- Protocols
- Alert law enforcement
- Information flow
- Pre-arranged code
- Coordinated response plan

ANALYSIS OF WORKSITE VIOLENCE INDICATORS

- ANY COMBINATION OF THESE INDICATORS MAY BE CAUSE FOR REPORTING TO DESIGNATED AUTHORITIES FOR FURTHER ACTION:

1) Past history of violent or threatening behavior
2) Co-worker's reasonable fear of an employee
3) Statements of personal stress or desperation
4) Evidence of chemical dependency
5) An obsession with weapons/inappropriate statements of weapons
6) Observed or perceived threatening behavior
7) Routine violations of department policy or rules
8) Sexual and other harassment of co-workers

ANALYSIS OF WORKSITE VIOLENCE INDICATORS

9) Destructive behavior
10) Obsessed with retaliating against workplace for discipline
11) Showing little involvement with co-workers; a "loner"
12) Resistance or over-reaction to changes in agency policies
13) Significant changes in behavior or beliefs
14) Deteriorating physical appearance
15) Statements of excessive interest in publicized violent acts
16) Exhibiting behavior that may be described or perceived as "paranoid"

Training and Education

Workplace Violence Policy

- Ensure that all staff are aware of potential security hazards and ways of protecting themselves

Training and Education

Training program should involve all employees, including supervisors and managers

Training and Education

- Workplace violence prevention policy
- Risk factors that cause or contribute to assaults
- Early recognition of escalating behavior or warning signs
- Ways to prevent volatile situations
- Standard response action plan for violent situations
- Location and operation of safety devices

- ◉ Display educational materials throughout the office
- ◉ Informational materials include but are not limited to Pamphlets, Anti violence Posters
- ◉ Educational materials in restrooms and lounges
- ◉ Educational department wide emails

Recordkeeping and Evaluation

Recordkeeping and evaluation of the violence prevention program are necessary to determine overall effectiveness and identify deficiencies or changes that should be made

Recordkeeping

- Medical reports of work injuries assaults
- Incidents of abuse, verbal attacks, or aggressive behavior
- Information on employees with history of violence
- Minutes of safety meetings, records of hazard analyses, and corrective actions
- Records of all training programs

Evaluation

- Establish uniform violence reporting system and regular review of reports
- Review reports of minutes from staff meetings on safety issues
- Analyze trends and rates in illness/injury or fatalities caused by violence
- Measure improvement based on lowering frequency and severity of workplace violence

Notice someone acting odd?
Picking up on a pattern?

SEE SOMETHING – SAY SOMETHING!

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QUESTIONS?

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