

Workplace Violence: It CAN Happen to You!

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) estimated the number of nonfatal violent crimes occurring against persons 16 or older while they were at work to be well over 500,000 in one year.



What is Workplace Violence?

Any act or threat of violence, harassment, intimidation, or threatening disruptive behavior at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers and visitors.

Am I Really In Danger?

Nearly two million American workers report being victims of workplace violence each year. Unfortunately, many more cases go unreported. Research has identified factors that may increase the risk including:

- Providing services and care where alcohol is served
- Time of day (such as night hours) and work site location (in areas with high crime rates)
- Exchanging money such as delivery drivers, healthcare professionals, public service workers and customer service agents
- Solitary or small group workers

Risk Factors to Consider Regarding Problem Individuals

- Threats, disclosures or actions that signal intent
- Stalking or harassing a target; an unreciprocated romantic obsession
- Pattern of anger problems focused on others in the workplace such as challenging peers and authority figures
- Oppositional or counter-productive attitudes or behavior; a tendency to blame others or exhibit a strong sense of entitlement, defensiveness, self-centeredness, or intolerance of others' rights
- History of interpersonal conflict, violence, or other criminal conduct, in domestic or other settings
- Recent job loss
- A preoccupation with violence, firearms or extremist groups
- History of a mental disorder or substance abuse. Symptoms of paranoia, delusions, hallucinations, extreme agitation, despondency, or suicidal tendencies
- Marked behavioral changes such as depression, irrational beliefs and decline in job performance
- Personal or financial stressors, such as divorce, custody disputes, job or status losses, or deaths in the family; evidence of poor coping skills to such events
- Understanding organizational, supervisor, or workgroup problems that may provoke an individual and how that person perceives of the situation

Factors to Consider After a Risk Assessment of an Individual

- Positive, valued, family, or other personal attachments
- Genuine remorse for concerning behavior
- Has source engaged in problem solving or sought professional treatment?

All other situations should be forwarded to the Crisis Management Team for further review

Upon completion of the initial risk assessment, situations evaluated as no or low risk should be followed-up and resolved outside the crisis management process, for example through relevant human resources channels.

