



Security and Workplace Violence

Brian Bennett, CSP
Norman R Deitch, OHST
National VPPPA Conference
Kissimmee, FL
August 31, 2015



1

Definitions

- **Workplace violence** is any assault, violent act, threatening behavior, harassment, or verbal abuse that occurs in or is related to the work setting and entails a substantial risk of physical or emotional harm to individuals or damage to company resources or capabilities (OSHA)
- A **work setting** 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



6

Contact Info

Brian Bennett
(732) 803-7812
brian.bennett@ehs-excellence.com

Norman R Deitch
(267) 566-7383
norm.deitch@ehs-excellence.com



2

Definitions

Workplace Violence is NOT:

- Annoying behavior
- Disliking a co-worker
- A rude customer

They may be symptoms though!



7

True or False?

- Violence is the leading cause of death on the job
- False!
- The leading cause of death on the job is vehicle accidents



- Violence is the **SECOND** leading cause of death on the job



3

Categories of Violence

- Self-directed
- Non-physical
- Interpersonal violence
- Targeted violence
- Every day violence
- Collective violence
- Warfare
- Terrorist




8

Types of Workplace Violence

Violence by:

- Strangers (31%)
- Co-Workers, Former employees (15%)
- External Visitors or Customers (20%)
- Family members, domestic partners or personal relations (7%)

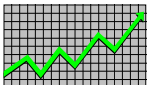

2014 data from www.safety.blr.com



9

Statistics on Workplace Violence


- Homicide is the *second leading cause* of death in the workplace
- Average of 700 annual homicides in America's workplaces over the past 25 years (78% gun related)
- Assaults and threats of violence number *almost 2 million a year*
- 80% of workplace violence is domestic violence related

14

Domestic Disturbance(s)...

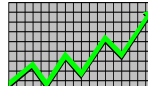

Domestic violence spills over into the workplace



10

Statistics


- Most common form of violence was simple assaults: 1.5 million a year
- Aggravated assaults: 396,000
- Rapes and sexual assaults: 51,000
- Robberies: 84,000

15


Examples of Workplace Violence

- In Maryland, a man shoots and kills a co-worker in the city's DPW Yard (3/2016)
- In Kansas, 3 employees were killed at a lawn care products factory by an employee recently served a PFA (3/2016).
- In Massachusetts, a co-worker murders a chef at PF Chang's (9/2015)
- In NYC a fired US DOL employee walks into the FOB and kills by gun fire a security guard and then kills himself (8/2015)




11

Economic Impact of Workplace Violence

Cost 

- 500,000 employees lose **1,175,100 work days** each year
- Lost wages: **\$55 million** annually

\$ BILLIONS \$



17

Workplaces at Risk



- Working with public or volatile, unstable people (taxi and for hire drivers)
- Working alone or in isolated areas
- Handling money and valuables (convenience retail)
- Providing services and care (healthcare, social services)
- Working where alcohol is served
- Time of day and location of work (late night retail)
- Working in high crime areas
- Guarding property or possessions
- Contact with the public



18

Early Personality Warning Signs of Escalating Behavior



- Confusion
- Frustration
- Withdrawal (loner)
- Uncooperative
- Defensive
- Argumentative
- Verbally abusive

21

Workplace Violence Includes:


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Beatings · Stabbings · Suicides · Shootings · Rapes · Near-suicides · Psychological traumas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Threats or obscene phone calls · Intimidation · Harassment of any nature · Being followed, sworn or shouted at
---	---

19

Possible Underlying Issues


- Personal problems
- Financial
- Business uncertainty
- Health
- Family turmoil
- Advancing age



22

Predictability


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



20

Early Work Warning Signs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sudden persistent complaining of unfair treatment · Missed schedules · Confusion/Frustration · Blaming others for problems · Threats to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Decline in job performance · Increased tardiness or absenteeism · Refusal to accept criticism · Change of work habits
--	--



23

Initial Responses to Warning Signs

- Personal intervention
- Professional intervention (EAP)
- Counseling



24

Preparation

Check to see:

- How many **policies** deal with workplace violence?
- How **responsive** is the company to acts of violence?
- Does the company **allow** you to **fire** someone on the spot for **assault**?



27

National Benchmark Survey

Employer Readiness

- 31% - no programs, support of help
- 23% - given access to counseling and assistance
- 18% - provided information and referral to DV programs
- 18% - provided flexible leave and other benefits
- 12% - assisted in contacting authorities
- 12% - provided security



25

Preparation

- As anger goes up the ability to think declines
- The companies grievance procedure tells the perpetrator who to deal with



28

How Do You Prepare?

- Three things that you should look at are:
 1. The *personnel manual*
 2. The *grievance procedure*
 3. The company *news letter/paper*
- They will tell you about the **company culture**, about what's happening, what's expected, and how far employees may go



26

Preparation

- It is very important to remember that *violence does not just happen*.
- Individuals perpetuating workplace violence want validation not help!



29

Prevention Strategies (External Risk)

- Don't work alone late at night or early morning
- Call for a security escort if working late
- Carry a cellular phone
- Redesign workspace to prevent entrapment
- Train staff in ways to diffuse violence
- Place curved mirrors at hallway intersections
- Maintain good lighting indoors and outdoors
- Prepare plan for consumers who "act out"
- Control access to employee work areas



30

Management's Role

- Create a safe work environment
- This duty is dictated by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Respondent Superior dictates that *principals* (employers) are liable for the actions of their *agents* (employees)



33

Internal Risk Factors Include

- Highly competitive sectors with intense workloads, e.g. food processing
- Restructuring of an organization, e.g., impending layoffs
- Ignoring warning signs from certain individuals who have a gripe with co-workers or management
- Allowing an ongoing feud between co-workers to go unaddressed by management
- Chronic verbal abuse by a supervisor towards workers
- Denial on the part of management regarding employee tension or favoritism towards one party
- Old school mentality by management that tolerates and enables supervisor abuse



31

Preparation

- Identify liaison with responders
- Prepare and review floor plans
- Establish meeting point(s)
- Establish accountability procedure
- Prepare personnel lists
- Include contact information



34

Prevention Strategies (Internal Risk)

- Risk Assessment: Confidential survey of all employees designed to uncover internal risk factors, coupled with analysis of external risk factors
- Presentation of overall risk analysis to top management, along with supporting facts
- WPV training for all levels of organization
- Sensitivity training for high-risk employees as necessary
- Follow-up survey of employees to gauge impact of training



32

Management's Role

To put it simply:

"If the employer knows -- or should have known -- of information indicating that a person is a risk for committing violence, the employer is responsible for any violent acts that that person commits."



35

Recognizing Violent Potential

- It can be very difficult to know when a person is going to be violent. While not all people will show the following signs, these types of behaviors and physical signs can serve as warning signs that a situation could turn violent
- One warning sign may not be a particularly strong predictor of violence but numerous warning signs increase the potential for violence



36

Recognizing Violent Potential

Socially Isolated:

- *History of negative interpersonal relationships*
- *Few family or friends*
- *Views the workplace as a home and coworkers are "family"*
- *Has obsessive involvement in his or her job*
- *Recent job loss*



39

Warning Signs of Hostility

1. Physical actions or threats appear imminent
2. There is immediate danger of physical harm or property damage
3. Out-of-control behavior signals the person has crossed the line



37

Recognizing Violent Potential

Intimidating Behavior:

- *Argumentative*
- *Unwarranted anger*
- *Uncooperative, impulsive, easily frustrated*
- *Challenges peers and authority figures*
- *Speaks loudly and/or quickly*
- *Wild gestures*
- *Aggressive stances*



40

Recognizing Violent Potential

History of Violence:

- *Fascination with weapons, acts of violence or both*
- *Demonstrated violence towards inanimate objects*
- *Evidence of earlier violent behavior*

Threatening Behavior:

- *States intention to hurt someone*
- *Holds grudges*
- *Excessive behavior (phone calls, gift giving, obsessions)*
- *Preoccupation with violence*



38

Recognizing Violent Potential

Negative Personality Characteristics:

- *Suspicious of others*
- *Sense of entitlement*
- *Unable to take criticism*
- *Feels victimized*

Marked Changes in Mood or Behavior:

- *Extreme or bizarre behavior*
- *Irrational beliefs or ideas*
- *Appears depressed or has heightened anxiety*
- *Marked decline in work performance*



41

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



42

Techniques to Diffuse Violence

Some violent situations cannot be stopped; however, there are proven techniques that you can use and steps that can be taken to reduce a situation that is escalating



46

Typical 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
- Holds a grudge
- Makes open and veiled threats
- Obsessed with work
- Loner
- Usually Male
- Paranoid
- Can't take criticism



43

Why don't employees report suspicions?

- Fear of becoming a target
- Fear of retaliation
- Don't want to get involved



47

Initial Responses to Hostility

1. Disengage with the person and evacuate the area
2. Attempt to isolate the person if it can be done safely
3. Alert your supervisor and contact security immediately



45

Techniques to Diffuse Violence

Things to do when dealing with a potentially violent person:

- *Assess the situation in your mind*
- *Project calmness*
- *Be patient, empathetic and encourage the person to talk*
- *Focus your attention on the person so they feel that you are interested in what they have to say*



48

Techniques to Diffuse Violence

More things to do when dealing with a potentially violent person:

- *Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture, position yourself at a right angle instead of directly in front of the person*
- *Ask for small specific favors, such as if you could talk in a quieter area.*
- *Be reassuring and point out choices*
- *Arrange yourself so that your exit is not blocked*
- *Do not fake empathy or place blame*

Security

- Physical
- Administrative

Techniques to Diffuse Violence

Actions to avoid when dealing with a potentially violent situation:

- *Do not be the hero*
- *Your focus should be diverting the aggressive individual and keeping others safe without putting yourself in harm's way*
- *Do not make promises you cannot keep*
- *Do not make physical contact with the individual*

Responding to Imminent Threats

- Deflection
- Diffusion
- De-escalation

General Guidance

- Assess
- Coordinate
- Implement
- Exercise
- Improve

Responding to Imminent Threats

- Remain calm
- Speak softly
- Respect personal space – keep a safe distance
- Buy time
- Focus on the person and not the weapons
- Negotiate – get as many “yes” responses as you can

Active Shooter

(<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cirg/active-shooter-and-mass-casualty-incidents/run-hide-fight-video>)



Hide

- Stay out of view
- Lock or block entry
- Silence cell phones
- Text for help

Questions



Fight

- Choose weapon that can be handled
- Fight dirty – no holds barred
- Gang up – power in numbers (remember flight 93)

Run

- Know the escape route
- Leave belongings behind
- Don't look back

CRASE

- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events*
 - Avoid – by getting out
 - Deny – by hiding and barricading
 - Defend – by fighting back

*Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University

Interface With Law Enforcement

- Keep hands visible
- Keep hand empty
- Don't approach with force
- Inform law enforcement
 - How many gunmen
 - Description(s)
 - Number and type of weapon(s)
 - Number of actual and potential victim(s)



63