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 worksite. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, contractors, and many others.

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 other outside influences. Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, coworker, customer, family member, or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.

There is no sure way to predict human behavior and, while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. The best prevention comes from identifying any problems early and dealing with them.

You can expect at some point in your career to encounter individuals who don’t share your individual or your company’s core ethic of fairness, dignity, and respect. There are appropriate and effective ways to deal with such persons to avoid or minimize the damage they seek to cause, and everyone needs to educate themselves on those methods.

In addition, supervisors and managers have the obligation to deal with inappropriate behavior by their employees and customers, to provide employees with information and training on workplace violence, and to put effective security measures in place.

The following sections provide more detailed description of the responsibilities of various persons or offices.

All employees should:

- Be familiar with department and agency policy regarding workplace violence.
- Be responsible for securing your own workplace.
- Be responsible for questioning and/or reporting strangers to supervisors or the appropriate authority.
- Be aware of any physical or verbal threats and/or any disruptive behavior of any individual and report such to supervisors.
- Be familiar with local procedures for dealing with workplace threats and emergencies.
- Do not confront individuals who are a threat.
- Take all threats seriously.
Managers and Supervisors should:
- Inform employees of department and agency workplace violence policies and procedures.
- Ensure that employees know specific procedures for dealing with workplace threats and emergencies and how to contact police, fire, and other safety and security officials.
- Ensure that employees with special needs are aware of emergency evacuation procedures and have assistance (as necessary) regarding emergency evacuation situations.
- Respond to potential threats and escalating situations by utilizing proper resources from the following: local law enforcement and medical services, human resources staff, and the Employee Assistance Program.
- Take all threats seriously.
- Check prospective employees' backgrounds prior to hiring.
- Coordinate with other collocated agencies to develop joint workplace violence prevention plans.

How EAP can help:
- Provide short-term counseling and referral services to employees at no cost.
- Help in the prevention of workplace violence through
  - Early involvement in organizational change.
  - Training employees in dealing with angry coworkers and customers, conflict resolution, and communication skills.
  - Training supervisors to deal with problems as soon as they surface without diagnosing the employee’s problem.
  - Consultation with supervisors to identify specific problem areas, develop action plans to resolve problems in the early stages, and encourage employees to contact the EAP for individual counseling.
  - Consultation with incident response teams when a potential for violence exists or an actual incident is reported.
  - Participation on critical incident stress debriefings teams in the event of a violent situation.

Resources Are Available
Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.FOH4YOU.com. Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.
Employee Assistance Program

We care, just call.

1-800-222-0364

1-888-262-7848 TTY Users

www.FOH4YOU.com