

SPECIAL POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- From a Crisis Team
- Create a Zero Tolerance Policy
- Publicize Your Policy
- Use Caution with Terminations
- Assess Your Risk
- Be Alert to Work Situations that Could Lead to Violence
- Warnings of Potential Violence in Individual
- Take Action
- Personal Problems Can Lead to Workplace Violence

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# Hats ON for Safety

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## Grrrr!

**Homicide is the second leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the U.S.** Workplace violence is a serious problem. Frightening and sometimes tragic incidents of workplace rage are being reported more frequently. Widespread lack of agreement about what is and is not threatening behavior—what can be accepted or overlooked and what should be reported—is a major contributor to the problem of workplace violence.

**Form a Crisis Team** The teams primary responsibilities are to track incidents of violence throughout the company and to train supervisors on the com-

### Be Alert to Work Situations That Could Lead to Violence

People may be more likely to go over the edge when they:

Are fired or laid off or fear they may be.

pany's policies.

**Create a Zero Tolerance Policy** This can be an opportunity to state the positive values most important to your company—five or six admirable qualities you want your people and products to stand for.

**Publicize Your Program** widely and often. Place in handbook, require a signed receipt, place on bulletin boards. An anti-violence program that workers aren't aware of won't do any good.

**Use Caution with Terminations** Take special care when an employee is discharged or laid off. Terminations can and should be managed with tact and re-

spect which will prevent an angry response.

**Assess Your Risk** Here are the risk factors most often included to look for

- Employee struggling with



domestic violence.

- Cash handling.
- Considerable public contact.
- Late night shifts and/or isolated worksites.
- Anticipated downsizing or major reorganization.
- Recent automation or other retooling to boost productivity.
- Signs of poor workforce morale.

counted on.

Have a hostile relationship with another employee.

Workplace violence may also result when a bad personal situation spills over into the workplace. (abusive spouse comes after a partner)

## Warnings of Potential Violence in Individual

The more of the following signs a person displays, the greater the risk:

- Makes threats of violence, getting back at someone.
- Intimidates others.
- Gets very angry easily and often.
- Uses abusive language.
- Lets people know he/she owns weapons.
- Brings weapons to work.
- Likes to talk about violent crime.
- Believes others are out to get him/her.
- Blames problems on others.
- Holds grudges.
- Is rigid and inflexible.
- Has a drug or alcohol abuse problem.
- Suffers from extreme stress.
- Demonstrates mood swings.
- Has a history of violence.

## Take Action

- Follow and enforce workplace security rules.
- Report any direct threats of violence.
- Be alert for signals that a potentially violent person's problems are getting worse—monitor troubling changes in behavior or circumstances, recognize that a person can show warning signs of violence, but never act violently.
- Don't ignore troubling employee behavior, statements or attitudes.
- Be aware of workers' personal situations that could bring violence to work.
- Have another person present when you have to fire or give a warning.
- Get keys, passes, ID numbers, entry materials before discharged employee leaves.

What are \*YOU\* worried about? Let us know safety topics that could help keep your workplace safe!

## Personal Problems Can Lead to Workplace Violence

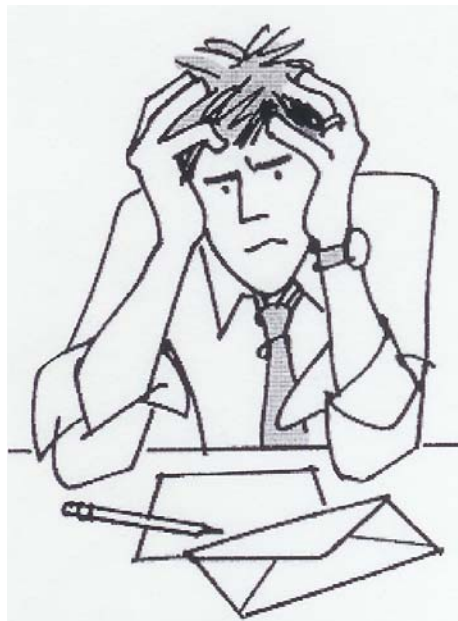
*Be alert to employees personal situations that could bring violence to the workplace.*

*An employee could be pushed over the edge by:*

- A failed or one-sided relationship
- Serious family health or financial problems.
- Serious personal problems combined with job-related problems.
- Substance abuse, especially if combined with other problems.
- Emotional or mental illness that focuses anger on the job or co-workers.

*Violence could follow an employee to work in the form of:*

- An irrationally jealous partner.
- An abusive partner.
- A partner unable to accept a divorce or the end of a relationship.



- A stalker or someone obsessed with the employee.

*To protect employees, OSHA recommends*

- Provide safety education. Local police departments can give training on awareness, avoidance, and prevention of mugging, robbery, and assaults.
- Establishing a communication system, such as a cellular phone, for employees to use while in the field.
- Assuring proper maintenance of employer provided vehicles.
- Establishing procedures to decrease the risk of robbery (e.g. advise employees not to carry purses).

*Some information in this newsletter was taken from Business and Legal Reports; Defuse the Violence, Employer Resource Institute*