

ATTACHMENT A  
Policy No. 800.002

Workplace Violence Mitigation and Prevention

Historical evidence has shown that Workplace Violence occurs in almost any work setting. Experience has shown that the frequency and severity of workplace violence incidents can be minimized by the actions of management to reduce the risk potential. In developing workplace violence mitigating and prevention strategies, an organization must address the employment, domestic, and facility sources of potential workplace violence scenarios. The following addresses these potential sources separately.

EMPLOYMENT:

Employment strategies should address all phases of employment, including the pre-employment process, employment, and termination of an employee.

- A. The pre-employment process is for the most part, to identify applicants most qualified for a position. Inherent in the process is to identify those that do not meet the requirements of the position. The pre-employment process should include the following:
  1. Review employment history for gaps in employment. Reasons for gaps in employment include:
    - a. Suspensions and terminations or non-qualified status, such as, license revocation for truck drivers, doctors, lawyers, real estate agents, etc. (Verify with issuing agency, obtain current traffic abstract, etc.)
    - b. "Self employment" can be used to disguise undesirable gaps in employment history. However, as the nation's economy worsened, many employees were laid off. These conditions are understandable but must be questioned more closely to ascertain the veracity of such statements.
    - c. The individual was detained in prison or otherwise not available for employment.
  2. Reference check of past employers is very important. Verify names of previous supervisors and how the supervisors can be contacted. Federal DOT rules require applicants for Commercial License Driver positions to provide a 10 year work history on applications

and a statement from the previous employer on drug and alcohol testing history.

3. Radical changes in employment history can denote exclusion from a particular field of employment because of a personal or legal mandate. (For example, a pedophile is mandated disassociation from any work with youngsters.)
  4. Criminal history checks are required in most positions. Applicants with a history of violence/aggressive behavior convictions should be restricted from certain types of employment, i.e. Lautenberg amendment to the Federal Gun Control Law.
  5. Negative controlled substance test results are required as part of the qualification process for some positions.
- B. Mitigating and prevention activities include the assessment of workplace for workplace violence risk and the implementation of a Workplace Violence Program based on that assessment. The program should include:
1. The department's statement of intolerance to acts of workplace violence.
  2. Promotion of the program and information on how employees can report incidences or acts of workplace violence.
  3. Investigation of all reports of workplace violence immediately.
  4. Requirement that employees attend an approved workplace violence training program. (HRD/Safety provides periodic supervisor and employee workplace violence programs. These programs were developed in collaboration with the HGEA and UPW.)
  5. Ensure that supervisors and managers understand their investigation and reporting responsibilities.
  6. Promote awareness of employee assistance programs.
  7. Ensure that sanctions are implemented for infractions of the policy including sanctions to supervisors who fail or refuse to report acts and incidences of workplace violence.
- C. Termination is often a traumatic act for all involved, irrespective of the reason for termination. In a situation of scarce jobs, limited job mobility,

and a close community, termination or the belief of impending termination can be devastating to an employee. Progressively, after termination, an employee may realize loss of financial independence, socialization, personal and family safety, and security. Therefore, retribution may not be immediate, and may fester for months, and even years. The situation becomes more problematic as relationships disintegrate. Many workplace violence behaviors are due to the abrupt or callous way the employee was terminated. Suggestions to minimize such behavior include:

1. Follow bargaining unit contract provisions for included bargaining unit employees; policies and procedures, rules, or statutes for non-bargaining unit employees. This includes following any and all requirements for progressive discipline before termination.
2. Let the police and legal system handle the retribution and consequences of criminal activity by an employee.
3. Where appropriate and available, provide a short term counseling program as part of the termination process.
4. Information on employee termination should be kept strictly confidential and such information shall only be shared on a need to know basis.
5. All terminations should be coordinated with the personnel and other offices that interact with the employee so that all state property (keys, equipment, tools) is returned to the state and access to computers, offices, etc. are voided.
6. Once informed of termination, avoid permitting employee to stay on premises. This may require a delivery method for personal effects and pay check - mail, bank, security office, or pick up at a location the department selects.
7. Inform the employee that when terminated, entry into the facility is prohibited (where possible have employee sign a statement to that effect).
8. Whenever possible, conduct the termination in the later part of the week (last work day of the week) and at or near the end of a workday. Have security personnel reasonably close during the interview and to escort terminated employee out of the facility. This serves to minimize intrusion of work activity, maintain confidentiality, and provide the terminated employee the week end to cool off.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The workplace is the most identifiable place to locate an individual who is avoiding contact with another person. In cases where an individual intentionally moves from his/her customary place of residence to avoid unwanted phone calls or contact with a person, the perpetrator's choice is usually to seek the individual at work. Please refer to Policy & Procedure 501.006 ("Victims Protections") for a summary of mitigating measures.

## FACILITY SOURCES (TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY)

Targets of opportunity for workplace violence are largely determined by the function and type of operations of the organization. Historically, organizations that exchange money for goods or services such as banks, stores, art museums, and anyone, or anywhere, that displays a wad of money are more susceptible to violence.

Organizations that have the ability (power) to grant or deny perceived objects of value are at greater risk for workplace violence than those that do not. These organizations typically are those that provide licenses, permits, food stamps, income maintenance, workers' compensation disability compensation, highly desired tickets (sports, theater, concerts, etc.), and the like. The target of aggressive behavior can include organizational assets away from the traditional workplaces like the department's vehicles, property and even to employees on the road or official trips (personal effects, money, car, etc.).

Organizations with 24 hour operations with dark parking lots, locations in economically deprived neighborhoods, or small number of employees in a shift change, are more subject to workplace violence. Mitigating and prevention strategies for these conditions include increasing security and changes to workplace layout and design. In some instances, operational procedures can reduce the risk of exposure. Mitigating and prevention activities include:

1. Conduct risk assessments to determine the level of potential violence.
2. Review electronic security opportunities vs. security personnel.
3. Review workplace barrier designs to limit exposure risks.
4. Installation of alarm or help systems (color code and benign statements).
5. Reposition manager to area of confrontation.

6. Rotate personnel in public contact position.
7. Workplace design with personnel facing area of potential conflict.
8. Schedule large money transfers in irregular patterns.
9. Unmarked vehicles.