Four Categories of Workplace Violence and Prevention Strategies



What's at Stake?

There are four generally agreed upon categories of workplace violence. Once you know what the categories of violence are you and your employer can practice ways to protect you, co-workers, and the public from harm.

1. *Type 1* Criminal Intent: Violent acts by people who enter the workplace to commit a robbery or other crime; or current or former employees who enter the workplace with the intent to commit a crime.
2. *Type 2* Customer/Client/Patients: Violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, students, inmates or any others to whom the employer provides a service
3. *Type 3* Co-worker: Violence against co-workers, supervisors or managers by a current or former employee, supervisor or manager.
4. *Type 4* Personal: Violence in the workplace by someone who does not work there, but who is known to, or has a personal relationship with, an employee (such as a domestic partner).

What's the Danger?

Consider these four real-life examples of workplace violence…

- *Two masked men walked into a food mart, killed the 44-year-old male co-owner by shooting him several times with a handgun, ripped away the cash drawer, and fled from the scene.*
- *A 27-year-old mechanic in an autobody shop was fatally shot in the chest by a customer after they argued about repairs.*
- *An ongoing argument between two delivery truck loaders at a furniture company distribution warehouse ended abruptly as one pulled a gun and shot the other to death.*
- *A 24-year-old woman who worked in a grocery store was taken hostage at gunpoint and then shot to death with multiple shotgun blasts by her 20-year-old ex-boyfriend*

How to Protect Yourself

Start by learning how to recognize, avoid, and diffuse potentially violent

situations. This comes from training provided by your employer and other sources of information.

Type 1 Criminal Intent Prevention Strategies

1. Cash control and safe handling procedures for cash.
2. Use of security cameras and security signs
3. Carry only minimal money and required identification into community settings.
4. Limit public access inside – i.e. don't leave backdoors open or unlocked.
5. Well-lit establishments – both inside and outside.
6. Training on robbery response; safety equipment (alarms, panic buttons, safety controls on a safe or cash register); conflict management/dealing with aggressive or drunk people.
7. Avoid traveling alone into unfamiliar locations or situations whenever possible.

Type 2 Customer/Client/Patients Prevention Strategies

1. Learn to pick up on behavioral cues preceding violence.
2. Learn violence de-escalation techniques and other related interpersonal and communication skills, new requirements (in healthcare) for patient seclusion and restraint, and proper restraint and take-down techniques

Type 3 Co-worker Prevention Strategies

1. Immediately report threatening, harassing, bullying, stalking, and other types of menacing behaviors or actions.
2. Look out for co-workers who are the target of these behaviors and actions; support them and encourage them to report it.

Type 4 Personal Violence Prevention Strategies

1. Read your organization's policy
2. Be familiar with intimate partner violence – the observable traits and cues, and methods for discerning it in coworkers.
3. Communicate with your manager and HR if you are experiencing domestic violence or other type of threats or abuse by a family member or friend. Your employer should be privy to this information, along with any restraining orders or orders of protection you have out on someone

Final Word

Recognize the warning signs, take the right preventative measures, and communicate with your employer to keep you and others safe from workplace violence.