

52nd NATIONAL SAFETY WEEK CELEBRATION

March 6th 2023 – Guard against violence on the job

“The ramifications of workplace violence can have a lingering effect on the organization for generation”

~ Asa Don Brown



Today's violent crime is a terrible reality, and it does happen at work place. Everyone should be aware of some fundamental principles for maintaining personal security. Workplace violence is defined by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as any act or threat of violence, including verbal or physical abuse of those who are working or performing official duties. Acts that harm an organization's assets or capabilities can also be considered forms of workplace violence. Bullying and harassment at work are often regarded as types of workplace violence by employers. Domestic violence that spills over into the workplace in the form of attacks, threats, or other incidents that happen there by outside individuals with whom employees have relationships is also included in this context.

Research has uncovered factors that may make some Employees more vulnerable to violence at particular workplaces. Working alone or in isolated places can potentially increase the risk of violence. The chance of violence may also be affected by providing care and services and working in an environment where alcohol is supplied. Employers can prevent or reduce the likelihood of assault in the majority of workplaces when risk factors may be identified by taking the necessary precautions. Establishing a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence is one of the strongest protections organizations can give their employees. **“Zero tolerance policies forbid people in positions of authority from exercising discretion or changing punishments to fit the circumstances subjectively; they are required to impose a pre-determined punishment regardless of individual culpability, extenuating circumstances, or history.”**

The key is to be ready for any kind of workplace violence. The advantages of having resources and qualified individuals who handle the security effort are available to larger firms with strong security departments. Even though, the general counsel or the head of human resources is frequently held accountable for smaller businesses that have scant or no security procedures in place.

The following examples of employment situations that may pose higher risks of workplace violence:

- Duties that involve the exchange of money.
- Delivery of passengers, goods or services.

- Duties that involve mobile workplace assignments.
- Working with unstable or volatile people in health care, social service or criminal justice settings.
- Working alone or in small numbers.
- Working late at night or during early morning hours.
- Working in high-crime areas.
- Duties that involve guarding valuable property or possessions.
- Working in community-based settings.
- Working in a location with uncontrolled public access to the workplace.

Despite our best efforts to stop workplace violence, instances do happen occasionally. Although there is no failsafe way to completely eliminate workplace violence, using the prevention techniques suggested by experts and covered in this toolbox can be quite successful. When violence does occur at work, businesses may be ready by seeing the threat early, responding correctly by enlisting law enforcement and other specialists, and making sure that all staff members are aware of efficient methods to lower the risk of injury.

It is well recognised that certain occupations, such as those of a police officer, cab driver, or clerk at a liquor shop, include a danger of violence. But, many other Employees, including those in the healthcare industry, delivery and transit drivers, night shift Employees, and many others, have a considerable risk of being a victim of an occupational violent crime.

Most importantly, trust in your instincts. If you believe someone may be following you, seek assistance in a safe location, such as a busy neighbourhood or a police station. Call for assistance right once if you believe there is an intruder inside the building. Workplace violence is a risk that everyone must consider.

Tips to avoid work violence:

- Stay alert
- Think ahead
- Stay away from dark, deserted areas
- Vary your routines
- Never pickup hitch hikers
- Keep your vehicle well maintained
- Know how to summon help quickly
- Stay out of interpersonal conflicts
- Undergo personal security training
- Trust your instincts.