



Workplace Violence Prevention

Workplace violence is an increasing concern for leaders across all industries. According to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), some 2 million American workers are victims of workplace violence each year. Workplace violence can strike anywhere, and no one is immune. Workplace violence prevention training should be a priority for the safety of employees at all organizational levels.

Who is at risk for workplace violence?

There are four (4) major types of workplace violence identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), including:

1. Criminal Intent/Random Violence (Robbery, Carjacking, etc.).
2. Customer/Client Violence in Dealing With Difficult People.
3. Violence Directed at a Coworker.
4. Violence Involving a Personal Relationship (such as Domestic Violence).

While workplace violence can affect anyone, certain risk factors increase a person's risk, including gender and occupation.

Gender

Women, in particular, are vulnerable to domestic violence in the workplace. Female employees have more than double the rate of on-the-job homicides than their male counterparts (19% compared to 8%), with 32% of the homicides committed by a domestic partner.

Occupation

While taxi drivers, healthcare workers, and other social work occupations have some of the highest rates of workplace violence, other sectors of employment are seeing an increase in workplace violence, too. In general, the occupations with the highest risk of workplace violence include any that interact with the public, are open after dark, and those that serve alcohol.

Workplace Violence Contributing Factors

In general, workplace violence is the product of the interaction between three factors:

1. The person committing the violence.
2. The triggering event that motivates the person.
3. A workplace that is more conducive to allowing violence to happen.

Workplace violence prevention training can help mitigate all three factors.

Workplace Violence Prevention Training

The Safety Director recommends that organizations review and update their current workplace violence prevention training policies, and establish clear lines of communication within the organization to ensure that the goals of these training policies are met.

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.



Here are seven steps to take to make sure your workplace violence prevention training is effective:

1. Analyze your workplace for exposure and to reduce risks.
2. Create a supportive work environment and encourage the reporting of suspicious behavior or incidents requiring further examination by supervisors.
 - a. Include Human Resources services
 - b. Employee Assistance Programs
3. Include communication skills, empathy, and de-escalation training as part of an overall employee training curriculum.
4. Have a clear no-tolerance [workplace violence policy](#) with appropriate sanctions in place, and provide initial and periodic training on your policy.
5. Leadership must commit to a non-violent workplace and convey this message to all employees during formal and informal training.
6. Train employees to recognize warning signs/triggers that could result in violent behavior.
7. Have an emergency action plan which should include:
 - a. Procedures to deal with violent or potentially violent individuals.
 - b. Communications procedures during crises.
 - c. Procedures for lockdowns/evacuations.
 - d. Train employees on the plan. Consider drills to test your plan and better prepare your employees.

A safe workplace depends on the efforts of employees at all levels of the organization. A commitment to a violence-free environment can lessen the likelihood of an incident occurring, reduce the impact should an incident occur, and assist in ensuring that employees feel safe in the workspace.

For resources regarding *Active Shooter Training*, see the *N.J. Office of Homeland Security* website: <https://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/training-videos/category/Active+Shooter+Response>
