

Just the Facts...

Medical Safety and Security Workplace Violence Work Site Analysis

The first step of setting up a Violence Prevention Program is conducting a work site analysis. A thorough work site analysis will help detect the potential for and sources of workplace violence. In addition, the work site analysis will help verify the effectiveness of existing engineering, administrative, and work practice controls; detect needs for additional security controls; and establish a baseline from which to measure improvement in the workplace violence program. The procedures for conducting a work site analysis are designating individual(s) to conduct the analysis, reviewing records, reviewing written policies and procedures, and surveying the work place.

Designating Individuals

Commanders should designate a multi-disciplinary team to implement the work place violence program. At a minimum, the team's responsibilities should include conducting the work site analysis; recommending/implementing engineering, administrative, and work practice controls; recommending/implementing worker training programs; developing emergency response plans; and auditing the program for effectiveness. Depending on the size of the organization, the team may include representatives from:

- ◆ senior management
- ◆ civilian personnel office
- ◆ public affairs
- ◆ medical/nursing staff
- ◆ security
- ◆ safety
- ◆ legal
- ◆ worker union
- ◆ provost marshal
- ◆ employee assistance program
- ◆ community mental health
- ◆ equal opportunity office (military)

Reviewing Records

When reviewing records, the team should focus on information that will help them identify the potential cause and severity of work place violence. At a minimum, the following records should be reviewed:

- ◆ OSHA No. 200, Log and Summary of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses
- ◆ workplace violence incidence reports
- ◆ workers compensation records
- ◆ accident investigations
- ◆ training records
- ◆ worker grievances
- ◆ minutes of safety meetings
- ◆ safety/security inspection reports
- ◆ worker workplace violence questionnaires
- ◆ local police reports
- ◆ local environment and patients

Reviewing Policies and Procedures

The team should review the security and any work place violence policies and programs to verify that they:

- ◆ include clearly stated standards of behavior
- ◆ relate the Commander's concern for worker emotional and physical safety and health
- ◆ assign responsibilities and accountability for the various aspects of the program
- ◆ include clear goals and objectives that will prevent work place violence
- ◆ allocate authority and resources needed for program implementation
- ◆ are current, flexible, and appropriate in accordance with appropriate laws, standards and guidelines
- ◆ include procedures to evaluate/revise the program periodically (e.g., annually)

Surveying the Workplace

Inspections and Questionnaires

When surveying the work place, the team should consider using worker questionnaires as well as work place inspections to identify vulnerabilities and high-risk operations. Work place inspections and worker questionnaires should be repeated periodically. The Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers, OSHA 3148-1996, and the Long Island Coalition for Workplace Violence Awareness & Prevention Workplace Violence Awareness & Prevention include sample questionnaires and work place inspection checklists.

Indicators of Potentially Violent Behavior

Profiling potentially violent individuals is unreliable and can result in unfair stereotyping. Therefore, supervisors should focus on preventing violent incidents by promptly and appropriately dealing workers who show signs of an increased risk of violent behavior. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's indicators of increased risk of violent behavior include:

- ◆ direct or veiled threats
- ◆ intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying or other aggressive behavior
- ◆ numerous conflicts with supervisors/coworkers
- ◆ fascination with weapons or making inappropriate references to guns
- ◆ bringing weapons to the workplace
- ◆ fascination with and/or approval of workplace violence incidents
- ◆ suicidal threats/desperation
- ◆ drug/alcohol abuse
- ◆ extreme changes in behavior

Domestic Violence

An often-overlooked source of work place violence is when estranged partners seek out their victims while they are at work. Victims of domestic violence are more likely to tell their supervisors of the potential for a work place attack when they feel protected at work. Several policies that can help protect victims of domestic violence are:

- ◆ safeguarding their home address, telephone number, and work schedule
- ◆ restricting or denying specified relatives and/or visitors access to the work place
- ◆ allowing flexibility regarding leave, work schedules, and job transfers

References:

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- ◆ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Current Intelligence Bulletin 57, Violence in the Workplace, Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies. Washington D.C. NIOSH, June 1996.
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- ◆ U.S. Medical Command. Memorandum Subject: Violence in the Workplace Policy. Headquarters U.S. Army Medical Command, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. 30 April 1996.