

**JOB AID**

**Workplace Violence Prevention**  
**Awareness**

# Workplace Violence Prevention Awareness

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Workplace violence can happen anywhere, so it is important for you to know how to prevent it and what to do during and after an emergency.

## Defining Workplace Violence

Workplace violence typically falls into four broad categories based on the description of the perpetrators:

- Type 1: Violent acts by individuals with no connection to the workplace
- Type 2: Violent acts by individuals with a connection to the workplace
- Type 3: Violent acts by a present or former employee
- Type 4: Violent acts by someone who has a personal relationship with an employee

Workplace violence may be committed by or to anyone. It may include:

- Threats
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Domestic violence
- Stalking
- Emotional abuse
- Intimidation
- Physical assaults
- Murder

## Identifying Warning Signs

You have the responsibility to be aware of and report violent or threatening behavior or other warning signs displayed by co-workers.

### *Problematic Behaviors*

- Increasing belligerence
- Outbursts of anger
- Extreme disorganization
- Hypersensitivity to criticism
- Apparent obsession with a supervisor or co-worker or employee grievance
- Ominous, specific threats
- Recent acquisition/fascination with weapons
- Preoccupation with violent themes
- Interest in recently publicized violent events
- Homicidal/suicidal comments or threats
- Bringing weapons to the workplace

Be aware of noticeable CHANGES in behavior.

## **Additional Indicators of Potentially Violent Employees**

<b>Behavioral Changes</b>	<b>Emotional Changes</b>	<b>Conversational Changes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Increased use of alcohol or illegal drugs</li><li>– Unexplained increase in absenteeism or withdrawal</li><li>– Disengagement or disassociation from co-workers</li><li>– Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene</li><li>– Repeated violations of company policies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Depression/withdrawal</li><li>– Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures</li><li>– Increased severe mood swings</li><li>– Noticeably unstable, emotional responses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Vague physical complaints</li><li>– Comments about “putting things in order”</li><li>– Paranoia (“everybody is against me”)</li><li>– Increasing problems at home</li><li>– Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace</li><li>– Previous incidents of violence</li><li>– Increase in unsolicited comments about weapons and violent crimes</li></ul>

**NOTE:** Many employers have assistance programs for CONFIDENTIAL help. There are also suicide prevention helplines.

- In the U.S., dial 988 to access the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (<https://988lifeline.org>)
- Similar helplines exist outside the United States

### **Addressing Security Risks**

Actions to promote security:

- Make sure the people you see at work have the appropriate identification
- Report broken or propped doors or other unsecure access points
- Report any unusual persons, packages or activity inside and outside the facility
- Keep badges, keys and access codes secure
- NEVER let anyone follow you through a secure door while you have it open

### **Preventing Workplace Violence**

Employees can help prevent workplace violence by:

- Becoming aware of and reporting unusual, violent or threatening behavior
- Following workplace violence prevention program procedures
- Enforcing and exercising workplace procedures at all times
- Participating in routine security and active shooter scenarios

Co-workers are usually the first to notice warning signs through gossip, rumors and observation. Alert your supervisor when you observe warning signs.

Remember:

- Law enforcement can assist with background checks and worksite reviews
- Employers should adopt and practice consistent, fair disciplinary practices
- Employees should report violent or threatening behavior by co-workers

### Active Shooter Situations

If there is an active shooter in your workplace, there are three ways to react:

1. **RUN** if you can safely leave the scene.
2. **HIDE** out of view and protect yourself as much as possible. Stay alert and be prepared to move, run or attack.
3. **FIGHT** as a last resort.

Your goal is to survive the attack, which may require all three of these actions, in any order.