


How to Detect and Address Potential Workplace Violence

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The information that has been prepared and shared today, utilizes governmental, scientific, and medical research data, as well as generally-accepted industry safety practices at its foundation. It is presented as an educational, professional development training session that is designed to increase general knowledge of the subject and enhance employee skills.


While we always endeavor to do so, some of the information may have changed recently, thus may not be completely up-to-date at the time of the presentation with respect to the subject matter.



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Overview


- Industry commitment.
- Workplace harassment is illegal and is destructive to any organization.
- It is important to treat everyone in the workplace with respect and dignity.
- Workplace harassment must be identified, discouraged, prevented, and reported, to keep a hostile work environment from developing.
- Left unchecked, harassment can easily escalate into workplace violence.



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Objectives


- Understand and recognize OSHA guidelines as they apply to protecting America’s workforce from workplace violence.
- Define workplace harassment, bullying, workplace violence, and their impacts.
- Identify behaviors and potential risk factors that can be experienced in multifamily housing.
- Discuss different types of violence, share examples.
- Review OSHA Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
- Staff responsibilities.
- Wrap-up.



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I’m not concerned with you liking me or disliking me. All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.


Jackie Robinson



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Introduction

- Almost every day we hear about workplace violence, crimes, mass school shootings, protests turning violent and even terrorist events impacting our work environments.
- Workplace violence is not limited to your current or former employees; it may be perpetrated by residents, vendors, family members or even strangers fixated on making some sort of statement.
- The primary focus of this overview is to help all of you become more aware of the warning signs of potentially violent situations and the steps that you can take to keep yourself and others out of harm’s way.
- If there is a situation that cannot be stopped, you also need to be aware of the emergency response procedures required so that you can assist employees.



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OSHA Requirements



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OSHA General Duty Clause

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the General Duty Clause - Section 5(a)(1) states:

“Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees, employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees.”

This includes the prevention and control of hazards associated with workplace harassment and workplace violence.



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Workplace Harassment




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What Is Workplace Harassment

- Legally, harassment is any word, gesture, or action that offends people or makes them feel uncomfortable or intimidated. You never know how sensitive people are, so never say or do anything if you are not sure how it will be received.
- Allowing workplace harassment to continue can cause legal problems while destroying company morale.
- Many people today are uncertain about what constitutes workplace harassment, so they are confused when their actions are pointed out as demeaning.



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How to Identify Workplace Harassment

Physical

- Gestures
- Actions
- Contact

Emotional

- Threats
- Comments
- Jokes
- Degrading tones




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Costs to Your Business

- There are several federal and state laws on the books that allow for people to sue employers for workplace harassment and workplace violence.
- Litigation fees and verdict awards can easily go into the many hundreds of thousands of dollars or more.
- There can be harmful psychological ramifications to those affected.
- Can negatively impact, and even damage a company's reputation.




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Legal

- Companies are responsible to protect employees from harassment at all levels.
- Employers must prove that they used “reasonable care” to prevent and address workplace harassment.
- Address issues swiftly and correctly, document the facts –maintain privacy when required.
- Sexual harassment is the responsibility of the company when it is *quid pro quo*.




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Psychological

- Harassment and bullying take a psychological toll on everyone in a workplace.
- They can cause physical symptoms including but not limited to stress, fatigue, headaches, sleeplessness, exhaustion, anxiety, and other outward indicators.
- Companies lose millions of dollars in missed workdays, productivity, morale, all due to workplace harassment not being addressed quickly and prevented.



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Bullying




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Identifying Bullying

- Bullies have become an increasing problem in the workplace.
- Those who bully others do so with malicious intent.
- Unlike other harassment issues, bullies know that they are being cruel.
- Only 20% of bullying is considered illegal harassment because 80% of bullies do not harass people in other groups.
- Surprisingly, 71% of bullies are women who target other women.




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Abusive Bullying Behaviors

- Bullies will oftentimes target high-performing employees with the intent to destroy them out of fear, and jealousy.
- They manipulate using fear and will recruit others to turn against the individual.
- Bullying has the same impacts and results as other harassment policies.
- Managers are often guilty of bullying their employees.




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Bullying Behaviors

- Changing job parameters
- Spreading gossip and rumors
- Creating impossible deadlines
- Shifting job standards
- Isolating an individual
- Threatening a job loss
- Spying on or stalking an individual
- Belittling or ridiculing an individual




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Bullying Behaviors

- Yelling or screaming.
- Disregarding an individual’s opinions and feelings.
- Interfering with or preventing promotions or transfers.
- Intruding a person’s workspace or their personal belongings.
- Supplying misinformation to discredit an individual.



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Antisocial Personality Disorder

Those diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder are over the age of 18 and have exhibited conduct disorders since well-before they were 15 years of age, on average.

Indicators of APD include:

- Not conforming to societal norms, customs, or rules.
- Consistently being deceitful.
- May even use more than one identity.
- Total disregard for being a team player.




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Antisocial Personality Disorder


- Impulsive and irresponsible.
- Oftentimes these individuals will have personal financial problems.
- Irritable and unable to empathize.
- Deceitfulness, lying, or conning for their betterment.
- Disregards their own personal safety and the safety of others.
- Physical assaults or fights.



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Workplace Violence




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Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- Most management firms have a consistent, unified, and committed approach to ensuring, as safe a portfolio of workplaces as possible for all employees.
- All staff must be aware that program compliance is not only mandatory, but essential for the success of the company's safety program and safety of all employees.
- Employees must feel comfortable to be able to freely share information, and with no fear of reprisal.
- Employees are encouraged to give feedback and to make recommendations.




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Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- Management must continually provide focus, motivation, and support for the program.
- The company will constantly enforce its WPV safety policy with all employees.
- The written policy shall be posted alongside the required federal/state compliance posters at each company location.
- The program will be reenforced regularly, showing that leadership and management's concern is for the employee's emotional, physical safety, health, and wellbeing.




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Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- The program must have accountability at all levels of the organization, specifically, for all managers, supervisors, leads, and employees.
- Each company *location* must have a comprehensive, site-specific, plan for maintaining safety and security in the workplace.
- Company will define the process by which workplace hazards and workplace analyses are identified, reported, documented, addressed and/or corrected, completed, and documented accordingly.




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Workplace Violence Prevention Program

There are several important parts to an effective workplace violence prevention program, including:


- Leadership and management commitment.
- Employee involvement and engagement.
- Established hazard prevention measures, controls, policies, and procedures.
- Initial, periodic/refresher, and annual employee education.
- Preparation and updating of workplace/worksites analyses.
- Proper recordkeeping.
- Ongoing evaluation of the program.



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Definitions

- **Workplace Violence:** Any kind of physical assault, verbal abuse, or threatening behaviors that are exhibited within the workplace setting.
- **Workplace:** Any location, primary or secondary, whether permanent or temporary where an employee of a company performs any type of work-related tasks, or duties.




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Definitions

Workplace includes:

- The site and its buildings and surrounding areas, including, but not limited to offices, community areas, parking lots, residents' apartments, any interior or exterior public spaces, as well as traveling to and from work assignments.




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Handling Workplace Violence

- To prevent workplace violence, it is essential that managers and employees, can identify situations and individuals that could become violent and understand how to diffuse dangerous situations, if needed.
- Violent behavior doesn't just appear out of thin air, there are oftentimes early warning signs and a variety of interpersonal indicators.




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Types of Workplace Violence

- Type I: Criminal Intent
- Type II: Customer/Client
- Type III: Worker-on-Worker
- Type IV Personal Relationship



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Types of Workplace Violence

Criminal Intent:

- The perpetrator of Type I violence has no legitimate relationship to the property, company, or its employees.
- This violence is usually incidental to another crime such as a robbery, shoplifting, or trespassing.
- Acts of terrorism also fall into this category.

Customer/Client:

- With Type II violence, the violent person has a legitimate relationship with the business – for example, a resident or family member becomes violent while receiving services at the property.



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Types of Workplace Violence

Worker-on-Worker:

- The perpetrator of Type III violence is an employee or former employee of the business who attacks or threatens other employee(s) or former employee(s) in the workplace.

Personal Relationship:

- Finally, Type IV violence, the perpetrator in these cases usually does not have a relationship with the business but has a relationship with the intended victim.
- This category includes victims of domestic violence who are assaulted or threatened while at work.




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Workplace Violence Survey Results

- In a recent survey, over one half of HR professionals have indicated that they've reported that their organization has experienced some form of workplace violence incident.
- This number is up from 36 % since the last survey in 2012.
- In another survey, SHRM, the *Society for Human Resource Management* reports that 1 out of 7 Americans do not feel safe at work.
- When confronted, companies shared that there were four core responses.




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Workplace Violence Survey Results

- The response depended on the severity of the issue - 61%.
- Violation of Zero Tolerance policy resulted in immediate terminations – 47%.
- Company issued written warnings – 31%
- Company suspended the employee – 29%




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Persons who might be involved

- Residents
- Family members of residents
- Co-workers
- Former employees
- Guests and/or acquaintances
- Family members of guests or acquaintances
- Vendors, contractors or other service providers




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Workplace Violence Examples:

- Intimidation
- Abusive or offensive language
- Threats or threats of bodily harm
- Pushing, striking, throwing or pushing objects
- Discourteous conduct towards supervisors or fellow workers
- Threats, in-person or via telephone, email or text
- Being stalked or followed
- Unwanted physical contact
- Punching walls, slamming doors




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Workplace Violence Examples:

- Aggressive physical acts
- Harassment of any kind
- Being accosted or sworn at
- Disorderly conduct
- Psychological traumas
- Beatings
- Shootings
- Stabbings
- Rapes
- Suicides and near-suicides




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Workplace Violence Statistics

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 525 U.S. workers were workplace homicide victims in 2022. Of those victims who died from homicide:


- 81% were men
- 44% were aged 25 to 44
- 28% were Black, 18% were Hispanic and 54% were white and/or non-Hispanic
- 30% of workplace homicide victims were performing retail-related tasks such as tending a retail establishment or waiting on customers.



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Workplace Violence Statistics


- About two million people become victims of workplace violence every year.
- Most victims of recent workplace violence incidents are between 25 and 54 years of age.
- About 25% of workplace violence incidents go unreported.
- 75% of acts of workplace violence cases are classified as assaults.
- 4% of employees have been affected by bullying in the workplace.



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Workplace Violence Statistics

- 7% of fatal assaults involved acts of hitting, kicking, beating, and/or shoving.
- Women make up for 85% of total victims of domestic violence occurring at the workplace.
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for women due to violent events in the workplace.
- 35% of injuries caused by workplace violence involve injuries to the head.
- In many cases, victims have no previous relationship with the offender.




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Workplace Violence Statistics

- A workplace violence event results in an average of 8-sick days per employee.
- The annual cost of all types of workplace violence is around \$125 billion to U.S. companies according to the U.S. Dept of Justice.
- Companies average over 1,250,000 lost workdays per year and as much as \$65 million in lost wages.
- Workplace productivity can also decrease by as much as 50% in the aftermath of a violent event.
- These events also impact employee morale, cost millions in legal expenses, negatively impact company reputation and public image, can require additional security, and result in significant property damage losses.




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Workplace Violence Statistics

- More than 28% of workplace sexual harassment happens in service-providing industries like food, accommodation, hospitality, office environments, and retail.
- Impacts to employees include stress, fear or being hurt, retraction or disengagement within the work unit/team, increased awareness of dangers – may be short-term.
- Majority of incidents involve handguns or other weapons.
- 62% of active shooters in the workplace were dealing with mental health issues.




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So, What Can You Do?

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Benjamin Franklin




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Staff Responsibilities

- Ensure that property inspections are made regularly, noting any potential areas where an attack or an event can take place and work to eliminate or mitigate issues.
- Review and ensure that your site’s security plan is up-to-date, noting any areas where immediate action cannot be taken to reduce the risk.
- Contact and work with local law enforcement officials to visit and present at community meetings, events, etc.
- Stay up-to-date with what is happening in your area with respect to violence.




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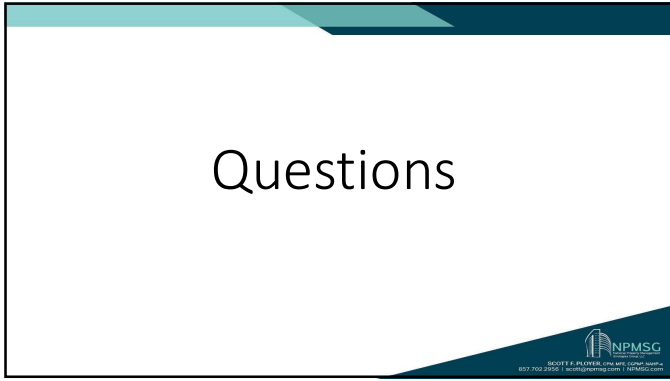
Staff Responsibilities

- Always be vigilant and aware of your surroundings, means of escape or how to shelter-in-place.
- Remember the various types of behaviors discussed.
- Try not to be alone with potentially unstable people.
- Ensure that your site, work areas are all well-lit.
- If cameras are needed, work to get them installed.
- Report any suspected harassment and/or workplace violence immediately to leadership and your supervisors.
- If you have any questions, ask!

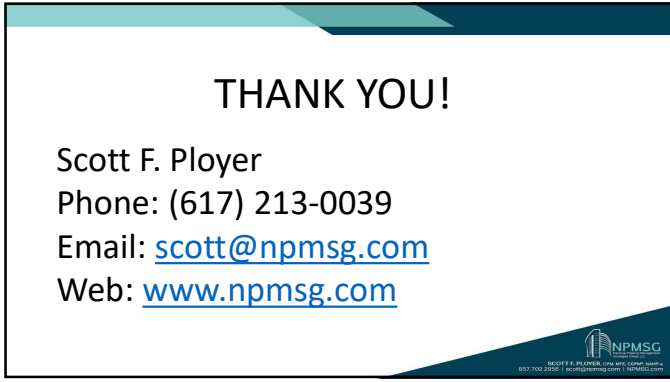


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