



## VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE



Workplace violence often begins with inappropriate behavior or signs that, **when detected and reported**, may help prevent its occurrence. The following information may be helpful in detecting or anticipating workplace violence and help to create a safer, healthier workplace for everyone.

If violence occurs or there is an immediate threat of violence:

1. Leave the area immediately if possible. If this is not possible, try to lock yourself in a secure area.
2. IF safe to do so, dial **911** and give the 911 operator as many details as possible. **Verbal** communication is MOST effective for caller and 911 operator. The majority of cellular networks can support TEXT messages to 911 if speaking out loud places you at risk.

**Examples of Workplace violence: Threats, direct or implied**

- Physical conduct such as pushing, shoving, or striking that harms or has the potential to harm people or property.
- Conduct that harasses, disrupts or interferes with another individual's performance.
- Conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment.

**Potential Warning Signs:**

- Verbal, nonverbal or written threats
- Fascination with weapons or violence
- New or increased stress at home or at work
- Expressions of hopelessness or anxiety
- Insubordinate behavior
- Dramatic change in work performance
- Destruction of property
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Externalization of blame

**Risk Factors that Contribute to Workplace Violence**

- Termination of employment
- Disciplinary actions
- Ongoing conflicts between employees
- Domestic or family violence
- Debilitating and/or life threatening illness in the family
- Financial problems

**Workplace Violence Prevention**

- Be aware of what's going on around you at all times.
- Awareness is a proven method for increased personal safety.
- Tell your supervisor when you notice unusual or suspicious behavior.
- Attend a violence prevention seminar that includes training in conflict resolution and positive ways of dealing with hostile individuals.
- Reach out to local law enforcement **BEFORE** the situation escalates to violence.

**911** dialed on a cellular device is received at the closest available **911** call center. Be **VERY** clear about your specific location and remain on the line to answer essential questions.

**REMEMBER: A SAFE WORKPLACE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.**



## DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES

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# Workspace Safety Planning Considerations

1. People who work in the space are the most knowledgeable about their space
2. Safety begins with awareness
3. Safety is about reasoned risk management; decreasing probability
4. Identify safety coordinator(s) for your office
  - a. Identify meeting location if you have to evacuate
  - b. Identify a call location to leave an "I'm okay" message away from the office

### **PERSONAL SAFETY:**

5. Start big and work in:
  - a. Parking
  - b. Path of travel
  - c. Time
  - d. What are you carrying in your hands
  - e. Exits / places of safety/ situational awareness
6. Inside the building:
  - a. Path of travel
  - b. Lighting
  - c. Who is there? (know folks who work in the building, meet and greet)
  - d. Exits / places of safety / situational awareness
  - e. Trust your intuition
7. Inside your department / office:
  - a. Entrance / egress
  - b. Locks on the inside doors
  - c. Proxemics / Barriers
  - d. Objects that can protect/endorse you
  - e. Situational awareness while working
    - i. Can you see someone entering your space
    - ii. Do you have a way to exit when someone is in your space
    - iii. Communication with co-workers – safety in numbers
8. Communication:
  - a. Program your LOCAL Police Department phone number into cell phones. Dialing **911** is always an option
  - b. Have an outside number for staff to call to check in
  - c. Designate a meeting place to evacuate to
9. Evacuation vs. Lockdown
  - a. Plan to take purse/briefcase (Whatever holds Id, credit cards etc.), keys, every time
10. Practice and talk with each other about the plan

You have to feel safe both physically and emotionally to be productive. Creating the sense of stability and comfort is a balance of awareness and probability.