Workplace Violence Prevention

“The New York State Experience”

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What is Workplace Violence

- Any physical assault, acts of aggressive behavior (verbal threats, displays of force and stalking), or other threatening behavior that rises to the level of perception of potential violence occurring in the work setting.
- This includes any location where work is completed – temporary or permanent, on-site or off-site, etc.
- Video: https://youtu.be/OQpfCDW7smQ
The Bath School disaster was a series of violent attacks perpetrated by Andrew Kehoe on May 18, 1927, in Bath Township, Michigan, that killed 38 elementary schoolchildren and six adults and injured at least 58 other people. Kehoe killed his wife and firebombed his farm, then detonated a major explosion in the Bath Consolidated School, before committing suicide by detonating a final explosion in his truck. As rescuers began working at the school, Kehoe drove up and detonated dynamite inside his shrapnel-filled truck, killing himself, the school superintendent, and several others nearby, as well as injuring more bystanders.

This remains the deadliest school massacre in the U.S.!
Triggering the WPVP Law in NY

In 1992

A man in his 50’s was released from prison having served more than 20 years for violent crimes. He moved to Ohio but still had to pay back child support.

He threatened the Watkins Glen Child Support Collection office for 6 months, the employees asked for help and got none.

After 6 months he entered their office and shot Phyllis Caslin, 54, Florence A. Pike, 50, Nancy J. Wheeler, 48 and Denise M. Van Amburg, 28.

Sheriff’ deputies heard the shots and came running across the street. They met him in the stairwell and asked what happened and if they could help him.

He said he has done what he came to so and hurt who he came to hurt.

Then put his gin to his own head and killed himself in front of the officers.
Mass Workplace Violence In NY

On Friday, April 3, 2009, at the American Civic Association immigration center, in Binghamton, NY.
At approximately 10:30 a.m., a naturalized American citizen, from Vietnam, entered the facility and shot numerous people inside. He had taken English language classes there from January to March 2009 before dropping out.
He shot a teacher and students from his former classroom, among others. The shooter killed 13 people and wounded four others, before committing suicide.

Binghamton Police Chief Joseph Zikuski said, "From the people close to him ... this action he took was not a surprise to them."
He had allegedly made comments such as "America sucks" and talked about assassinating Barack Obama to his former coworkers.

This remains one of the top ten most deadly Workplace Violence attacks in America. (6th)
August 2014

Oswego (WSYR-TV) – An Oswego County man was arrested on Tuesday after he allegedly threatened to shoot people at the Palermo Town Hall.

Oswego County Sheriff’s Investigators say 77-year-old Jacob Heer threatened to bring his shotgun to the town hall and shoot people over a tax bill.

Town officials say Heer had paid the bill, however after they confirmed payment and told him he owed nothing, he remained hostile.

Heer – of 36 Goutermout Dr., Central Square – was charged with making a terroristic threat, a class D felony.

He was arraigned in Palermo Town Court and jailed.
Workplace Terrorism

December 2, 2015- San Bernardino, CA

Key points

• Islamic radical married couple, opened fire at a holiday party at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino on Dec. 2.
• Fourteen people killed and 22 injured, most of them county employees.
• Both attackers were killed in a gun battle with police. The husband was born in the U.S. and worked for the county, and his fiancée, a Pakistan national, had an arsenal of ammunition and pipe bombs were found in their home.
• A friend of the couple, bought two of the guns used in the attack. He entered a mental health facility after the massacre.
• The couple began plotting the attack before they were engaged and before the woman moved to the U.S. last year. Investigators have determined the wife had ties to international terror organizations and pledged allegiance to an Isis Leader before the attack.
Workplace Terrorism

December 2, 2015- San Bernardino, CA

Key points

• Threats were made in the workplace to coworkers for months prior to attack
• Facebook posts were seen by family and “friends” as well as others
• Pipe bombs were left out in plain site in the living areas and garage of the home while family and others were visiting
• Guns, ammunition and bomb making materials were being delivered to their home. After the incident neighbors remarked that they were afraid to report the high number of deliveries because they were afraid of being called “racists” or intolerant.
• Coworkers made reports of the husband’s behavior that were ignored by the government officials.
• Numerous recommendations for improved security were left unaddressed by the local government officials.
Dallas Assault on Police

June 13, 2015, Suspect shot at the Dallas Police Department from an armored van with what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon.

July 7, 2016, Terrorist ambushed and fired upon a group of police officers in Dallas, TX, killing five officers and injuring nine others.

July 11, 2016- Portland, OR- shocking video comes from a “Black Lives Matter” meeting in Portland. Several speakers advocate for violence against police openly.

July 12, 2016, BATON ROUGE -- Police have arrested and identified three young people who they say plotted to kill Baton Rouge cops using guns stolen from a pawn shop

Sept. 6, 2016, NY Daily News- Fatal police shootings have escalated in 2016, 71% of the people who had shot and killed police officers were white.

Today there is a “War on Police!”
12/24/2012
Webster, NY –
A gunman ambushed firefighters, killing two firemen and injuring two others before killing himself on a Lake Ontario beach.

Seven homes were destroyed as firefighters waited for police to secure the scene.

The gunman left a note saying he hoped the whole neighborhood burned down.

There was speculation that he was upset because his mother made a donation to the fire department before her recent death.
Firefighter & EMT Risks

An estimated 700,000 assaults occur on paramedics and emergency medical technicians annually!¹

80 percent of the firefighters surveyed stated that they have been assaulted while on the job¹

According to Fire Chief Magazine, assault prevention training for firefighters and EMTs should include a de-escalation drill to practice talking down volatile situations to try and deter the eruption of violence. In the midst of an emergency situation, knowing how to quickly deal with a person assaulting a firefighter or EMT is important.

1. "Violence Against Firefighter: Angels of Mercy Under Attack"
Facts

2014: FBI- Municipal Workplace Violence Facts

➢ Up 26.7% in a recent 5 year study

➢ Often considered “Soft targets” as most municipalities do not have adequate Workplace Violence Controls in place.

➢ The average Active Shooter event lasts between 90 – 120 seconds
Extent of Workplace Violence Problem

Municipal Workplace Violence Facts- BLS

- 2014- 38 government Worker Homicides
  (There were 32 government worker homicides in 2013)
  - 8 in Federal Government
  - 10 at the State level
  - 20 in Local Municipal Governments
  - Or 53% of fatalities occur in smaller locales
According to the Society of Human Resource Management Workplace, Almost two-thirds of HR professionals stated there had been some sort of violence at their organization within a three year time span. The breakdown of workplace violence incidents is as follows:

- 54% - Inappropriate language
- 13% - Verbal abuse
- 7% - Verbal threats of violence
- 6% - Sexual harassment
- 5% - Burglary
- 4% - Pushing/Shoving
- 3% - Fistfight
- 2% - Threatening emails received by employees
- 2% - Stalking
- 1% - Robbery (holdup)
- 1% - Threatening emails sent by employees
- 1% - Bomb threat
Extent of Workplace Violence Problem

• Male government employees were more likely than female government employees to face a stranger in an incident of workplace violence from 2002 to 2011.
• From 2002 to 2011, female government employees were more likely than male government employees to be attacked in the workplace by someone with whom they had a work relationship.

Part of the Violence in the Workplace Series From the Bureau of Justice
http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/wvage9411.pdf
Municipal Departments at Risk

Municipal Employees Face a Much Higher Rate Workplace Violence of Violence

Highlights:

• In 2011, about 1 in 5 victims of workplace homicide was a government employee. *(2 of every 5 in 2014)*

• From 2002 to 2011, the annual average rate of simple assault in the workplace against government employees (18.9 per 1,000) was more than 3 times that of private-sector employees (4.6 per 1,000).
Extent of Workplace Violence Problem

- Job-related homicides were the third leading cause of deaths for all workers.
- Workplace Risk Evaluations

  Workplace violence is the #1 cause of occupational death for female employees; and the #2 cause for male employees.

(In 2012-2013 Motor Vehicles killed more Women and MVC, Falls and Struck By killed more men.

- About 2 million people report being a victim of Workplace violence each year nationwide.
- *National EAP estimates that for each report as many as 4 to 5 go unreported!
Categories of Workplace Violence

- **TYPE 1** – Violent acts by criminals who have no other connection with the workplace, but enter to commit robbery or other crime.

- **TYPE 2** – Violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, students, inmates, or any others for whom an organization provides services.
Categories of Workplace Violence

- **TYPE 3** – Violence against coworkers, supervisors, or managers by a present or former employee.

- **TYPE 4** – Violence committed in the workplace by someone who doesn’t work there, but has a personal relationship with an employee – an abusive spouse or domestic partner.
Workplace Violence May Not Be about Work

When perpetrators of workplace violence are employees they may not take action because they're unhappy on the job. "Sometimes they commit workplace violence because of something else going on in their lives,"
And, he added, "there are a lot of unhappy employees, but most aren't going to shoot anyone."

Encouraging employees to use the EAP programs and/or seek help when needed can significantly reduce risks for everyone.
Risk Factors

- Handling money
- Contact with the public
- Working late at night/alone
- Uncontrolled access to the workplace
- Lack of training in recognizing and managing escalating hostile and aggressive behavior
- Poor outdoor lighting
- Limited access to emergency services
Setting up a Workplace Violence Prevention Program

NYS Workplace Violence Prevention Act

- Written Plan/Policy Statement
- Identify a team to investigate incidents
- Workplace Risk Evaluations
- Incident Reporting and Review
- Employee Training
- Hazard Control & Prevention recommended to the Municipal Officials
- Policy and team members reapproved annually at reorganization
The Written Plan

Mandatory for public employers with at least 20 full-time permanent employees, with participation of an employee representative, and must include:

- Board-adopted policy statement, Annually @ “reorg”
- Risk factors identified from a review of workplace evaluations and employee surveys
- Methods to prevent incidents of occupational assaults and homicides
- Methods for incident reporting, investigating and follow-up training requirements for staff
- A statement that the plan is available to employees, upon request, with the names of the investigation team
Workplace Risk Evaluations

Response Team must inspect or examine the workplace. Examination should include:

- Physical Plant Inspections – entrances, public access, public interaction, exterior lighting, emergency systems, etc.
- Employee Input – surveys, interviews, on-going/ever-present hazard identification and reporting, focus groups and union involvement
- Review previous incident/accident reports and occupational injury and illness logs (SH 900, C-2, etc.)
Employee Training and Education

- Location of Written Report
- Protective Measures
- Employer-initiated Protective Measures
- The Act Itself
- Your Workplace Violence Program
- Risk Factors Identified
Sample Policy Statement

- Signed by the Board
- Management Commitment
- Employee Involvement
- Must be reapproved Annually with the names of persons on the ERT
Security Checklists

“What information should be collected during a review of the workplace?”
Staff Feedback Regarding Workplace Safety and Concerns
Employee Survey Form continued

Staff Feedback Regarding Workplace Safety and Concerns

1. Employees are safe in terms of vehicle physics, known habitat physics, safety for emergency management.
2. Employees are aware of the proper procedures for health and safety.
3. Employees are aware of the proper procedures for health and safety.
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26. Employees are aware of the proper procedures for health and safety.
Incident Report

“What details should be recorded after an incident occurs?”
When do you make a report

- Discourtesy
- Disrespect
- Intimidation
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Retaliation
- Verbal Assault
- Physical Aggression
Incident Reporting Procedures

- To be completed by appropriate supervisors (department or administrative)
- Reviewed with employees
- Investigation completed
- Confidentiality stressed
- NO Retaliation stressed
Emergency Response Team

- Must respond to an incident report in 24 hours or less
- Identify issues
- Union Membership must be included
- Team members from same department as those involved should recuse themselves.
- Investigation and any action recommended should be done within 10 days!
Emergency Response Team

Team should review:

- Incident Reports, C-2 Forms, Police Reports, Employee/Union Grievances, any Record of Threats
- Collect and assess data from Building Inspections and Employee Survey
- Create an overview and report to Municipal Leaders Annually
Employee Training

Written program should include:

- Workplace/job risk factors
- Training can be department specific
- Measures employees can take to protect themselves
- Details of the written workplace violence prevention program
- Risk assessment ID exposures/hazards
- Safeguards in place
- How to obtain counseling after a crisis
Training Components

- Techniques for recognizing potential risks
- Procedures to control risk
- Proper use of security hardware
- Incident response - emergency/hostage
- Incident reporting/document procedures
- Medical assistance/follow up
- Cash handling
Who MUST Be Trained

- All Employees MUST be trained
  - Full-time
  - Part-time
  - Seasonal
  - Volunteers, including Fire Services, Senior Center personnel, Elected/Appointed Officials…
  - Anyone whose actions are directed by the Municipality.
Frequently Asked Questions

- I work for multiple municipalities. Do I have to take this class at each location?
- Can I get a letter from my other employer to show I have already had this training?
- I go the training with the Volunteer Fire Department does that count?
- Do elected/Appointed officials have to go to the training?
Dealing with Violent Situations

- Do be interested in what the person has to say and let the person speak his or her mind.
- Do remain relaxed and project a state of calmness. Position yourself at a right angle to the individual with a clear path to the exit.
- Do practice empathetic listening.
- If unreasonable behavior persists, do establish ground rules. Calmly describe the consequences of violent behavior.
- Do use delaying tactics that will give the person time to calm down.
- Do accept criticism in a positive way and when the person is correct, acknowledge him or her. If the criticism is unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.
Dealing with Violent Situations

- Don’t reject all of the person’s demands from the start.
- Don’t use styles of communication that will turn the person off, such as brush-offs, coldness, or the run-around.
- Don’t stand in challenging positions, such as crossing arms or hands on hips.
- Avoid physical contact, finger pointing, or long periods of sustained eye contact.
- Don’t make sudden or threatening movements.
- Steady the tone, volume and rate of your speech.
- Don’t challenge, threaten, or dare the person.
- Don’t attempt to bargain with a threatening person. Never make false statements or promises that you can’t keep.
- Don’t try to make the situation seem less serious than it is.
Preplanning and Preparation

- Escape routes?
- Shelter in Place?
- Improvised weapons for self protection
Active Shooter Emergency

The US Department of Homeland Security and the City of Houston have worked together to create the following video to give people some ideas of what they could do in case they were ever caught in an Active Shooter event.

Hazard Control and Prevention

- Drop Safes/Signage & Security Guards
- ID Card/Buzzer/Secured Doors/Visitor Sign in
- Monitoring Access Points
- Avoid Working Alone
- Support for staff feeling threatened
Hazard Control and Prevention

- Deviation of daily routines
- New Staff Screening
- Video Surveillance
- Panic Alarms/911 service
Administrative Controls

- State clearly to the agitated person that violence will not be tolerated or permitted
- Establish liaison with local police and state prosecutors- Take these incidents seriously!
- Require employees to report all assaults and threats. You never know which threat will be real!
- Set up trained response teams to respond to emergencies
Summary

✓ Leadership by Supervisor and Board
✓ Written Policy Statements
✓ Written Program
✓ Identify Workplace Violence Incident Response Team
  ✓ Members must be named in the Policy/Program
  ✓ Must meet within 24 hours of any report
✓ Formal Reporting and Response Program
✓ Annual Employee Safety Review- Documented
✓ Evaluation of Questionnaires by WPVP team
✓ Annual Large Group Training
✓ Annual Department Specific Training
Questions

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For more information contact:

www.labor.state.ny.us/workplacesafety

Workplace Violence Prevention Model WVP Program