

# Workplace Violence Sample Checklist

An employer's response to an act of violence in the workplace is best handled by being prepared before it happens. No employer can predict when or how incidents of violence may occur, so it is best for management to agree upon documented policies and to make employees aware of appropriate responses on a regular basis. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) protects employees from safety and health violations while in the workplace. This protection includes safety from violence. Guidelines may vary according to the nature of the company, but all employers need to be aware of the threat of violence and how to handle events.

## Phase 1: Prevention:

- Implement guidelines from OSHA into a Workplace Violence Prevention Program.
- Include a policy that outlines prohibited behavior - OSHA states there should be a "No Tolerance" policy for violence stated in a policy and communicated to all employees.
- Instruct employees and supervisors on policies regarding prohibited behavior.
- Investigate any reports of alleged violence or suspicious behavior.
- Identify any act in which an employee is physically, verbally or mentally abused.
- Encourage employees to report any offensive behavior that increases stress or anxiety or that seems threatening in any way.
- Determine appropriate disciplinary action for violations of policies.
- Examine applicant's backgrounds thoroughly. HR needs to make this process a thorough and important part of its hiring process.
- Pre-plan for crisis management steps if the workplace is a high-profile corporation: collect fingerprints, handwriting samples and physical characteristics of executives.
- Be aware that employees and even non-employees harmed by violence occurring in the workplace may be able to file lawsuits against the company if it is deemed that a risk was apparent and not attended to properly.
- Perform a worksite analysis to determine risk for violence and set up the response system accordingly with engineering controls and administration. The analysis may be performed by a team including company Human Resource supervisors and security personnel.
- Inspections by OSHA officials may be scheduled in workplaces that are identified as higher risk for occurrence, such as late night retail establishments and health care sites.

## Phase 2: Creation of a Standard Response Plan:

- Consider the available assistance an employee may have in the workplace if an event should occur.
- Ensure alarm systems and other engineering controls can be activated in case of a violent event.
- Include training on responses to violence in employee workshops or in each new employee's orientation training.
- Create a crisis management team within the employee structure. These employees must have training that stays updated for the team to be effective. The team may consist of employees who are in Human Resources, the legal department, have medical and/or security training or simply designated employees who are willing to respond in the case of an event.
- Examine and document any reports of threats or harassment that an employee communicates.
- Follow the workplace disciplinary actions regarding the behavior.

## Phase 3: Taking Action on Violent Encounters and Post-Incident Management:

- Contain and stop the action if possible, using caution and alerting an emergency response if necessary.
- Mediate the situation if possible and call in the pre-designated crisis management team if necessary, emphasizing the importance of having this type of plan set in place.
- Seek treatment for any injured employees or witnesses, providing transportation to medical care as needed.
- Secure psychological testing and counseling for those who were injured or who are traumatized by witnessing the event. A post-incident debriefing and counseling about the incident needs to be conducted by professional employee assistance or other counselors trained in the area of assaults and violent behavior.
- Make decisions on whether the person creating the scene needs to be terminated from employment.  
Contact legal services as needed to explore actions that need to be taken against the aggressor or potential liability on behalf of the company.
- Obtain professional assistance, such as law enforcement and psychologists, in case further security measures need to be taken to provide a safe workplace for the victim and other employees in the company.
- Provide a flexible plan for returning to work for the involved employees, taking consideration of the incident and the recommendations of professional counselors.