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Is your workplace an accident waiting to happen? Don't turn a blind eye to office violence

Iw Workplace Violence



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According to the U.S. Department of Labor, "Violence in the workplace is a serious safety and health issue. In its most extreme form, homicide, [it] is the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the United States.

Workplace violence is everywhere. We have become desensitized to the headlines and the nightly news on television. Everyday we see it, we hear about it, and we consciously ignore it. Most people, small businesses, corporations, schools and organizations, take the attitude: It will not happen here, and turn a blind eye.

Preventing workplace violence is achieved by proactive measures that must be

established in writing and adopted as part of the corporate culture. One of the corner stones of effective prevention is to commit to and create an environment free from disruptive, threatening and violent behavior.

Setting up successful screening procedures for new employees can be one of the most cost effective measures available. Careful hiring procedures can weed out potential problem employees before they become "your" problem as well as reducing turnover rates. A safe workplace, free from violence, is a team effort which must begin at the highest level and reach all levels of the organization.

Being penny wise and pound foolish with regard to workplace violence issues is a very expensive gamble. Are you willing to risk liability issues resulting from workplace violence?

Provide a planned and stra-

tegic approach to effectively address workplace violence. Stopping workplace violence takes preparation and planning in these areas:

- Establish a Workplace Violence Team - including top management, human resources, an employee law specialist, a threat assessment specialist, security, administration, union representation, and Employee Assistance Program representatives

- Analyze risks - conduct a violence vulnerability-audit, and security survey.

- Determine what events would seriously disrupt your business operation

- Practice risk management: crime, fire, accidents and workplace violence

- Examine potential types of threats: *Internal Threats* such a hostile termination, demotions, downsizing, and stalking of co-workers and *External Threats* such as domestic stalking, customer as threat, criminal threats, and former employee as a threat

- Evaluate current workplace violence, harassment policies in place.

- Establish written policy and procedures

- Implement policies from top management down

- Educate, manage, and supervise employees

- Develop, implement and monitor workplace violence prevention programs annually

- Discuss the role of law enforcement

- Invest in law enforcement and mental health intervention, case management options and long term management for compliance

- Learn from history - top executives are most vulnerable while traveling in their automobiles. Historically most attacks usually happen in route from or to the residence from work. Because it is predictable in both timing and direction for some.

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