

Violence in the Workplace




University of Louisiana at Monroe

Definitions

- **Violence:** any threat or assault on an individual that has the intention or results in physical and/or psychological damage.
- **Types of violence:**
 - Physical
 - Verbal
 - Psychological
- **Types of Threats:**
 - Direct
 - Veiled
 - Conditional
- **Workplace:** any location the employee is at due to the requirements of completing job assignments.

Sources of Workplace Violence



- By strangers, vendors, contractors, etc.
- By students or clients
- By co-workers
- By personal relations

Effects of Workplace Violence



- Physical injuries
- Psychological / emotional damage
- Interruption in business
- Increased costs: medical costs, costs of additional security, etc.
- Damaged public image

Risk Factors



- Working Alone
- High Risk Environments
- Working with limited or no means of communication
- Financial Responsibilities - i.e. making deposits, etc.
- Nature of Services Provided - i.e. law enforcement
- Unrestricted movement of public in the workplace
- Low staffing during peak hours
- Lack of employee training
- Lack of program implementation

Preventing Workplace Violence



- You can help prevent workplace violence by doing the following:
 - Secure your workplace daily
 - Always be aware of your surroundings
 - Know where the exits in your building are.
 - Implement a “buddy system” - do not work alone
 - Leave with your keys in your hand
 - Move your vehicle closer if working late. Call university police and have them provide an escort for you to your vehicle if necessary.

Preventing Workplace Violence (continued)


- Maintain an ability to communicate - if you are working alone let University Police know so that they can check on you.
- Always escort all visitors / vendors in the workplace.
- Report **all** incidents of workplace violence. An incident can occur without a physical attack or crime. Threats can be considered an incident. Reporting will enable the administration to try and address the issue before it becomes worse.
- Inform management of all restraining orders. Notify your supervisor and university police of restraining orders.
- Train all employees on preventing workplace violence.

Early Warning Signs



- **Personality Traits:**
 - Low Self-Esteem
 - Low Productivity
 - Low Impulse Control
 - Lacks Empathy
 - Social Withdrawal
 - Feelings of Rejection
 - Resists Change
 - Feelings of being picked on
 - Easily frustrated
 - Challenges authority

Warning Signs - What to look for....



- Obsessive behavior
- Increased absenteeism
- Chemical dependency
- Verbal threats or threatening actions
- History of discipline problems
- Depression & isolation
- Defensiveness
- Emotional outbursts
- Interests in weapons
- Self-destructive behavior

Resolving Workplace Conflicts

- When resolving workplace conflicts remember the following in order to prevent violence:
 - Do not get physical
 - Do not over-react
 - Do not take the challenge
 - Be a good listener
 - Find out what is really being said
 - Give them space
 - Watch what you say non-verbally
 - Use consequences, NOT threats

If a Workplace Violence Incident Occurs:

- **Report the incident immediately** - call the university police if necessary. Report the incident to the human resources department - complete appropriate forms
- Seek medical attention to treat injuries if necessary.
- Thoroughly investigate incident. Get written statements from all involved. Take pictures of everything involved
- Workplace violence committee will review incident and offer recommendations to prevent recurrence.

Questions?



- Please see the ULM Violence in the Workplace Policy located on the HR webpage, <http://www.ulm.edu/hr/policies/WPVPOLICY.htm>
- Contact the Human Resources Department, 342-5140
- Contact the Environmental Health & Safety Department, 342-5177