WHAT ABOUT VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Violence in the workplace takes many forms, from raised voices and profanity or sexual harassment to robbery or homicide. While homicide in the workplace is rising, 75 percent of work-related homicides are committed by unknown assailants while committing a robbery or other crimes. Despite media hype, the attacker usually isn't a disgruntled co-worker. To assess a workplace's vulnerability to violence, ask yourself these questions.

- Is your office secure? Do you have easy-to-use phone systems with emergency buttons, sign-in policies for visitors, panic buttons, safe rooms, security guards, office access controls, good lighting, and safety training?
- Does your employer take care in hiring and firing? Before hiring, are employment gaps, history, references, and criminal and educational records thoroughly examined? Are termination procedures defined clearly with attention to advance notice, severance pay, and placement services?
- Could you recognize potentially violent employees? Signs of stress that could erupt into violence include: depression, frequent absences, talking in a louder-than-normal voice, being startled easily, increased irritability and impatience, and concentration and memory problems.
- Are you encouraged to report unusual or worrisome behavior? Is there a clear, written policy that spells out procedures in cases of violence and sanctions for violators? Make sure you know to whom you should report unusual behaviors.
- Do you work in a supportive, harmonious environment? Is there a culture of mutual respect? Does your employer provide an employee assistance program (EAP)?

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

Crime Prevention Tips From

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Take Crime Prevention To Work

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME

National Crime Prevention Council

When you go to work, don't leave your crime prevention sense at home. Almost any crime that can happen at home or in your neighborhood, can happen in the workplace. But common-sense prevention skills can help make life "at work" safer for all.

HELP PREVENT OFFICE THEFT AND OTHER CRIMES

- Keep your purse, wallet, keys, or other valuable items with you at all times or locked in a drawer or closet.
- Check the identity of any strangers who are in your office — ask whom they are visiting and if you can help them find that person. If this makes you uncomfortable, inform security or management about your suspicions.
- Always let someone know where you'll be — whether it's coming in late, working late, going to the photocopier or mail room, going out to lunch or a meeting.
- If you bring personal items to work, such as a coffee pot, a radio, or a calculator, mark them with your name or initials and an identification number.
- Report any broken or flickering lights, dimly lit corridors, doors that don't lock properly, or broken windows. Don't wait for someone else to do it.
- Be discreet. Don't advertise your social life or vacation plans and those of your co-workers to people visiting or calling your place of work.

TAKE A LOOK AT COMMON TROUBLE SPOTS

- Reception area — Is the receptionist equipped with a panic button for emergencies, a camera with a monitor at another employee's desk, and a lock on the front door that can be controlled?
- Stairwells and out-of-the-way corridors — Don't use the stairs alone. Talk to the building manager about improving poorly lighted corridors and stairways.
- Elevators — Don't get into elevators with people who look out of place or behave in a strange or threatening manner. If you find yourself in an elevator with someone who makes you nervous, get off as soon as possible.
- Restrooms — Attackers can hide in stalls and corners. Make sure restrooms are locked and only employees have keys. Be extra cautious when using restrooms that are isolated or poorly lighted.
- After hours — Don't work late alone. Create a buddy system for walking to parking lots or public transportation or ask security to escort you.
- Parking lots or garages — Choose a well-lighted, well-guarded parking garage. Always lock your car and roll the windows up all the way. If you notice any strangers hanging around the parking lot, notify security or the police. When you approach your car, have the key ready. Check the floor and front and back seats before getting in. Lock your car as soon as you get in — before you buckle your seat belt.