

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE



INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

1-DAY COURSE



VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

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Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

Course timing

Module One: Causes and Sources of Workplace Violence

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Introduction	20
	Who are aggressors?	10
	Risk factors for victims	10









Reading



Written
Exercise

Module Two: Prevention Measures

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Prevention strategies: Building and property security	15
	Prevention strategies: Administrative controls	15
	Incident reporting	15
	Pre-employment screening	10
	Threat assessment team	15
	Organization policies, procedures, and benefits	10









Facilitation



Group
Activity

Course timing

Module Three: Identifying and Defusing Potentially Violent Situations




Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Warning indicators	10
	Triggering events	5
	Escalating behaviors	10
	How to respond to disruptive behavior	10
	How to respond to threatening behavior	10
	Role play practice	20

Module Four: Dealing with a Crisis

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Developing a crisis response plan	10
	Reacting to a crisis	10
	Structured recovery process	20

Course timing

Module Four: Dealing with a Crisis (cont.)

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Recovering from a crisis	10
	Case study	30
	Wrap-up	10

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Course objectives

- Understand the most common causes of workplace violence
- Conduct a thorough safety readiness assessment
- Implement prevention measures that make a difference

Course objectives (cont.)

- Recognize warning signs and triggering events that may signal an individual is about to explode
- De-escalate a potentially dangerous situation before it erupts
- Handle a crisis effectively if it occurs
- Manage the aftermath and restore a sense of normalcy

Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- Understand the most common causes of workplace violence
- Conduct a thorough safety readiness assessment
- Implement prevention measures that make a difference
- Recognize warning signs and triggering events that may signal an individual is about to explode
- De-escalate a potentially dangerous situation before it erupts
- Handle a crisis effectively if it occurs
- Manage the aftermath and restore a sense of normalcy

ModuleOne



CAUSES AND SOURCES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Learning objectives

Successful completion of this module will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- Become aware of the statistics regarding violence in the workplace

- Understand the nature of aggressors

- Recognize the risk factors that contribute to the potential for violence

Introduction

One afternoon an anonymous caller made a death threat against one of the managers of a small business. The manager recognized the caller's voice as a former long-term employee who had recently been laid off by the firm because of a downturn in business.

The police were phoned immediately and began their investigation by contacting the suspected former employee. The man indicated his despair over the loss of his job and quickly confessed to making the threatening phone call.

Fortunately, intervention occurred before the perpetrator had a chance to carry out his threat. However, the remaining employees, already in a state of low morale due to the layoffs, were terribly shaken by the incident. Use of sick leave increased and productivity was negatively affected for several weeks following the threat.

Why bother? It's not going to happen to us

Violence in the workplace accounted for 18 percent of all violent crime between 1993 and 1999.

On average, between 1993 and 1999, 1.7 million violent victimizations per year were committed against people in the workplace, including:

- 1.3 million simple assaults
- 325,000 aggravated assaults
- 70,000 robberies
- 36,500 rapes and sexual assaults
- 900 homicides

Homicide is the leading cause of injury death for women in the workplace.

Icebreaker activity: Have participants introduce themselves and share any workplace violence they (or someone they know) have experienced. Chances are, you will find almost everyone has directly experienced, or knows someone who has experienced, workplace violence (keeping in mind that violence is not only murder, but assaults or even threats)..

Acknowledge that this can be an uncomfortable topic – people just don't want to believe it can happen in their workplace. But it can – review the statistics listed on the page.

The statistics come from a variety of sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2001. Violence in the Workplace, 1993-99. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: Women's Safety and Health Issues at Work.

Monetary costs keep growing

- \$5.2 million paid to a supervisor shot by a fired employee
- \$5.49 million paid by a temp agency that was found to have inadequately screened its hires

Legal and liability issues

- Hiring
- Training
- Supervising
- Discipline/retention



Legal and liability issues: The employer must use reasonable care in hiring, training, supervising and retaining employees.

Nearly all fatal workplace violence incidents have been followed by lawsuits by the families of victims, claiming not enough was done to prevent the incident.

Workplace violence litigation has dramatically increased. Recent awards include \$5.2 million paid to a supervisor shot and permanently disabled by a disgruntled fired employee; \$5.49 million against a temporary employment agency that failed to adequately screen an employee provided to a client after that employee fatally stabbed a worker at the client-company.

Other legal issues: Many state courts have ruled that an employer is liable for the dangerous acts of employees if such harm was foreseeable.

Employers may be liable for acts of an employee who is intoxicated or otherwise a risk to others.

Employers should be cautious about reducing the level of security because of financial pressures. To avoid or reduce liability the employer should first assess whether the level of security risk justifies reducing security measures

The good news: Employers with effective grievance, harassment and security programs had lower rates of workplace violence.

A survey by the American Management Association found that 50 percent of the companies surveyed reported experiencing incidents or threats of workplace violence in the last four years. Thirty percent reported that violence had occurred more than once.

A survey by the Northwestern Life Insurance Company found that one out of four full-times workers had been harassed, threatened or attacked on the job.

Victims of nonfatal workplace violence stated they knew their offender in about 40 percent of the cases. (Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2003. *Criminal Victimization 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

Each year, victims of intimate partner violence lose nearly 8 million days of paid work because of the violence—the equivalent of over 32,000 full-time jobs. (Centers for Disease Control. 2003. *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

Legal and liability issues

Negligent hiring: failing to properly screen employees, resulting in the hiring of someone the courts could say had a history of violent and criminal acts

Negligent retention: keeping an employee after the employer became aware of the employee's unsuitability and then failed to act on that knowledge

Negligent supervision: failing to provide the necessary monitoring to ensure that employees perform their duties properly

Inadequate security: security measures provided to safeguard employees, customers, and members of the public not consistent with the potential threat

We'll provide a model written policy that you can use.

Training issues

Various federal and state laws or case law may require employers to establish written policy and procedures dealing with harassment, as well as the training of employees as to company policies prohibiting sexual or racial harassment, fighting, and the use of drugs or alcohol in the workplace.

Employers may avoid or reduce liability for acts of violence in the workplace where it is shown that the employer conducted training for employees on the recognition of warning signs of potentially violent behavior, and on precautions which may enhance the personal safety of the employee at work.

The bottom line

An effective workplace violence prevention program includes physical security, pre-employment screening, good termination practices, employee assistance programs, out placement, and a host of other options.

Aggressors



- Strangers
- Customers
- Employees
- Domestic disputes
- Parents or students

So, the first question many people want to know is who does this? There is no standard description or stereotype. However, there are general categories of aggressors listed on this page.

Strangers: The most frequent occurrences of violence are committed by strangers outside the business, robbery being the greatest threat.

Customers: Patients, passengers, students, inmates, a student who has been suspended. This situation is usually in an organization that provides services to the public, such as municipal buses, health care and social service providers, teachers, etc.

Point out that in the customer and employee category, the organization has a degree of control – in providing fair treatment, following proper disciplinary actions, etc. It won't guarantee prevention of workplace violence, but it can help.

Who are aggressors?

Strangers

Person committing armed robbery
Persons involved in gang activity

Customers

Disgruntled customers or clients such as patients, passengers, or students
In school settings, parents who feel their child has been treated unfairly

Employees

Current or former employees who perceive they have experienced unfair treatment
Firing or lay off
Disciplinary action
Passed over for promotion
Perceived favoritism against them

Domestic disputes

Spouse or partner of an employee who is in an abusive relationship, or involved in separation or divorce proceedings
Rejected suitors

Risk factors for victims

A number of factors may increase a worker's risk for workplace assault. These factors include the following:

- Contact with the public
- Exchange of money
- Delivery of passengers, goods, or services
- Having a mobile workplace such as a taxicab or police cruiser
- Working with unstable or volatile persons in health care, social service, or criminal justice settings
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late at night or during early morning hours
- Working in high-crime areas
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community-based settings

Exercise: *Review the risk factors and list any that apply to your organization.*



A special mention should be made of taxi drivers and police officers. They are at the highest risk for experiencing violence in their workplace.

Exercise: Have participants share and compare their lists.

