

# VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE



Presented by  
Human Resources Department  
Training & Development Unit

# Course Objectives

***At the completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:***

- ❑ Clearly understand and define the phenomenon of workplace violence.
- ❑ Recognize employees who have a potential for violence.
- ❑ Develop systems and policies to prevent and reduce violence in the workplace.
- ❑ Respond appropriately in the event that violence occurs.

OBJECTIVES



# Agenda



- ❖ WORKPLACE VIOLENCE STATISTICS
- ❖ ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
- ❖ RISK FACTORS AND HIGH-RISK OCCUPATIONS
- ❖ THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
- ❖ IDENTIFYING AGGRESSORS
- ❖ DO'S AND DON'TS
- ❖ DEVELOPING A PLAN



# Definition



Any act against an employee that creates a hostile work environment and negatively affects the employee, either physically or psychologically.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

# How Prevalent Is It?

## How Wide Spread Is It?

- Workplace violence continues to be a pressing issue that companies from all sectors grapple with across the United States. Today, millions of people fall victim to workplace violence each and every year. In an effort to understand the complexities and intricacies of workplace violence in the U.S., our data analysis team concluded:
- In the United States, there are roughly **2 million victims** of workplace violence each year.
- The healthcare and social assistance industries have an **8.2% workplace violence incident rate**.
- Workplace violence deaths rates for men are roughly **75% higher** than those for females.
- Workplace violence causes American businesses to lose, on average, **\$250 to \$330 billion every year**.
- **85%** of workplace violence deaths are due to robbery.
- Workplace assaults resulted in **20,050 injuries and 392 fatalities** in 2020 alone.

Source: <http://victimsofcrime.org/library/crime-information-and-statistics/workplace-violence>

STATISTICS



# How Prevalent Is It?

- **Disturbing Workplace Violence Statistics**

- The picture is very, very far from perfect:
- **23% of employees** worldwide have experienced violence or harassment in the workplace.
- **Over 2.6 million Americans** were victims of nonfatal workplace injuries in 2021.
- **37,060 workers in the US** experienced nonfatal injuries from workplace violence.
- There were **481 workplace homicides in 2021**, up from **392 homicides in 2020**.
- In 2021, there were **387 cases of intentional workplace shootings** resulting in the death of the victim.
- It is estimated that about **25%** of workplace violence cases go **unreported**.
- Healthcare workers are most often affected - **50% of cases involve medics**.
- **7% of fatalities** in the workplace involve some sort of **physical damage**.
- **Women** report around **30,000 sexual assaults** on the job.
- **60.4 million Americans** have been **bullied** while working.
- <https://techjury.net/blog/workplace-violence-statistics/>





**“BUT WE ARE NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT HOMICIDE HERE TODAY. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A WORKFORCE UNDER SIEGE FROM PRESSURES, HARASSMENT AND NON-FATAL VIOLENCE.”**

**M. JOCELYN ELDERS  
FORMER SURGEON GENERAL**



# Violent Acts

- Vandalizing
- Shouting
- Punching
- Shooting
- Raping
- Murdering
- Stalking



- Harassment
- Intimidation
- Threatening notes
- Threatening letters/faxes
- “Suspicious” accidents







**Women target women  
84% of the time**

**Did you know – victims of workplace  
bullies are mostly women**

# Factors That Can Trigger An Explosion!

Organizational  
Changes

Workplace  
Diversity

Communication  
Issues

Interpersonal  
Conflict

Substance  
Abuse

Psychosocial/  
Psychiatric  
Problems

Stress/Burnout



FOCUS



# Organizational Changes

## The Change Model

For change to occur, Vision, Skills, Resources, and Plan must be present. If "X" is missing =



VISION	SKILLS	RESOURCES	PLAN	= <i>CHANGE</i>
X				= CONFUSION
	X			= STRESS
		X		= FRUSTRATION
			X	= FALSE STARTS



# Workplace Diversity

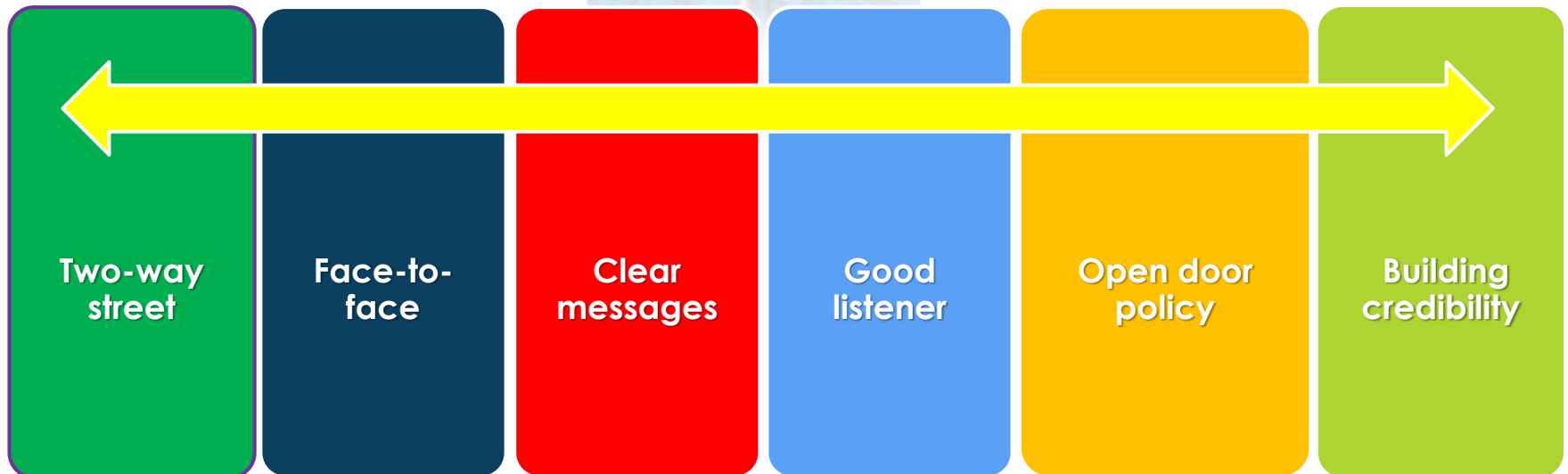


## Influences on the Individual

- ✓ FAMILY
- ✓ EDUCATION
- ✓ POLITICS
- ✓ RELIGION
- ✓ FRIENDS
- ✓ MEDIA
- ✓ SELF IMAGE
- ✓ ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

# Communication Issues

Communicating Better at Work



# Five Common Sources of Violence



Strangers who commit crimes such as robbery, or who have a grudge against the business.



Disgruntled current or past customers.



Current or former employees who threaten, assault or murder.



Spouses or lovers involved in domestic disputes.



Those who are infatuated with or who stalk employee.



# High Risk Factors



- JOBS INVOLVING EXCHANGE OF MONEY.
- JOBS SERVING LARGE NUMBERS OF CUSTOMERS.
- WORKING ALONE OR IN SMALL NUMBERS.
- JOBS REQUIRING NIGHT WORK.
- JOBS REQUIRING FIELD WORK.
- GUARDING VALUABLE PROPERTY.
- WORKING IN EXPOSED COMMUNITY SETTINGS.
- WORKING IN ISOLATED COMMUNITY SETTINGS.

# Some **High-Risk** Occupations



- Night Clerks/Cashiers
- Bus Drivers
- Housing Maintenance Workers
- Code Enforcement Officers
- Parking Enforcement Officers
- Field Caseworkers
- Firefighters
- Police Officers
- Driver Messengers
- Meter Readers
- Tax Collectors
- Toll Collectors

# Workplace Violence Cost!

## Real Costs

- ☐ Physical Injury
- ☐ Damaged Equipment
- ☐ Repair Cost
- ☐ Stolen Property
- ☐ Legal Expenses
- ☐ Stress-related Claims
- ☐ Worker's Compensation Claims

## Hidden Costs

- ☐ Low Employee Morale
- ☐ Increased Absenteeism
- ☐ Increased Stress
- ☐ Decreased Productivity
- ☐ Psychological Impact
- ☐ Lost Customers



# Managing Stress At The Work-Site



## Key Elements of a Violence Prevention Program



- ▶ Develop a written zero tolerance policy on violence in the workplace
- ▶ Assign dedicated personnel for critical duties (Develop a response team)
- ▶ Provide training on workplace violence
- ▶ Develop security protocols to address work-site needs
- ▶ Ensure 911 capability at all work-site locations
- ▶ Ensure that everyone is aware of approved escape routes
- ▶ Take a serious approach to violence in the workplace
- ▶ Never assume anything

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A.O. No.: 7-36  
Ordered: 3/9/2000  
Effective: 3/19/2000

**AUTHORITY:**

Section 4.02 of the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Amendment and Charter.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of Miami-Dade County to ensure that all employees are able to enjoy a work environment free from all forms of violence and threats of violence. This policy includes an absolute prohibition against employees carrying firearms or personal weapons onto any County property, except as may be specifically authorized by law.

**EXCEPTION:**

An exception to this is the Trail Glades Firing Range, where (licensed) employees may carry weapons or firearms when off-duty (County Code, Ch. 26, Rule 13). The County will absolutely not tolerate any deviation from this stated policy, and violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from County service.



**DEFINITION:**

Workplace violence or occupational violent crime (OVC) is defined as violent and/or threatening behavior in the workplace. Threatening behavior includes any behavior that could be interpreted by a reasonable person as intent to cause physical harm to another individual. Threatening behavior may, or may not, include the actual act of physical force, with or without a weapon, toward another individual.

Threatening behavior may be verbal or non-verbal. Employees, who have knowledge of violent acts or threats of violence in the workplace, must report through the appropriate chain of command and have the right to have those complaints investigated.

Employees, who engage in violent or threatening acts against other employees or the public, shall be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending upon the circumstances, up to and including termination of employment, as well as possible criminal charges. In the event disciplinary action is less than termination, there shall be mandatory referral to the County's Employee Support Services Unit (ESS). The County will work with appropriate law enforcement agencies to aid in the investigation and prosecution of anyone who commits a violent act in the workplace.

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**IMPLEMENTATION:**

In order to effectively implement the above policy, all County employees must refrain from: Committing any violent physical act in the workplace against another County employee or member of the public;

Carrying or bringing any firearms or personal weapons onto any Miami-Dade County property, unless appropriately licensed and required to carry a firearm or weapon in the course of fulfilling job responsibilities, at and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Trail Glade Ranges, or as may otherwise specifically be authorized by law. This prohibition on firearms and personal weapons extends to County vehicles, as well as privately owned vehicles on County property;

Making verbal or non-verbal threats of violence toward another person. Threats shall include any behavior or words that would reasonably cause another person to fear bodily harm.

Taking disciplinary action or other adverse employment action against another employee because of that person's complaining of, reporting, or seeking redress for violent or threatening behavior perpetrated upon them or others in the workplace;

Intentionally destroying property or possessions of co-workers or Miami-Dade County without authorization; or, exhibiting any other conduct or actions which fall within the above-stated definition of workplace violence.

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**REPORTING PROCEDURE:**

Employees have the right and are encouraged to report knowledge of violent acts or threatening behavior to their supervisor. It shall be each supervisor's responsibility to swiftly and thoroughly investigate such reports, or to report such complaints to the appropriate department or law enforcement authority.

Supervisors shall report all violent acts or threatening behavior, complaints or reports of same, and results of their investigation to their department director or designee. Additionally, the concerned department shall be responsible for reporting any potential criminal action to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Department management shall take appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of its employees and the public.

**ENFORCEMENT:**

Any employee who violates any provision of this Administrative Order shall be subject to appropriate action by the employee's department, in accordance with Administrative Order 7-3, Disciplinary Action. Upon receipt of a complaint regarding an employee, the concerned department director or designee shall immediately determine whether allowing the employee to continue working could pose a danger to the health, safety or welfare of the public, co-workers, or the employee. If a danger is possible, the department director or his designee shall report all relevant information concerning the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency and may relieve the employee from duty and place him/her on

administrative leave. The department director or his designee shall refer the employee to ESS for counseling and/or referral. Such referral shall not preclude disciplinary action or possible criminal sanctions, which shall be administered in conjunction with ESS referral and shall be imposed in accordance with existing County and departmental rules. The Labor Relations Division of the Human Resources Department shall be consulted on any disciplinary action imposed for violation of this Administrative Order.

**MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES:**

The guidelines below apply to all County employees and are intended to aid managers in dealing with violent or potentially violent situations at work.

**Immediate Action When Incidents Occur**

Any employee observing violent or threatening behavior is expected to first secure his/her own safety and then:

**I. Emergency Situations**

Call 911 and report as many details as possible so that the appropriate emergency response units can be dispatched. The employee should be prepared to provide a description of the violent or threatening individual(s) and the exact location of the incident. It is difficult to give specific instructions for each situation. We do not wish to endanger any employee, therefore, employees should not be encouraged to do anything that jeopardizes their safety. Contact his/her supervisor. If the supervisor is

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the threatening individual, the employee should notify someone else in the departmental chain of command.

## II. Non-Emergency Situations

Who you contact and when will depend on the seriousness of the situation. It is in everyone's best interest to make a good faith effort to defuse violent or potentially violent situations as quickly as possible to prevent their escalation and threat to others. The general steps you should follow are: Encourage and assist employees to resolve their differences by non-violent means; if the situation escalates, contact his/her supervisor. If the supervisor is the threatening individual, the employee should notify someone else in the departmental chain of command.

### **Appropriate Follow-Up**

If disciplinary action is contemplated, the following should occur: Separately interview all persons involved, including any witnesses, in order to obtain an accurate account of the incident; Document the statements of witnesses and others interviewed; Advise those employees who may be subject to disciplinary action based on the incident that they have the right to be represented during the interview, in accordance with Administrative Order 7-3; and Contact the Labor Relations Division of the Human Resources Department for advice and assistance in this process.

### **Relieved From Duty**

If a situation involving an employee is serious enough that possible

termination may be involved, and/or the continued presence of the employee at the worksite would present a danger, the employee may be relieved from duty and ordered not to return to the worksite until further notice. This action may only be taken with the department director's concurrence.

**Resources for Advice and Assistance**

After the initial incident has been responded to, the supervisor/manager may need advice and assistance from other County entities.

These may include:

- Human Resources Department
- Employee Support Services Section
- Labor Relations Division
- Internal Services Department
- Office of Safety
- Security Management
- Office of Human Rights & Fair Employment Practices
- Emergency Assistance (if appropriate)

This Administrative Order is hereby submitted to the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County, Florida.



# Developing a Violence Prevention Program



Secure

Secure management's support for the program

Review

Review County's A.O. (7-19)

Review

Review previous incidents of workplace departmental initiative violence

Review

Review work-site security issues

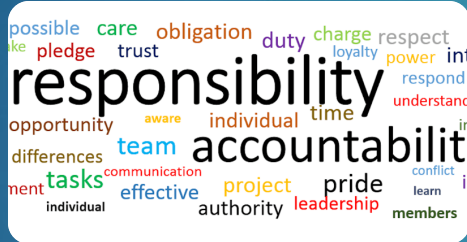
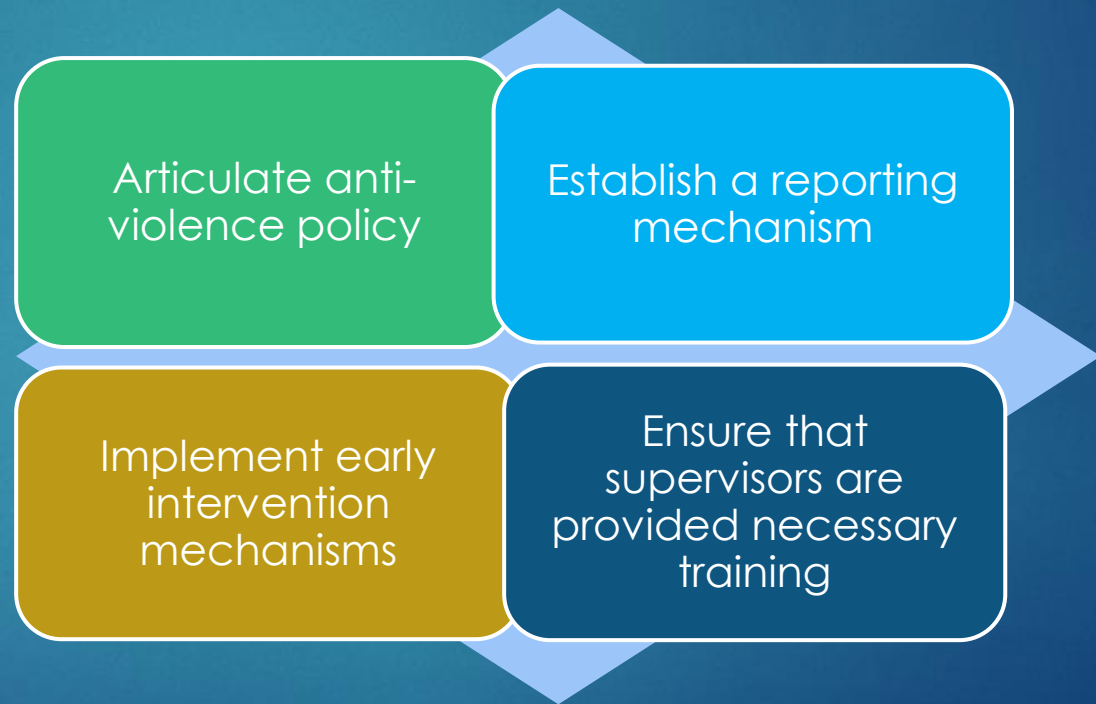
Involve

Involve employees in program planning and implementation

Consult

Consult with the Employee Support Services Section

# Administrative Responsibilities



# Aggressor Profile

## Characteristics:

- ◆ Disgruntled
- ◆ Perceived injustices
- ◆ Socially isolated
- ◆ Poor self-esteem
- ◆ Cries for help
- ◆ Fascination with military
- ◆ Fascination with weapons
- ◆ Temper control problems
- ◆ Makes threats
- ◆ Few healthy rage outlets

## Other Indicators:

- ◆ Obsession with media violence
- ◆ Unstable family life
- ◆ Concern by other employees
- ◆ Chronic disputes
- ◆ Numerous physical or emotional injury claims
- ◆ Problems with working conditions
- ◆ Stress complaints
- ◆ Migratory job history
- ◆ Drug and Alcohol Abuse



# Conflict Management



- ❖ ACTIVE LISTENING
- ❖ OBSERVE EMPLOYEE'S BEHAVIOR
- ❖ LISTEN WITH EMPATHY
- ❖ AVOID DEFENSIVENESS
- ❖ ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS
- ❖ AVOID AN AUDIENCE
- ❖ SPEAK SLOWLY, SOFTLY, & CLEARLY
- ❖ ASK QUESTIONS TO OBTAIN FACTS
- ❖ STATE CONSEQUENCES

# When Taking Action



**DO:**

Project calmness

Listen with empathy

Focus your  
attention

Keep your posture  
relaxed and  
attentive

Acknowledge  
feelings

Establish ground  
rules

Ask for specific  
small favors

Use delaying  
tactics

Break problems  
into manageable  
units

Accepts criticism  
positively

Ask for  
recommendations

Repeat  
recommendations

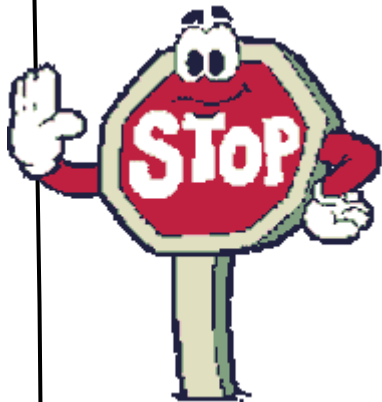
Ensure access to  
exit



# When Taking Action

## Don't:

- ❖ Communicate in a hostile manner
- ❖ Immediately reject all demands
- ❖ Pose in challenging posture or engage in physical contact
- ❖ Make sudden or threatening movements
- ❖ Threaten
- ❖ Dare or challenge
- ❖ Make the person feel foolish
- ❖ Act impatiently
- ❖ Criticize
- ❖ Attempt to bargain with a threatening person
- ❖ Make false statements or promises you can't keep
- ❖ Agree with distorted points of view
- ❖ Invade person's personal space





Thank you!

**Remember to take the  
quiz to complete the  
course**