

Workplace Violence

10 tips for a proactive prevention program

By Sarah J. Smith

ON JAN. 9, 2002, CALIFORNIA AUTHORITIES discovered a rocket launcher, tear gas, hand grenades, assault rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition among more than 200 weapons at a worker's home and in his storage locker (Krolicki). The man, a 17-year veteran mechanic, had threatened some former coworkers after he was terminated in December. According to police, the suspect stated, "They have taken my job. They have taken my life. I have nothing left to lose. . . . I'll take my guns and go to San Onofre and whack a bunch of people" (Morrison).

The nuclear plant had increased security measures since Sept. 11: plant employees are checked daily by explosives and metal detectors, searched for weapons and routinely monitored by remote cameras. In addition, supervisors are trained to monitor staff for strange behavior, including signs of drug and alcohol abuse. The result? Trained employees reported this potentially dangerous situation to the authorities. "He threatened supervisors . . . and anyone who had anything to do with his termination."

If a disgruntled former employee made threats at your facility, what would your employees do? Are they ready to take action if a gunman enters and starts shooting? Workplace violence is an internal threat—one that many employers have failed to address. How can an organization plan for such an

attack? By working with local law enforcement and implementing a mock active shooter drill, a company and its employees will learn how to recognize and report potential threats, observe facts, react to perpetrators and secure evidence. If a SWAT team is summoned, what will they need upon arrival? It is easy to ignore the threat of workplace violence at our own facilities. But, by waiting until a violent event occurs rather than proactively pre-

paring for it—both in terms of enhanced physical security measures and improved training of employees to make sure they understand the risks—the results may well be the "worst-case scenario." This article reviews two recent workplace shootings in northern Indiana and offers 10 tips for developing a proactive approach to preventing workplace violence.

Two Recent Workplace Shootings: Indiana Plants Fall Victim to Violence

Goshen, IN, is a quiet, rural city known for its "small-town values" (population 29,000) (City of Goshen). On Dec. 6, 2001, during the afternoon shift change for Nu-Wood Decorative Millwork, people throughout northern Indiana were shocked: a gunman had entered Nu-Wood and was shooting people. Local TV stations showed police cars, the SWAT team and concerned family members surrounding the facility. The media interviewed Mayor Allan Kauffman by phone; he had heard reports that up to 35 employees had sustained injuries. Within the hour, CNN broadcast news of the event nationwide.

Evidently, an argument between two male employees over a female coworker had ended in a shooting rampage (Gibson "Argument"). The argument had started on Monday and, according to the police chief, "became more of a situation on Thursday" when Robert Wissman was sent home. Wissman returned to the plant at 11 a.m. for another meeting with management and was again sent home. At 11:50 a.m., a supervisor instructed employees they were on lockdown; if anyone saw Wissman they should get away from him and promptly inform management. One employee stated, "She said there was no danger—no threats" (Gibson "Shooting"). A coworker said that on the previous day Wissman seemed unusually quiet. "When we were going to punch out, I asked Robert what was wrong. Robert said he wasn't going to (talk to coworkers) anymore, because people at the

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company thought he was crazy. All he really talked about was hunting.”

At 2:30 p.m., employees were punching out at a time clock located about 10 feet from a door—the same door Wissman used to reenter Nu-Wood. When the SWAT team finally entered the plant and secured the building, two were confirmed dead and six others wounded. Nearly two hours had elapsed before this information was available. Michelle Oswald was waiting outside for information about her husband, Greg, the plant manager. During an interview, she claimed the police did not respond to a phone call placed by Greg—a call he reportedly made a few hours before Wissman returned to Nu-Wood. Michelle stated that three people were in Greg’s office when they called the police with concerns about Wissman’s behavior. They were told that no crime had yet been committed and a restraining order would take a week to process.

On April 9, Michelle Oswald filed suit against the City of Goshen, the city police department and the police chief. She alleged that negligence of city police led to Greg Oswald’s death (“Widow Files Lawsuit”). In the claim, Oswald stated that police did not remove her husband’s body nor tell her about his death until later in the evening on the day of the shootings. In the meantime, she had been interviewed on national TV. Wissman had killed the plant manager, wounded six others and shot himself four times.

On March 22, 2002, another shooting took place 25 miles west of Goshen, IN. At 8:15 a.m., William Lockey entered Bertrand Products through the front door carrying a box. Observers thought he was making a delivery—Lockey was a 20-year employee of the firm who worked in shipping and receiving. Lockey entered a production meeting, pulled out a gun and started shooting. Supposedly, he was worried about losing his job at the company, a manufacturer of aircraft parts. According to reports, “he used to get in little squabbles with (coworkers) because he didn’t [receive] his merchandise in time to ship it out” (Coyne). Lockey, who owned a rifle and a shotgun, seemed to target particular coworkers in the shooting.

Lockey then fled the scene in a company van, stopping several times to reload. Three police officers suffered minor injuries, while construction workers took cover. “It was a gun battle all the way out of South Bend,” said Richard Dragomer, Michigan State Police Captain. Police believe Lockey was heading home—just across the Michigan state line.

Workplace Violence Prevention

If Robert Wissman or William Lockey had been a disgruntled worker at your workplace, how would your employees have responded? Workplace violence prevention, preparation and response require a team approach. This team must include management, local law enforcement and the firm’s employees. Management commitment includes not only dedicating financial resources to provide physical protective



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measures but also the development and implementation of a zero-tolerance workplace violence policy and program. Company leaders must buy in to the importance of workplace violence prevention and employee training. Local law enforcement will partner with your company to develop and deliver training, however, someone must ask them to share their expertise. Although not every incident will be prevented, many can be. And the severity of injuries sustained by employees can certainly be reduced.

Workplace violence has emerged as an important safety and health issue. Its most extreme form—homicide—is the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the U.S. (OSHA). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) *Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries*, 639 workplace homicides occurred in 2001. They accounted for 15.3 percent of the total 5,900 fatal work injuries in the U.S. (excluding those deaths resulting from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks) [BLS(a)]. In 1998, 80 percent of workplace homicide victims were shot (Heathfield). A U.S. Dept. of Labor study showed that in 17 percent of workplace homicides, the alleged assailant was a current or former husband or boyfriend of an employee [BLS(b)]. When domestic violence spills over into the workplace, the result can be fatal. A study of 50 battered women in New York revealed that 75 percent had been harassed by their batterers while at work (Friedman and Cooper). It is

Table 1

Occupational Injuries by Industry & Event or Exposure, 2001

Industry	SIC code	Number of Fatalities*	% of Fatalities as a Result of Assaults & Violent Acts
Total		5,900	15.3
Private Industry		5,270	14.7
Government		630	20.0
Industrial machinery and equipment manufacturing	35	38	7.9
Taxicabs	412	46	73.9
Food stores	54	132	81.8
Automotive dealers and service stations	55	83	27.7
Eating and drinking places	58	147	69.4
Real estate	65	46	39.1
Business services	73	191	22.5
Automotive repair, services and parking	75	115	23.5
Amusement and recreation services	79	94	16.0
Health services	80	69	36.2

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistic, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.

*Excludes deaths resulting from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

often easy to find the victim at work because this routine is consistent.

Employers have both a legal duty and a moral obligation to provide a safe workplace. To prevent loss of life and injuries, and to limit financial losses and liability, employers should institute policies and procedures to prevent violence from occurring in their workplaces. These policies may include the means to identify potential for violence; procedures to prevent the occurrence of violence; and, in the event that prevention fails, plans to respond to the incident and minimize further damage.

Environmental conditions associated with workplace assaults can be identified as well. Firms can implement various control strategies. Although OSHA is not initiating specific workplace violence rulemaking at this time, it has identified three specific categories of exposure: nonfatal assaults, homicide and risk factors.

Nonfatal Assaults

Between 1993 and 1999, an average of 1.7 million violent assaults per year were committed in the U.S. against persons who were at work or on duty (BJS). Overall, 18 percent of violent crimes were committed while the victim was at work (BJS). The rate of violent crime experienced by people at work or on duty was 13 per 1,000 workers.

Homicide

The leading motive for workplace homicide is robbery. Occupations with the highest risk of fatal injury include taxicab drivers, police, private guards, and managers or employees in retail settings (grocery stores, eating and drinking establishments or stores in which cash is readily available). Table 1 provides a summary of fatal occupational injuries that occurred in 2001, by industry SIC code, while Table 2 summarizes these injuries by occupation (data is available in its entirety from BLS). In 1996, BLS analysis revealed that disputes among coworkers and with customers and clients accounted for about one-seventh of the homicide total [BLS(c)]. Domestic disputes accounted for one-sixth of the workplace homicides of female workers [BLS(c)].

Risk Factors

Several factors may increase a worker's risk for workplace assault:

- 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 healthcare, social services or criminal justice settings;
- working alone or in small numbers;
- working late at night or early in the morning;
- working in high-crime areas;
- guarding valuable property or possessions;
- working in community-based settings (NIOSH).

OSHA offers recommendations to reduce worker exposure to workplace violence hazards. Death and injury from workplace assaults can be cited under the OSH Act of 1970; the extent of an employer's obligation to address workplace violence is governed by the General Duty Clause. This clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act, (P.L. 91-596) provides that "each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees" [29 U.S.C. 654(a)(1)].

10 Tips to Develop a Proactive Approach to Preventing Workplace Violence 1) Assess Physical Protective Measures

When employment ends, are keys, name badges and access passes collected and checked in? Are

Table 2

Fatal Occupational Injuries by Occupation & Event or Exposure, 2001

Occupation	Total Number of Fatalities*	% of Fatalities as a Result of Assaults & Violent Acts
Total	5,900	15.3
Managerial and professional specialty	637	29.4
Executive, administrative and managerial	378	34.1
Managers, food service and lodging	63	74.6
Health assessment and treating	25	32.0
Social, recreation and religious workers	36	33.3
Technical sales and administrative support	641	36.7
Sales occupations	388	53.4
Administrative support, including clerical	99	19.2
Service occupations	511	40.7
Food preparation and service	56	66.1
Janitors and cleaners	68	22.1
Precision production, craft and repair	1,140	5.5
Auto mechanics and apprentices	36	16.7
Precision production occupations	90	17.8
Operators, fabricators and laborers	2,043	6.5
Driver-sales workers	55	21.8
Taxicab drivers and chauffeurs	62	56.5
Freight, stock and material handlers	79	3.8
Stock handlers and baggers	10	30.0
Garage and service station personnel	20	20.0

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistic, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.

*Excludes deaths resulting from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

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doors designed to protect workers from external threats in place? When an employee discloses concerns for safety at work from a potential perpetrator, it is the employer's duty to provide protective measures. These may include the following actions:

- Require all visitors and vendors to register before entering the worksite. If the site has no central office or security station, the reception desk can coordinate this function. Make sure the employee who registers visitors has ready access to a security "panic" button. In case of emergency, a phone call may not be possible.

- Consider additional physical barriers such as bullet-resistant glass, deep service counters or pass-through windows.

- Install alarm systems. Consider video surveillance equipment or closed-circuit TV.

- Determine how emergency information will be communicated to employees (e.g., intercom system). Identify a meeting location according to the nature of the emergency. Determine alternative means of egress and take steps to ensure that employees are not directed into a violent situation.

- Consider in-car video surveillance cameras and global positioning systems for employees with mobile offices.

- Ensure clear visibility of service and cash register areas by installing convex mirrors.

- Use bright, effective lighting.

- Employ adequate numbers of workers (adequate staffing).

- Recommend a restraining order if appropriate.

- Offer security escorts to employees between parking and work areas.

- Redirect unusual calls to security.

- Encourage a change in routine. Perpetrators are successful partially because they know when and where to find the victim. Advise the employee to vary routes taken to and from work. Offer to adjust the employee's work schedule or relocate the workstation.

- Evaluate door handle mechanisms for security. Consider combination door pads, crash bars that can only be opened from the inside, locks that unlock when the knob is turned on the inside to escape but which are secured on the outside, or locking mecha-

To identify effective physical protective measures, consult local law enforcement or a credible threat-assessment source. Obtain recommendations from the police or consultants who are trained in SWAT tactics, are current on the latest developments and have practical experience.

nisms that have a knob on the inside, but not on the outside.

When considering these mechanisms, be sure to consult OSHA 1910.36(b)(4), which states:

In every building or structure, exits shall be so arranged and maintained as to provide free and unobstructed egress from all parts of the building or structure at all times when it is occupied. No lock or fastening to prevent free escape from the inside of any building shall be installed except in mental, penal or corrective institutions where supervisory personnel is continually on duty and effective provisions are made to remove occupants in case of fire or other emergency.”

OSHA does not, however, require that employees be placed at risk. If throw-lock security devices are installed to secure a door after a perpetrator leaves, (preventing re-entry and potential hostage situations), procedures *must* be in place to ensure that these locks are not used while the building is occupied. These procedures should be in writing, and employees must be designated to ensure that the doors remain unlocked during normal business conditions.

If asked to justify expenditures for new equipment, it is best to create a paper trail via e-mail or memo to upper management. Specify safety recommendations, costs of additional security measures and recommended implementation dates. To help identify physical protective measures that will make the workplace more secure, consult local law enforcement or a credible threat-assessment source. Obtain recommendations from the police or consultants who are trained in SWAT tactics, are current on the latest developments and have practical experience.

2) Review Company Policies: Violence, Weapons, Harassment, Discipline/Termination

OSHA's response to workplace violence in certain industries has been targeted. This has resulted in the availability of three industry-specific publications:

- *Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers* (1996);
- *Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late-Night Retail Establishments* (1998);

• *Risk Factors and Protective Measures for Taxi and Livery Drivers* (2000).

These recommendations, based on OSHA's Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines, contain four basic elements:

1) **Management commitment and employee involvement.** For smaller employers, this may simply include clear goals for worker security. Larger worksites will have more extensive written programs.

2) **Worksite analysis.** Identify high-risk situations through employee surveys, workplace walk-throughs and review of injury/illness data. A sample workplace violence checklist can be found at www.osha.gov/SLTC/nursinghome_ecat/workplaceviolence/checklist.html or www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/guideline.html#B.

3) **Hazard prevention and control.** Implement engineering, administrative and work practice controls to prevent or limit violent incidents.

4) **Training and education.** Ensure that employees know about potential security hazards, ways to protect themselves and coworkers, and how to report potentially violent behavior. Create supportive environments in which victims of domestic violence can seek help without fear.

A workplace violence policy should address weapons in the workplace and zero tolerance. This policy should work in conjunction with a company's harassment awareness program and coordinate with drug/alcohol testing policies and disciplinary procedures. The policy should include:

- statement of purpose;
- statement of commitment;
- nonconclusive list of behaviors that will not be tolerated;
- consequences for behaviors listed;
- statement of policy regarding weapons;
- employee responsibilities;
- statement of the importance of reporting threats;
- reporting procedures;
- employer responsibilities;
- emergency code word(s);
- central meeting place(s) in case of emergency.

Written workplace violence policies cannot help an organization unless they are implemented consistently, fairly and promptly. Communicate expectations to all employees and have them sign an acknowledgment that they have received and understood the training. If the site employs security guards, make sure they are properly trained. Some states have no standards in this area, so many security guards are not trained or are trained by instructors who are not certified. Also, be sure to verify that instructor certifications are current.

Take immediate action when threatening behavior is reported or observed. Form an internal threat-assessment team. Its role is to ask, "What did you mean by that (comment or behavior)?" Discipline fairly: in private, in person and confidentially. Train supervisors how to administer discipline. Supervisors have a tendency to be too lenient early in the disciplinary action process, and later, too strict (Mondy, et al).

3) Train Supervisors to Avoid Negligent Hiring & Retention

How does one recognize a potentially violent employee? The signs may be clear-cut: someone kicks in a door, pulls a knife on a coworker or makes verbal threats. Often, however, the signs are more subtle. A potentially violent employee may be intelligent and articulate; s/he may be an intimidator or may exhibit paranoid behavior or become quiet (a loner, antisocial). Often, the aggressor is a disgruntled employee who feels s/he is not being heard by the company, an angry client, a sexual harasser or an irate spouse of an employee (Chavez "Workplace Violence"). To avoid *negligent hiring* liability, new-hire screening techniques should be assessed.

- Do classified advertisements seeking job applicants state that the successful applicant must pass a drug/alcohol test or criminal background check? If a company uses such screening, it is best to tell applicants upfront. Those who know they cannot pass employment tests will likely not apply.

- What does the application form state regarding reference checks? Driving records? Criminal background checks? A thorough applicant's release on the employment application form allows a firm to conduct appropriate job-related checks and also protects the firm from liability.

- How is the reference questionnaire structured? Although the return rate is low, sending a brief and consistent reference-check questionnaire to previous employers of prospective employees can show that good-faith efforts were made should a negligent hiring claim ensue.

- Does the company confirm basic information on applications such as past employment history, dates of employment and education?

- Will those who conduct employment interviews ask applicants about gaps in employment?

Costs associated with background checks are nominal and easily justified compared to costs associated with negligent hiring lawsuits. Background checks should be established by job classification and must be performed uniformly. Do not "pick and choose" whom to check. The nature of the work will indicate the types of checks that are appropriate. A previous felony conviction should not automatically eliminate a candidate. The nature of the offense should be considered and compared to the job duties and environment. This will help the company determine whether placing a candidate in a particular job is appropriate or whether it poses a substantial risk. Most supervisors would likely agree: it is much easier to reject a candidate who poses legitimate threats than to fire that employee later.

What if a poor hiring decision is made? Terminate the relationship sooner rather than later. The longer this employee remains on the payroll without feedback about unsatisfactory performance, the more secure s/he will feel. If an employee has shown violent tendencies, yet remains on the payroll, a company will be liable for *negligent retention* should another violent act occur. To avoid this liability:

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- Document performance issues thoroughly and communicate unsatisfactory behavior and consequences step-by-step, in a timely manner.

- Do not tell an employee the problem is his/her attitude. Be precise, not vague. Specifically inform the employee how and why his/her performance is not meeting expectations. Does s/he not get along with coworkers? Treat others poorly? Speak negatively about the company?

- Remind supervisors to recognize early warning signs and respond accordingly.

- Do not ignore a problem employee nor pass along an unsatisfactory performer to another department within the company.

4) Ask Local Law Enforcement How a Nonemergency Call Should Be Placed

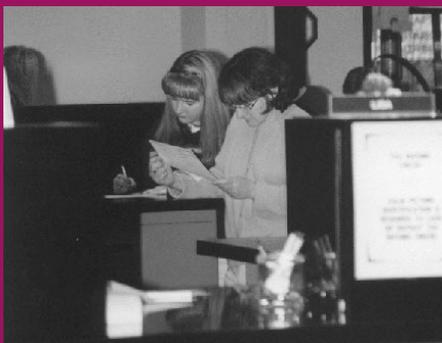
When calling to report an employee's threats, should you call 911 or would local law enforcement prefer that a different number be used? It's also useful to know whether all phone lines at the local police office are recorded. In the Nu-Wood case, management allegedly called Goshen police two hours before Wissman started shooting. The Goshen station had no record of the call. Did someone answer a nonemergency business phone number for the police department? Did management call an employee in the City Courts building or a County Police nonemergency number? The local phone company confirmed calls between local phone numbers were not recorded. Recording is an additional expense. Some communities make this service available to local law enforcement through the area's 911 center. Thus, if the local department lines are not recorded, it may be best to call 911 in situations that have the potential for violence.

5) Communicate the Emergency Action Plan to All Personnel & Responding Agencies

OSHA requires a written emergency action plan for all firms with more than 10 employees. Simply authoring a plan is not enough. Employees must know and understand the plan. When developing emergency escape procedures and escape routes, several questions must be considered.

- Who will call 911? Employees will hesitate to

Mock Active Shooter Drill: Preparing for Workplace Violence



Mock active shooter drills help the police practice their response and allows them to become better acquainted with the logistics of a given workplace. It is important that employees learn the importance of observing details, such as clothing, hair color, weapons and distances in order to help the police in the event that the perpetrator leaves the premises. Using a suspect identification profile form can help in this regard. Employees should complete the form independently—without comparing notes with coworkers—to ensure their accuracy. Mock active shooter drills designed with the help of local law enforcement will educate all employees on these issues and are a proactive way to alleviate or minimize a potentially devastating scenario.

Two “suspects” enter LaPorte Savings Bank and stage a robbery. (top, left). LaPorte Police Chief Walter Brath (middle, left) shares violence prevention tips with bank employees. He also explains how to secure evidence, suggesting that they place inverted garbage cans over shell casings (top, right) and shows them how to complete a suspect identification profile (middle and bottom, right).

call because they believe someone else has already called in an emergency situation.

- When an employee calls 911, does s/he clearly understand the need to remain on the line until law enforcement is on the scene? One call to 911 can summon police protection, firefighters and ambulance services. Needs may change as an event unfolds.

- How will employees be warned that an act of workplace violence is in progress? Code words, intercom capabilities and instant messaging can help ensure that employees remain out of harm’s way.

- How should employees react when faced with aggressive behavior? Instruct them to remain calm, avoid unnecessary movements, speak quietly and use an even tone. Slowing down the pace of the situation allows more time for help to arrive. Employees must also be instructed to do what the aggressor wants (within reason) but not to appear scared or intimidated.

- Where should employees go for cover?

- Do supervisors and human resources personnel who administer discipline and termination procedures have a planned escape route? Although these conversations should always take place in private, the physical location should have at least two exits. Have a trained witness present and alert security of the meeting time and place. Handle terminations with dignity, care, professionalism, fairness and control. When a termination occurs, notify supervisors and affected employees on a need-to-know basis. If this is a safety-sensitive termination, notify them quickly but stick to the facts.

6) Practice—Schedule a Mock Active Shooter Drill

Chief Walter Brath and the City of LaPorte Police Dept. have collaborated with area banks to conduct “mock robberies.” Mock active shooter drills help police personnel practice their response and allows them to become better acquainted with the logistics of a given workplace. When planning the mock active shooter drill, consider these key elements:

- What should employees look for in parking areas when coming to or leaving the worksite? Is a person or vehicle following them? Does a situation in the parking lot look suspicious?

- If something at the worksite makes a worker feel uncomfortable, s/he should not enter, but rather should drive to the nearest phone and call the police.

- Many workplace shooters have specific targets in mind. If it is clear that the perpetrator has a plan, it is best not to ask questions or attempt to delay that plan. Such actions can elevate the danger, prolong the perpetrator's presence in the building and potentially place others in jeopardy.

- How can employees observe details, such as clothing, hair color, weapons and distances, to help the police in the event the perpetrator leaves the premises? Instruct people to use all senses. Use a suspect identification profile form if applicable. If employees record what they see on this form, it is important they do this without comparing notes with their coworkers. Each person's perceptions are most accurate when individually recorded.

- If a perpetrator leaves the scene, make sure employees understand they must secure exits so that an assailant cannot re-enter the facility and create a hostage situation. An employee in each area should be responsible for securing exit doors.

- Make sure people are designated to check for injuries to employees or customers.

- Take a head count to make sure no one has been abducted or taken hostage.

- Offer employees tips on how to secure a crime scene and evidence until authorities arrive. Placing an inverted trash can over shell casings, blocking off crime scene areas with chairs or tables tipped on-end, and looking to see if the assailant inadvertently dropped any belongings while exiting the facility could provide police with critical evidence.

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7) Appoint a Public Information Representative

In the Nu-Wood tragedy, as the story broke, early reports stated there could be up to 35 victims ("World Takes Notice"). Calls from national and international news organizations lit up *The Goshen News* phone system within the hour. MSNBC, Fox News, CBS, NBC, the BBC World Service, CNN, BBC radio, *Newsweek*, UPI, Canadian and Australian television networks, radio stations from Vancouver, Belgium, Canada and Australia, and a host of other news services bombarded the news office with requests for first-hand accounts from the scene. Those early, erroneous reports more than quadrupled the actual number of victims and created "media madness."

As a result, Chief Brath named a public information officer for the department. Not every police officer has all the facts of a case; a company's employees are no different. Due to concerns such as confidentiality, certain facts should/should not be conveyed at various times during a critical event. Public infor-

To prevent escalation of violent behavior, employers must take immediate action when threatening behavior is reported or observed. Form an internal threat-assessment team to ask, "What did you mean by that (comment or behavior)?" Discipline fairly: in private, in person and confidentially.

mation representatives or crisis communications teams should be trained to talk to the media and must understand what information to convey. When designing a media communications approach, consider these guidelines:

- If an aggressor entered your workplace today, who would talk with the media on behalf of the company? Absent a designated person or team to provide crisis communications, employees with partial information may volunteer it on their own.

- If the company is geographically dispersed or has several divisions, a more elaborate crisis communications approach is needed.

- The emergency action plan should identify the public information representative/crisis communications team members to employees.

Freedom of information laws exist on federal and state levels. These encourage openness with the media, consistent with the needs of law enforcement and the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of a fair trial (Rosenthal 7-8, 31, 72-76). If the public asks for information (or the media ask on behalf of the public):

- Tell the truth and provide the best, most-complete information.

- Release bad news as completely as possible, clearly and quickly.

- Determine what information should not be released. This should include critical matters of evidence, names of juveniles or victims of sex crimes, comments on the character of an assailant, hearsay or speculation of any kind, and any information that would threaten anyone's safety or jeopardize the possibility of a successful investigation and prosecution.

- In a serious or catastrophic event, consider making a daily summary of events available to the media. In many cases, it may also be best to prepare a well-developed, accurate press release.

- Keep communications simple—stick to the who, what, when, where, why and how (Rosenthal, 7-8, 31, 72-76). This may include:

- a) what happened;
- b) when it happened;
- c) where it happened;
- d) names of victims (this information is included in police reports, which means it is a matter of public record);

- e) numbers, extent and nature of injuries, if any;
- f) details of items stolen, if any;
- g) details concerning any suspect(s), including photos or sketches.

- Consider scheduling a news conference for larger stories (Rosenthal, 7-8, 31, 72-76). News conferences help the media and eliminate redundancy (answering the same questions repeatedly). Give plenty of notice, prepare a news release and distribute it before the conference. Set a time limit; in general, 20 minutes is sufficient.

8) Train Employees in CPR/AED & First Aid

Employees must receive training to develop the skills needed to respond when the worst occurs. For example, suppose a person on the scene of a violent event suffers cardiac arrest. Although most attacks result from underlying heart disease, stress and trauma can also trigger a heart attack. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a paddle device that can be used by trained lay rescuers to analyze heart rhythms and administer needed electric shocks. Decreased cost per AED unit and CPR/AED training through the American Heart Assn. or American Red Cross (also available in Spanish) has helped organizations bring defibrillators into the workplace. Here are a few facts to consider:

- When a person suffers a sudden cardiac arrest, chance for survival decreases by seven to 10 percent for each minute that passes without defibrillation. After 10 minutes, few resuscitation attempts succeed.

- To document success rates of early defibrillation, the Clark County, NV, Fire Dept. and Dr. Terence Valenzuela of the University of Arizona collaborated on a study of casinos in Las Vegas. While gaming is not intrinsically high-risk, many high-risk individuals spend many hours at casinos. Casino security officers were trained in CPR and AED use. They could deploy AEDs in three minutes or less. As a result, 70 percent of the study's cardiac arrest victims survived to hospital discharge ("Study Reports Highest").

- Early intervention at the worksite is key. AED units now cost approximately \$3,000. Manufacturers' associations and other work groups within the same EMS service area can secure group pricing to help reduce the cost.

- A business that installs an AED unit must work with a company physician and local EMS. Trained first responders in CPR and AED techniques, physician oversight and notification of local EMS are essential program components.

- Ask the local EMS provider to provide information on various brands. Some brands work with existing EMS units to download clinical information, which gives EMS ready access to valuable patient history data.

9) Offer an EAP & Make Use of Its Services

It is difficult to know whether various measures implemented have truly prevented a violent workplace incident. However, early intervention through an employee assistance program (EAP) is another key prevention strategy. For best results, consider cou-

pling the formal support network—the EAP—with an informal, in-house employee support system.

- Providing a company-sponsored EAP is not a costly benefit. This year, the City of LaPorte contracted EAP services, including a crisis response team, for \$20 per employee per year. According to this provider, over time, 99 percent of services rendered have been requested by employees themselves (with assurance of total confidentiality). Only one percent come from supervisor referrals.

- Employees and their families face issues each day. People do not usually "snap." A violent outburst is better characterized as a slow-burning downward spiral. Some problems persist for years, such as:

- a) failing personal relationships;
- b) economic hardships characterized by unresolved debts and garnishments;
- c) feelings of personal failure due to lack of progression in status;
- d) actual or perceived injustice at work;
- e) unwillingness of the employee (typically male) to ask for help. Generally speaking, it is not part of the "male culture" to ask for assistance. Rather, men see themselves as problem-solvers and find it difficult to ask for help. Men outnumber women 99 to 1 as perpetrators of fatal workplace violence incidents (McClure).

10) Strategically Locate Blueprints of the Facility

A SWAT team that responds to the scene will request a blueprint of the workplace so its members can study the floor plan. Therefore, it is best to place multiple copies of blueprints in strategic locations so they are readily accessible.

It is also valuable to find out whether local law enforcement has a specific plan for responding to incidents of workplace violence. Police response time and approach was credited with minimizing affects of the Bertrand shooting incident and criticized in the Nu-Wood case. Michelle Morgan, human resources manager at Nu-Wood, thought she was going to die during the incident. Bleeding from wounds to her hand and hip, she waited for more than two hours for police to enter the plant to rescue her. "I don't understand why it took so long to enter the building," Morgan said. "After a while, no shots were being fired. Why couldn't they have sent in the SWAT team? They're supposed to be there to protect you, not to sit and wait until it's over" (Shaw). Police were at the scene in 4.5 minutes. "But what were they doing the other hour and 56 minutes while people were inside bleeding?" (Shaw). Consider these guidelines when discussing response tactics with local law enforcement:

- Some local police departments have developed an emergency response team (ERT). These specially equipped officers carry nonlethal weapons and wear additional PPE. Nonlethal weapons include 12-gauge shotguns that shoot beanbags. Officers receive special training in using such weapons because the ammunition must be administered according to a person's body weight. PPE includes

protective helmets, bullet-proof vests and eye protection. Some ERT officers also carry long automatic weapons and shields with halogen lighting.

- The Indiana Law Enforcement Academy currently offers an "Active Shooter Class" to law enforcement personnel. Two instructors travel to a given town and train its officers how to enter a situation with a shooter inside. The only cost is a per diem and lodging for the instructors. They train up to 20 officers per class and encourage officer groups to train together (e.g., city and county). Practice includes three-man, four-man, and five-man diamond formations that are designed to contain shooters.

- In addition, some local departments have developed their own response plans. As effective as ERTs (or SWAT teams) are, it can take up to one hour for such teams to suit up and enter a building. Under these specific plans, the first two officers on the scene are to activate the ERT and enter the building. Once inside, they potentially have two jobs: 1) contain the perpetrator until an ERT arrives; and 2) if lives are in danger, eliminate the perpetrator.

Conclusion

In most cases, workplace violence is a planned act. People are targeted because 1) the perpetrator knows or perceives that they had something to do with his current situation; or 2) employees were assigned to positions within the organization that the perpetrator feels are responsible for perceived injustices to him. For example:

- April 25, 1995: The Richmond (CA) Housing Authority. A perpetrator shot and killed two female supervisors and allowed other employees in the same room to live.

- Nov. 2, 1999: Xerox facility, Honolulu, HI. A perpetrator singled out his own work group. He perceived they were responsible for his impending termination. Seven were killed.

- June 28, 2000: The University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle. A medical doctor who was failing an internship program blamed his mentor for his plight. Two were killed in a murder-suicide.

- Dec. 26, 2000: Wakefield, MA. The perpetrator blamed his employer, specifically the accounting section, for collaborating with the IRS in a wage garnishment. Seven were killed (Chavez "Answers").

OSHA's General Duty Clause recognizes the potential threat to employee safety posed by workplace violence. It allows for significant fines for failure to comply. But fines are insignificant when compared to the millions of dollars that are paid out as a result of wrongful-death or negligence lawsuits. No amount of money can compensate for lives lost nor the toll in terms of human suffering that is brought about by a single violent incident. ■

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Helpful Internet Links

Workplace Violence Inspection Checklist: <http://www.afscme.org/health/violaa.htm>. Sponsored by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Workplace Programs: <http://endabuse.org/programs/workplace>. Sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

"My Story": <http://www.sumitomoworkplaceviolence.com/welcome.htm>. The aftermath of the Sumitomo shooting by a security officer/supervisor.

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