



Experts on workplace violence say that it can happen at any place at any time. Workplace violence, including assaults, verbal abuse, etc., affects 2 million victims each year.

Preparedness and awareness is critical to preventing workplace violence.

Suggested Recommendations:

- Work with employees to create a safe environment and zero-tolerance policy on workplace violence.
- Survey employees for thoughts on security concerns; keep an open line of communication on the topic.
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses and create a plan to address weaknesses.
- Have a well-lit parking lot and controlled access. Security cameras and key card access may help prevent or aid in the case of a workplace shooting.
- Create an anonymous tip hotline for people to call in suspicious behavior or concerns about an employee.
- Conduct annual background checks.

Watch for Warning Signs

There are warning signs of potentially dangerous employees. Here's what to look for:

Watch for dramatic changes in attitude, behavior and work ethic. If someone is usually active and social, then suddenly quiet and reserved, it may be an indicator.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management says no one can predict human behavior and there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. However, indicators of increased risk of violent behavior have been identified by the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Profiling and Behavioral Assessment Unit in its analysis of past incidents of workplace violence.

- Direct or veiled threats of harm
- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- Numerous conflicts with supervisors and other employees
- Bringing, brandishing a weapon in the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, fascination with weapons
- Fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve problems, statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Statements indicating desperation over family, financial, other personal problems, to the point of contemplating suicide
- Drug/alcohol abuse and extreme changes in behavior.