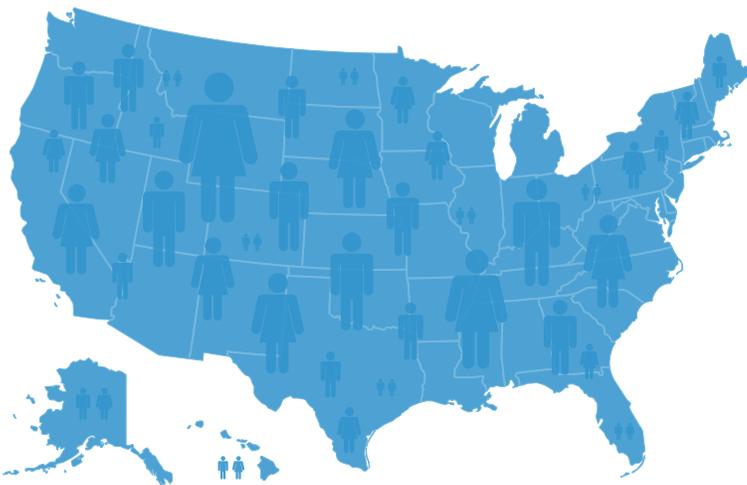


Workplace violence is a concern for businesses and employees

Workplace violence is an ongoing issue in modern society. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, certain factors can increase the risk of workplace violence.

These factors include working alone or in isolated areas, exchanging cash with the public, working late hours, and working with people who may have a higher propensity for violence. Workers at a higher risk of workplace violence include delivery drivers, healthcare professionals, public service workers, customer service representatives, law enforcement personnel, and taxi drivers.

Even though there are some industries and employees at a higher risk of experiencing workplace violence, these events can occur at any type of business. Businessowners and managers are very aware of this fact. In a recent HSB commissioned Zogby Analytics survey,¹ 91% of respondents indicated they believe an act of workplace violence could happen in any industry. Also, 41% of respondents believe the consequences are becoming more severe in terms of lower employee morale, employee retention, lost productivity, and lost sales and profits.



2 million
Americans report
experiencing a workplace
violence annually²

Workplace violence in a reopening economy

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an increase in workplace violence against some workers. In May of 2020, a security guard was killed after telling a customer that her child couldn't enter the store without wearing a face mask.

These types of incidents continue to occur throughout the pandemic. In May of 2021, there was an attack against a flight attendant that left her with lost teeth and other injuries to her face.

As our society continues to navigate through a "new normal" work environment, there are concerns that there will continue to be an ongoing increase of workplace

violence incidents. According to the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice, there was an 8.1% rise in domestic violence during the pandemic.³ Now, with the economy reopening, abusers could be more likely to harass, or even attack, their victim at work.

In May of 2020, as the economy started to open after the first wave of COVID-19, there were at least three shootings in malls in Arizona, Florida, and Washington. These types of incidents are grim reminders that the problem of workplace violence, and violence in general, did not go away while the country was in lockdown.

There has been an **8.1%** rise in domestic violence during the pandemic³



Know the warning signs

According to ASIS International, a professional organization that issues certifications, standards, and guidelines for the security profession, there may be warning signs that occur prior to workplace violence. It can be helpful to understand these indicators in order to foster a safer work environment for employees, customers, and vendors:

- A history of threats or violent act. This includes threats and violent acts that occur at a place of employment
- A criminal history that suggests the use of violence to project power and to control others, or to respond to stress or conflict
- Threats, bullying, or other concerning behavior, aggressive outbursts or comments, or excessive displays of anger
- Abusive or harassing behavior
- Harboring grudges or an inability to handle criticism
- Habitually making excuses and blaming others
- Chronic, unsubstantiated complaints about persecution or injustice
- Obsessive intrusion upon others or persistent, unwanted romantic pursuit
- Erratic, impulsive, or bizarre behavior that has generated fear among coworkers
- Expression of homicidal, suicidal, or self-harm intentions
- A high degree of emotional distress
- A disturbing or threatening fascination with weapons
- A preoccupation with violent themes of revenge, and/or an unusual interest in publicized violent events, if uncommunicated in a manner that creates discomfort for coworkers

Train employees to identify and respond to workplace violence

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that employees be trained to recognize the warning signs that could lead to workplace violence and how to properly respond to these warning signs.

Employees should first be made **aware** of what defines **workplace violence** and be aware of the **different types** of workplace violence.⁴



Workplace violence categories

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health has broken workplace violence into four categories:⁵

Type I – Criminal Intent

This includes robberies and trespassing. The perpetrator has no legitimate relationship to the business or its employees.

Type II – Customer/Client

The perpetrator has a legitimate relationship with the business and becomes violent while being served by the business. Perpetrators of Type II workplace violence include clients, customers, and students.

Type III – Worker on Worker

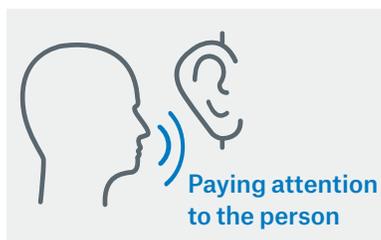
Type III workplace violence is carried out by current or past employees against current or past employees.

Type IV – Personal Relationship

Workplace violence in this instance is carried out by a perpetrator who may not have a relationship with the business but they have a relationship with the intended target of violence. This type of violence sometimes occurs when domestic violence spills into the workplace.

Warning signs include verbal and non-verbal cues. Verbal cues include speaking loudly or swearing. Non-verbal cues include pacing, fist clenching, and heavy breathing.

Communication is key in these situations. Some proper responses to violent situations could be the following:



When responding to a situation in which a person is aggressive or threatening, the CDC recommends an employer or employee remain calm, give the person space, make sure others are in the area, and not touch the person or try to forcibly remove them.⁴

Assessing the risk

According to Loss Prevention Magazine,⁶ one way to address workplace violence is to conduct risk assessments of employees. These assessments can be maximized by conducting them in four stages: preemployment, during the new-hire process, on an annual or biannual basis, or when responding to a violent event. These assessments gauge:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antisocial or violent beliefs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Job performance and satisfaction |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antisocial or violent peers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emotional distress | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low self-control |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family dissatisfaction | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social support |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial insecurity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substance abuse |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History of aggression | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Violent victimization |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impulsivity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overall wellness |

¹HSB Small Business Survey of U.S. companies conducted by Zogby Analytics 2020

² Source: According to OSHA, there are approximately 2M Americans affected by a workplace violence incident every year

³ National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice (NCCC) <https://covid19.counciloncj.org/2021/02/23/impact-report-covid-19-and-domestic-violence-trends/>

⁴ Source: Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/limit-workplace-violence.html>

⁵ National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

⁶ <https://losspreventionmedia.com/workplace-violence-retail-policies-and-training/>