Violence in the Workplace: Are you ready to handle these frightening situations?

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Violence in the Workplace
- Bomb Threats
- Active Shooters
- Q&A
Welcome!

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- Based in San Leandro, CA
- 20 years experience in Human Resources
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- Experience implementing and managing HR programs to include policy development, performance management, compensation, recruitment and retention, learning and development, coaching, and M&A activity
Virginia Capezio
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- Based in Fort Mill, SC
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- 20 years progressive/leadership experience in Human Resources
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Quick Poll

• How many workplace homicides happen on average per year?

a. 50  
b. 240  
c. 700  
d. 1200
OSHA

• Under the “General Duty Clause,” the Occupational Safety and Health Act requires an employer to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.

• OSHA considers violence a recognized or known hazard. Consequently, the employer must make a reasonable effort to keep violence out of the workplace.
Did You Know?

- OSHA can and will fine an employer that does not have an effective violence-prevention program in place. For that reason, if a supervisor realizes the employer’s program would not be effective, he or she should bring it to the employer’s attention and help correct the policy and procedures.
Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Employers should have a workplace violence prevention policy and procedures in place to:

- Keep the workplace safe;
- Address ways to prevent, recognize, and report incidents of violence by coworkers and third parties, e.g., customers, vendors, visitors, and strangers; and
- Comply with OSHA and avoid citations.
Emergency Action Plan

Some organizations, elect to put an action plan in place to better prepare employees for an emergency, such as an active shooter incident or bomb threat.
Workplace Violence

• Since a supervisor is typically in closest communication with employees, he or she should fully understand his or her role and responsibilities.

• Employees must be encouraged to report any suspicious or threatening behavior and be assured that no retaliatory action will be taken against them for making a report.
Signs of a Potentially Violent Employee

Because supervisors frequently interact with employees directly, and may have the opportunity to observe their behavior, he or she should know how to recognize the signs of a potentially violent employee.
Violence in the Workplace

If an act of violence occurs, the supervisor should:

• **Remain calm.**

• **Act fast.** Call on-site security and/or local law enforcement.

• **Assess the situation.** Clear the area of any potential weapons and determine if the area should be cleared of employees.

• **Communicate.** Do you engage the individual? Do you ask him or her to leave?.
Violence in the Workplace

Report

• An act resulting in a death must be reported to OSHA within eight hours.

• Any in-patient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye must be reported to OSHA within 24 hours.
Violence in the Workplace

The supervisor should have three goals after an act of workplace violence:

1. To help employees by providing healing (mental and physical);

2. To document and record the incident completely; and

3. To work with HR and the employer to help prevent future incidents.
Violence in the Workplace

Employee Assistance Program

• Many employers have an Employee Assistance Program, an employer-sponsored service, designed to assist employees in getting help for personal or family problems, including mental health issues or financial or legal concerns.

• EAPs often provide assessments and referrals to employees to get the support they need.
Handling A Bomb Threat

Source: US Department of Homeland Security
Bomb Threat Impact

Risks of a bomb threat can impact:

• worker safety,
• employee morale, and
• your company’s economic livelihood.
Knowledge

• Bomb threats or the appearance of a suspicious item are rare, but should **always** be taken seriously.

• Bomb threats are typically made *by phone* and the caller may allege they have planted a *package or device* in the building.

• How quickly and safely you react to a bomb threat could save lives, including your own.

Source: US Department of Homeland Security
Knowledge

Bomb threats are classified into two categories:

*Specific threats*: Information provided might include bomb location, motivations, and detonation time.

*Nonspecific threats*: No detailed information, just that a bomb has been placed.

Both types of threats should be taken seriously.
Knowledge

Employees need to be trained to recognize suspicious items such as packages or devices, whether in the mail or found in the building.

Suspicious items may be hidden, obviously suspicious and not typical
Knowledge

Suspicious letter or package bombs may include:

- Unusual or indecipherable address.
- “To be opened only by…” or “Do not delay delivery”.
- No return address.
- Inaccuracies in the employer’s address or in titles.
- Unusual odors.
- Metallic components, protruding wire, string or Metal foil.
Knowledge

• **Unattended Vehicles.**
  Unattended Vehicles may be used as a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) containing explosives for use in a terrorist act.

• **Changes in vehicle patterns.**
  Common vehicles such as mail and delivery trucks, buses, or taxis may be suspicious during certain times of day—for example, a second mail delivery, an idle delivery truck, a bus on a different route, or a taxi circling the building numerous times.
Bomb Threat – Preparation Video
BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

This quick reference checklist is designed to help employees and decision makers at commercial facilities, schools, etc. respond to a bomb threat in an orderly and controlled manner with the first responders and other stakeholders.

Most bomb threats are received by phone. Bomb threats are serious until proven otherwise. Act quickly, but remain calm and obtain information with the checklist on the reverse of this card.

If a bomb threat is received by phone:
1. Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. DO NOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.
2. Listen carefully. Re-phrase and show interest.
3. Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
4. If possible, write a note to a colleague to call the authorities or, as soon as the caller hangs up, immediately notify them yourself.
5. If your phone has a display, copy the number and/or letters on the window display.
6. Complete the Bomb Threat Checklist immediately. Write down as much detail as you can remember. Try to get exact words.
7. Immediately upon termination of call, DO NOT HANG UP, but from a different phone, contact authorities immediately with information and awaiting instructions.

If a bomb threat is received by handwritten note:
- Call ____________________________
- Handle note as minimally as possible

If a bomb threat is received by email:
- Call ____________________________
- Do not delete the message.

Signs of a suspicious package:
- No return address
- Excessive postage
- Stains
- Strange odor
- Poorly handwritten
- Misspelled words
- Incorrect titles
- Foreign postage

Ask Caller:
- Where is the bomb located?
- [building, floor, room, etc.]
- When will it go off?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will make it explode?
- Did you place the bomb? Yes / No
- Why?
- What is your name?

Exact Words of Threat:

Information About Caller:
- Where is the caller located? (background, level of noise)
- Phone number
- Is voice familiar? If so, who does it sound like?
Training

• Develop and implement policies and procedures.
• Obtain training assistance from local police and the fire department on the development of an evacuation plan.
• Conduct manager/supervisor training.
• Conduct employee training.
• Make sure everyone knows their role and how to react.
Searches

- Employers that get frequent hoax bomb threats may choose to perform a search of the building and evacuation routes to make sure a threat is legitimate.

- We recommend contacting your local police and/or fire department for their recommended processes.

- Employee safety should be the priority.
Evacuation Process

The owner or manager in charge should make the decision to evacuate. Usually this is done in conjunction with local law enforcement and/or the fire department.

A designated supervisor should take charge of leading the evacuation and should:

- Make sure everyone exits the building and goes to designated area;
- Consider employees with disabilities who may need assistance;
- Take a roll call and identify reasons for missing employees (vacation, sick, at lunch, etc.).
Evacuation Process

Employees should not be allowed back into the building until law enforcement and the employer say it is safe to do so.

During the evacuation supervisors should listen to employee fears and help alleviate worries and concerns.
Incident Review

• Create a list of areas that need improvement; review policy and procedure improvements.
• Identify opportunities for employee and supervisor training on handling such events.
• Promote the Employee Assistance Program services.
• The agenda for the post-bomb threat incident should include:
  ▪ Prepare an incident report; and
  ▪ Review the entire incident from inception to debriefing.
Active Shooters
Active Shooter Video
Definition of Active Shooter

• An active shooter is defined by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as an individual who is engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.

• Active shooter events are generally unpredictable and can evolve and escalate very quickly.
Active Shooter Event

A supervisor should:

• Have an understanding of how to best notify, lead and/or direct his or her team out of an active shooter situation; and

• Learn how to recognize the sound of gunfire in order to quickly and effectively alert others of danger.
Active Shooter

• As DHS stresses, each employee must determine what is the best response in light of the particular circumstances.

• An employer should explain the options to employees but should never make recommendations or mandate what course of action employees should take.
Active Shooter

*Run.*

- If possible, the best option is to run away from the threat.
- Employees should run and exit the building using the safest route, if possible.
Active Shooter

*Hide.*

- If running is not a safe option and escape is therefore not possible, employees should be trained to hide in a safe place (e.g., a room with a locking door, thick walls, and few windows)
Active Shooter

**Fight.**
- An employee’s only option may be to fight and to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter when running or hiding is not possible and the employee is imminent danger (i.e., comes face-to-face with the shooter).
Active Shooter

Once the active shooter(s) has been incapacitated and is no longer a threat and the wounded have been evacuated, a supervisor along with management should engage in a post-event assessment.
Violence in the Workplace

- Having on-site grief counselors in the aftermath of an incident is critical.
- Therefore, a supervisor should also be familiar with and recognize programs to help survivor employees deal with the issues that they will likely face after an active shooter event.
Violence in the Workplace

• While an employer is under no legal obligation to offer active shooter training, DHS recommends such training as a way to prepare employees and to provide them with the techniques and strategies to survive such an incident.
Q&A

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