Winston-Salem Police Department Crime Prevention Unit

Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention

Presented by

Winston-Salem Police Department

Crime Prevention Unit

Workplace Violence

- Defined - A violent incident which arises out of a dispute or adverse interpersonal relationships between employees, employers, in and around their place of employment

- Includes - threats (direct / indirect), assaults (fatal / nonfatal), stalking, harassment, and intimidation

Work Place Violence

- THREE CATEGORIES – OSHA
  - Stranger - 60 % of all homicides (Robbery)

  - Client - 30% (Social worker / Nurses)

  - Employee - 10% (Supervisor / Domestic / Temporaries)

4

Topics of Discussion

- Statistics/Overview
- Causes of Violence
- Offender Profiles
- Contributing Factors (Internal)
- Consequences of Inaction
- Prevention Concepts

Statistics/Overview

- In a 1999 survey, workplace violence was ranked the #1 security threat by employees.

- Each year over two million people become victims at a cost of $36 BILLION (litigation, lost productivity, damage control)

- It is the number one killer of females and number two killer of males in all deaths at the workplace

Statistics/Overview

- Awards in lawsuits are exceeding $3 million against employers who are found negligent (Negligent hiring and retention)

- An average of 700-800 people are murdered each year and millions suffer from non-fatal forms of violence

Work Place Violence
Why should I be concerned?

- Incidents have occurred at banks, computer firms, shopping malls, law offices, government buildings, airlines, restaurants, schools, and libraries

- Victims have been executives, supervisors, employees, security personnel, customers, visitors, and family members

8

The Employer's Duty Under the Law

- OSHA "General Duty" Clause, 29 US Code 1900, Section 5 (a)(1) requires employers provide a "... safe and healthful work environment for all workers..."

Causes of Violence

- Economic (layoffs, downsizing, recession, mergers)
- Societal (music, tv, easy access to guns)
- Psychological (abuse, previous employer)
- Organizational Design (mgmt style, lack of grievance, employee polarization, screening process)
- Drugs and Alcohol

Offender Profile

- Migratory job history
- Loner
- Mood swings
- Failure to accept responsibility
- Chronically disgruntled
- Declining productivity
- Paranoia
- Holds grudges
- Unwarranted sense of entitlement
- Increased absenteeism
- Fascination with weapons or violence
- White male 35-45

The Number One Predictor of Future Violent Behavior:

- Past history of violent behavior

Internal Contributing Factors

- Inadequate screening
- Lack of workplace violence policy
- Lack of formal method for reporting violent behavior
- Lack of training/education
- Lack of employee assistance program
- Inadequate or non-existent on-site security
- Atmosphere of intolerance

Effects of Workplace Violence

- Lost productivity

- Litigation…lose of money

- Damage to company reputation

- Future Litigation

Methods of Prevention

- Take immediate action against all forms of violence
- Designate management representative to handle complaints and encourage reporting
- Recognize employees who contribute to making workplace safer
- Employ the highest level of security possible

Model Policy

- ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE
- Consistent
- Fair
- Available
- Easily understood
- Provides alternatives to violence

Model Policy

- Develop policies to address awareness, training, reporting, emergency procedures

- Designate someone to serve as arbitrator

- Establish an employee assistance program or form a referral relationship with a mental health care provider

Conclusion

No policy can prevent every incident of workplace violence. Instead, your goal should be to identify and address potential problems before they escalate. By decisively and consistently resolving conflict within your organization, you can provide a safer and more productive working environment.

FINAL QUESTIONS?