



# Violence in the Workplace

How to prevent and what to look for in the workplace.

# No One Ever Just Snaps !?




**Violence in the Workplace**



# What is Workplace Violence

- ▶ Workplace violence is violence or the threat of violence against workers. It can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide, one of the leading causes of job-related deaths.
- ▶ NOTE: *COVID 19 Pandemic has added to stressors within and outside the workplace. Social isolation, restrictions, changing work environments have led to an increase in workplace frustrations. It is important to recognize the impact these challenges have on our ability to balance demands with resources, whether emotional, financial, physical, or spiritual, particularly social isolation and limited movement and access to supportive activities.*

# Underlying issues for Workplace Violence

- 
- ✓ Broken Relationships
  - ✓ Employee Layoffs
  - ✓ Lack of Support
  - ✓ Mishandled Terminations
  - ✓ Sudden Behavior Changes
  - ✓ Lack of Pre-employment Screening
  - ✓ Stress
  - ✓ Lack of Employee Assistance Program
  - ✓ Denial
  - ✓ Disgruntled Customers And Former Employees



# Statistics in Workplace Violence

- ▶ Workplace violence is a serious, recognized occupational hazard, ranking among the top four causes of death in workplaces during the past 15 years. according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), more than 3,000 people died from workplace homicide between 2006 and 2010. Additional BLS data indicate that an average of more than 15,000 nonfatal workplace injury cases were reported annually during this time.
- ▶ From 2003 to 2012 over half of the workplace homicides occurred within three occupation classifications: sales and related occupations (28%), protective service occupations (17%), and transportation and material moving occupations (13%).




# Prohibited Conduct

- ▶ Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:
  - Intentionally causing physical injury to another person.
  - Intentionally causing damage to property of another.
  - Threatening remarks directed at another person (written or oral).
  - Possessing, during work, a dangerous weapon that is prohibited or not provided by the employer.
  - Bullying or intentional harmful teasing (written or verbal).
  - Displaying or exhibiting extreme anger or hostility.



# Recognizing the Levels of Violence and Response

- ▶ Potential or actual violent situations among employees usually escalate if not defused. Violence and the warning signs that typically occur can usually be identified at three levels. It should be noted that any one or combination of warning signs at the three levels may be indicative of a potentially violent situation. The following is an attempt to delineate warning signs and the appropriate response. There is no fail-safe way of presenting this information to employees.



# The Level (1) Early signs

- Intimidating/bullying;
- Discourteous/disrespectful;
- Uncooperative; and/or
- Verbally abusive.





# Response when Early Warning Signs Occur at Level One

- ▶ Observe the behavior in question.
- ▶ Report concerns to your supervisor to seek help in assessing/responding to the situation. If the offending employee is the reporting employee's immediate supervisor, the employee should notify the next level of supervision. If the offending person is not an employee, the supervisor of the employee reporting the incident is still the appropriate individual to receive and provide initial response.
- ▶ Document the observed behavior in question.
- ▶ Supervisor should meet with the offending employee to discuss concerns. Follow these procedures:
  - ▶ Schedule private time and place.
  - ▶ Coordinate any necessary union participation.
  - ▶ Get straight to the point.
  - ▶ Ask the employee for his or her input.
  - ▶ Ask the employee what should be done about the behavior.
  - ▶ Ask how you can help.
  - ▶ Identify the performance and/or conduct problems that are of concern.
  - ▶ Identify the steps you would like to see to correct problems.
  - ▶ Set limits on what is acceptable behavior and performance.
  - ▶ Establish time frames to make changes and subsequent consequences for failing to correct behavior and/or performance.
  - ▶ Department's policies.



## Level (2) “Escalation of the Situation”

- ▶ Argues with customers, vendors, co-workers, and management;
- ▶ Refuses to obey agency policies and procedures;
- ▶ Sabotages equipment and steals property for revenge;
- ▶ Verbalizes wishes to hurt co-workers and/or management;
- ▶ Sends threatening note(s) to co-worker(s) and/or management; and/or
- ▶ Sees self as victimized by management (me against them).




# Response when the Situation has Escalated to Level (2)

- ▶ If warranted, Call 911 and other appropriate emergency contacts (such as Federal Protective Service) for that particular facility, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- ▶ Immediately Contact the supervisor and, if needed, the supervisor will contact other appropriate official(s) such as functional area experts to seek help in assessing/responding to the situation.
- ▶ If necessary, secure your own safety and the safety of others, including contacting people who are in danger (make sure emergency numbers for employees are kept up-to-date and accessible).
- ▶ Document the observed behavior in question.
- ▶ Supervisor should meet with the employee to discuss concerns and, if appropriate, begin or continue progressive discipline. The supervisor should follow these procedures:
  - Call for assistance in assessing/responding, if needed.
  - Avoid an audience when dealing with the employee.
  - Remain calm, speaking slowly, softly, and clearly.
  - Ask the employee to sit down; see if s/he is able to follow directions.
  - Ask questions relevant to the employee's complaint such as:
    - What can you do to help?
    - What can I do to help you?



## Level (3) “Further Escalation-Usually Resulting in an Emergency Response”

- Suicidal threats;
- Physical fights;
- Destruction of property;
- Display of extreme rage; and/or
- Utilization of weapons to harm others.



# Response when Level (3) is an Emergency

- ▶ Any individual observing violent or threatening behavior which poses an immediate danger to persons or property is expected to:
- ▶ Call 911 and other appropriate emergency contacts (such as Federal Protective Service) for that particular facility, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- ▶ Remain Calm and Contact supervisor.
- ▶ Secure your personal safety first.
- ▶ Leave the area if your safety is at risk.
- ▶ Cooperate with law enforcement personnel when they have responded to the situation.
- ▶ Once law enforcement personnel are on the scene, they will assume control of the situation. Witnesses should be prepared to provide a description of the violent or threatening individual, details of what was observed, and the exact location of the incident.



# How should you Communicate Verbally with an Aggressive Individual

- ▶ Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.
- ▶ Do not glare or stare, which may be perceived as a challenge.
- ▶ Remain calm and try to calm the other person. Do not allow the other person's anger to become your anger.
- ▶ Remain conscious of how you are delivering your words.
- ▶ Speak slowly, quietly and confidently.
- ▶ Speak simply.
- ▶ Avoid communicating a lot of technical and complicated information when emotions are high.
- ▶ Listen carefully. Do not interrupt or offer unsolicited advice or criticism.
- ▶ Encourage the person to talk. Do not tell the person to relax or calm down.
- ▶ Remain open-minded and objective.
- ▶ Use silence as a calming tool.
- ▶ Acknowledge the person's feelings. Indicate that you can see he or she is upset.



# How should you Communicate in a Non-Verbal Manner with an Aggressive Individual

- ▶ Use calm body language - relaxed posture with hands unclenched, attentive expression.
- ▶ Arrange yourself so that your exit is not blocked.
- ▶ Position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person.
- ▶ Give the person enough physical space... but normally 1-2 feet is considered an adequate distance.
- ▶ Get on the other person's physical level. If they are seated try kneeling or bending over, rather than standing over them. Do not pose a challenging stance.
- ▶ Do not make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening.
- ▶ Do not fight, walk or run away. Get assistance from security or police.



# How to Respond to a Physical Attack

- ▶ Make a scene, yell or scream as loudly as possible. Try shouting words like “Stop” or “Help”.
- ▶ If you are being pulled along or dragged, fall to the ground and roll.
- ▶ Blow a whistle, activate your personal security alarm or push the security alarm.
- ▶ Give bystanders specific instructions to help you. Single someone out and send them for help. For example, “You in the yellow shirt, call the police.”
- ▶ If someone grabs your purse, briefcase or other belongings, do not resist; throw the item on the ground several feet away from the thief and run in the opposite direction, yelling “Stop” or “Help”.
- ▶ Run to the nearest safe place, a safe office or an open store.
- ▶ Inform your supervisors or the authorities at your work place.
- ▶ If agreed, call the police immediately after the incident.
- ▶ File an incident report.





# Terminating a Potentially Violent Interaction

- ▶ Interrupt the conversation firmly but politely.
- ▶ Tell the person that you do not like the tone of the conversation; will not accept such treatment; will end the conversation if necessary.
- ▶ If the behavior persists, end the conversation.
- ▶ Tell the person that you will ask them to leave the building, or that you will leave (if working off-site).
- ▶ If the person does not agree to leave, remove yourself from the scene and inform your manager or supervisor immediately, call security.
- ▶ Advise other staff and have them leave the immediate area.
- ▶ File an incident report.



# Complaint Procedure for Persons who have Experienced Workplace Violence

- Inform the person inflicting the behavior that it is an unwanted/ unwelcome behavior.
- Document all events, including time, date, and names.
- Fill out a complaint form and report the incident to the manager or supervisor.
- Request support/assistance, if required.



# What are Management Responsibilities?

- To treat individuals at the work place with respect.
- To develop work place arrangements that minimize work place violence.
- Address and resolve incidents involving employees.
- To promote a violence-free work place.
- To ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and that the policy is posted and available.
- To report any incidents of violence in the work place to the employer and, if necessary, to the police.
- When applicable, to ensure the privacy and safety of all parties involved in a work place violence incident.
- Managers and Supervisors are additionally responsible for:
  - Informing employees of the Department's workplace violence policy and program;
  - Taking all reported incidents of workplace violence seriously;
  - Investigating all acts of violence, threat, and similar disruptive behavior in a timely fashion and taking the necessary action(s);
  - providing feedback to employees regarding the outcome of their reports regarding violent or potentially violent incidents.



# Employee Responsibilities



- To treat individuals at the work place with respect.
- To report any incidents of work place violence, experienced or observed, to the employer.
- To co-operate in the investigation and resolution of matters involving work place violence.



# Unions and Their Representatives are Responsible for:

- ▶ Supporting the Department's workplace violence policy and program;
- ▶ Being cognizant of situations that have the potential to produce violence and promptly addressing them with all concerned parties;
- ▶ Being sensitive to stress generated by the workplace and assisting employees in alleviating it;
- ▶ Encouraging employees who show signs of stress to obtain assistance, such as that offered by the Employee Assistance Program; and
- ▶ Advising employees, if they inquire, of the procedures for reporting violent behavior.



# Human Resource is Responsible for:

- ▶ Assisting in assessing and investigating allegations of workplace violence raised by employees, supervisors, and/or managers, as requested;
- ▶ Providing technical expertise and consultation to help supervisors determine what course of administrative action is most appropriate in specific situations, including Alternatives to Discipline and use of Alternative Dispute Resolution process;
- ▶ Providing advice and counsel regarding personnel rules and regulations; and
- ▶ Offering training courses to assist employees to deal with situations which may lead to potential violence, e.g., conflict resolution, stress management, negotiation skills, etc.



# Investigation Process

- ▶ Upon receiving a formal complaint, the employer will decide whether to contact security if requested by the employee involved. The employer will then address and resolve the complaint between the parties involved. If the matter can be resolved, the employer will assess and implement controls to prevent the WPV from happening again.
- ▶ The identities of the people involved will not be disclosed without their consent.
- ▶ If the complaint cannot be resolved internally, the employer will appoint a competent person to investigate the complaint and submit a written report to the employer. The employer can conduct an investigation without using a competent person if these three criteria are met:
  - The work place violence was caused by a person other than an employee.
  - It is reasonable to consider that the possibility of intervening in violent situations is a normal condition of employment.
  - The employer has effective procedures and controls in place to address work place violence, the development of which involved the employees.
- ▶ Upon receipt of the report, the employer will provide a copy to the health and safety committee (or the health and safety representative) and will implement controls to prevent a recurrence of the work place violence.



# Disciplinary Action

- ▶ The Supervisor will notify HR of the incident and the severity of the incident whether there was injury or harm.
- ▶ The supervisor will have the incident documented with as much detail as possible and give to HR.
- ▶ HR will receive copies of any security/police reports, hospital reports or Occupational Health reports. The prior history of the employee involved in causing the WPV will be researched or a 15-6 will be conducted.
- ▶ After the investigation and MRU's has been established, charges will be initiated and progressive discipline such as written warning, suspension will be implemented up to and including dismissal.





# Assistance

- ▶ If requested, the employer will provide assistance for an employee who was involved in a work place violence incident. This assistance may include:
  - Employee Assistance Program.
  - Counseling.



# References

- ▶ Department of Army, EEO memorandum GC Policy #5, Commander's Policy on Prevention and Elimination of Unlawful Harassment in the Workplace
- ▶ CPOL ARMY, Strategies for Reducing Violence in the Workplace
- ▶ CyberFeds V3.0 Employee Relations, Disrespectful or Abusive Language
- ▶ CyberFeds V3.0 Employee Relations, Direct Threat(s)
- ▶ CPOL ARMY, Violence in the Workplace



# References Cont'd.

- ▶ United States ARMY Public Health Command, "What Constitutes Workplace Violence?"
- ▶ United States office of Personnel Management, Dealing with Violence in the Workplace, a Guide for Agency Planners
- ▶ Violence in the Federal Workplace, A guide for Prevention and Response.
- ▶ Schedule of offenses and Recommended Remedies, CFR 5, subchapter 752
- ▶ CPOL ARMY, Table of Penalties for Various Offenses



ATTESTATION:

I have reviewed the all the slides of this training and understand my role and responsibilities in preventing workplace violence. I understand that the current context of COVID 19 adds additional stressors and potential for workplace violence. Further, I commit to doing my part in this context to prevent workplace violence.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

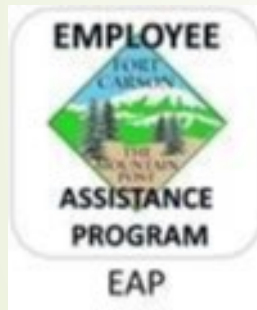
Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Fort Carson Employee Assistance Program  
Violence in the Workplace Training

# How to Reach your EAP

The EAPC is available Monday - Thursday  
during regular office hours:

**Calvin Lidmark**



**ASAP (Main Office)** Bldg. 6236, RM 210

By appointment:

During office hours: 526 – 2196

**Evans Hospital** Bldg. 7500, RM 1011

By appointment:

During office hours: 526 – 2107

Email: [calvin.n.lidmark.civ@mail.mil](mailto:calvin.n.lidmark.civ@mail.mil)

A  
S  
A  
P

1638 Elwell Street, BLDG 6236, Room 210

FT. Carson, Colorado 80913



**Telephone**  
**(719) 526-2196**