

## Workplace violence: what to do next

### When violence erupts at work, it can be deadly

In 2009, a man walked into a direct-mail company and opened fire, killing the company's owner. As employees ran screaming through a side door, the shooter left by a main entrance and shot himself. He later died. Police pegged his motive to a dispute involving his estranged wife, an employee of the company.

### No business is immune

Attacks can come from employees, customers, relatives of employees, or someone with no connection to the workplace. Unfortunately, according to a recent study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, most workplaces in the U.S. do not have either a formal program or policy in place to address potential violence in the workplace.

### What's next?

Because of several high-profile incidents, employers are beginning to wonder what they should do if something happens at their workplace. Following a violent incident at your business, you should:

- Require employees to report and log incidents or threats of workplace violence.
- Provide prompt medical evaluation and treatment.
- Report the incident to the local police promptly.
- Inform victims of their legal rights to prosecute perpetrators.
- Discuss the circumstances with staff members.
- Encourage employees to share information about ways to avoid similar situations in the future.

- Offer debriefing sessions and post-traumatic stress counseling services to help workers recover.
- Investigate all violent incidents and threats.
- Monitor trends in violent incidents by type or circumstance, and institute corrective actions.
- Discuss changes in the program during regular employee meetings.

You can reduce the negative impacts of stress on employee morale and productivity by creating an environment that promotes open communication.

## Safety Quiz

In the United States how many people every year are victims of violent crime while at work?

- A. 200,000
- B. 500,000
- C. 1,700,000

### ANSWER

**C**—1,700,000. Police officers, corrections officers, taxi drivers, and bartenders are victimized at the highest rates.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics