

# *Preventing Workplace Violence*

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## Preventing Workplace Violence

7 contact hours

9 CC10 hours

Violence in the workplace is a serious public health problem. This course is intended to show both operators and superintendents how to deal effectively with potentially volatile situations. This session will focus on the employee's role in helping to prevent violence in the workplace and ways to diffuse violent situations. Participants will be introduced to the stages of violent behavior; preventive measures; warning signs of workplace violence; security-conscious thinking; and measures required to take action.

1. Identify potential volatile situations;
2. Recognize warning signs of violent or dangerous behavior;
3. List potential perpetrators of violent behavior;
4. Identify measures required to take action.

### Agenda

8:00 AM to 8:30 AM	Introduction Hand Out Materials
8:30 AM to 9:30 AM	Pre-Test
9:30 AM to 10:00 AM	Definitions
10:00 AM to 10:50 AM	Statistics & Economic Impact
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM	Risk Factors & Threat Assessment
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM	LUNCH
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM	Policy Considerations & Reporting the Incident
2:00P PM to 3:00 PM	Your Role in Prevention & Helping the Victim(s)
3:00 PM to 3:30 PM	Review Analysis
3:30 PM to 4:00 PM	Final Exam

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**McET**  
environmental, health, and safety training

**CSM** college of southern maryland  
La Plata · Leonardtown · Prince Frederick · Waldorf

*Preventing Workplace  
Violence*

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**Introduction**

This training session will focus on Workplace Violence and your role in helping to prevent and defuse potentially violent situations.

Additionally, we will provide action tips on what to do if our efforts to prevent and defuse a situation are unsuccessful.

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**Goals**

1. Understand the scope of workplace violence
2. Know the policy requirements
3. Recognize warning signs of violent or dangerous behavior
4. Be prepared to take appropriate action

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## Conflict

Conflict is a struggle between two parties who perceive their facts, methods, purpose, values or goals as incompatible.

Conflict in the workplace is natural, very typical and can be healthy.

The key is how conflict is managed.

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## Pre-Test

What is your *conflict management* style?

This pre-test is designed to provide you with an “*unscientific*” description of your style of dealing with conflict.

It is designed primarily for the workplace but may also indicate your overall style for dealing with conflict.

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## What is Workplace Violence?

Any actual or threatened act of aggression or violence directed at a person or persons, that is committed in the workplace by another person.

(The offender does not have to be a co-worker)

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## Overview

- ▶ Workplace Violence claims more than 2 million victims each year
  - Assault, Rape, Robbery, Stalking
- ▶ Homicide is the second leading cause of job-related deaths
  - Firearms, stabbings, beatings, bombings
- ▶ Causes of workplace violence
  - Stress, economics, social, psychological

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## Who's at Risk?

- ▶ Employees regardless of job or rank
- ▶ Customers, visitors, vendors

***Some employees face a greater risk!!!!***

- ▶ Those who work with the public
- ▶ Off site, at night, those who travel

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## What type of Violence?

- ⇒ 75% were fist fights
- ⇒ 17% were shootings
- ⇒ 8% were stabbings
- ⇒ 6% were sexual assaults

### ***Directed at***

- ⇒ Employee against employee – 54%
- ⇒ Employee against supervisor – 13%
- ⇒ Customer against employee – 7%

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## Who are the Perpetrators?

- Co-workers
- **Former employees**
- **Spouses/Intimate partners**
- Friends or relatives of employ
- Business associates
- Outsiders
- Employees themselves, in the form of suicide

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## What are their Profiles?

- White male
- 30s to 40s
- Laid off or terminated
- History of substance abuse\*\*
- Loner, no support system
- History of altercations
- Blames others for his problems
- Recent catastrophic event in their life

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## Side Bar – Domestic Violence

- ↳ 74% of battered women are harassed at work
  - ↳ 13% of domestic shootings involved a former/current relationship
  - ↳ 1 in 10 of your colleagues is a victim of domestic violence
  - ↳ 19% of victims say some abuse occurs at work
- Warning Signs** ⇨ absenteeism, inability to focus, poor self esteem, low productivity, bruises or other signs of emotional distress

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### Employer Awareness

Domestic violence concerns employers because it endangers employee health and safety and undercuts company productivity. Uncertainty about preventive roles, a desire to respect employee privacy, and the need for guidance are common reasons why employers hesitate to address domestic violence in the workplace.

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### Why a Workplace Issue?

If a domestic violence victim leaves their abuser, where do you think the abuser would have more difficulty locating them, at a **new residence** or at **work**?

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### Understanding The Problem

#### Domestic Violence in MD

- Domestic violence related crimes
- Every 5 days
- 1 in 4 women

Will it effect the workplace?

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## Domestic Violence & The Workplace

- **54%** miss at least **three full days** of work a month
- **24-30%** of domestic violence victims **lost their jobs**
- Workplace violence has **tripled** in the last decade
- Among workplace violence **victims who took some type of protective action** more than **80%** believed it helped the situation

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## Is Workplace Violence Really a Problem?

Look at the facts:

- Domestic Violence cost big business **\$5-8 Billion** annually
- **74%** of employed battered women are **harassed at work**
- **56%** are **late** at least **five times** per month
- **28%** *leave early* at least **five times** per month

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## Economic Impact of Workplace Violence



### Cost

- **500,000 employees** **1,175,100** lose work days each year
- Lost wages: **\$55 million** annually
- Lost productivity, legal expenses, property damage, diminished public image, increased security:

**\$BILLIONS \$**

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### Predictability

Violence doesn't usually just happen,  
*like the weather, it's predictable.*

**80% of workplace violence is domestic violence related.**

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### Side Bar-Substance Abuse

**73%** of drug abusers are employed  
**64%** admitted drug use adversely affected their job performance  
**44%** sold drugs to other employees  
**18%** have stolen from co-workers to support their habit

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### Side Bar-Suicide

↳ Managers & specialty occupations more likely  
↳ 2x's as many suicides as homicides  
↳ 1 suicide every 18 minutes  
↳ Suicide in the workplace up 28 % since 2008  
↳ 10 million adults in the US think about suicide  
↳ 3<sup>rd</sup> cause of death overall for young people  
↳ Women attempt suicide 3x's more than men  
↳ 60% of men use a firearm and are 4x's more successful than women

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### Observable Risk Factors

The suspect usually is:

- ⇒ Emotionally disturbed
- ⇒ Stressed by home or the job
- ⇒ Has frequent disputes
- ⇒ A routine violator of policy
- ⇒ A poor performer
- ⇒ A sexual or other harasser

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### Flash Points

- \* A job termination
- \* A change in job duties - transfer
- \* Reduction in force
- \* Appraisal feedback
- \* Disciplinary action
- \* Culture change
- \* Compensation issues
- \* Change or drop in social status

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### Contemporary Flash Points

- \* Domestic Violence
- \* Separation/Divorce
- \* Death of a loved one
- \* Debt/Foreclosure
- \* Drugs/Alcohol
- \* Stress/PTSD

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## Examples of Violent or Threatening Behavior

- ⊗ Verbal Abuse
- ⊗ Indirect Threats
- ⊗ Direct Threats
- ⊗ Nonverbal Threats
- ⊗ Extreme Threats
- ⊗ Violent Actions

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## Verbal Abuse

- Sexual Insults/Innuendoes
- Racial Insults
- Name-calling
- Demeaning/Derogatory Language

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## Indirect Threats

" I am going postal here"

" You'll be sorry you did/said that to me"

" Bosses get killed for saying/doing things like that"

" **Accidents** happen to certain people"

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## Direct Threats

"I'll kill you"

"I'll break your arm"

"I'll kick your a—"

"I'm going to hurt you"

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## Nonverbal Threats

These are simulated acts of violence:

→ Shaking a fist at you

→ Simulating the pointing of a gun

→ Finger across the throat

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## Extreme Threats

Stalking/Harassment

Unwanted attention:

- Romantic
- Hostile

Display a weapon:

- Gun
- Knife

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### Violent Actions

Violent acts that in any way are likely to

→ Threaten and/or intimidate

*or cause*

→ Bodily Harm

→ Property Damage

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### Some Warning Signs

→→ Fascination with weapons

→→ *Alcohol or drug abuse*

→→ Extreme Stress

→→ **Anguish over employment decisions**

→→ History of violent acts

→→ Dramatic changes in personality or routines

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### More Warning Signs

● Psychological deterioration

● Decreased/Inconsistent job functioning

● Social isolation

● Obviously deterioration in personal hygiene

● Other major personality changes

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## Warning Signs of Violence

- Balled fist
- Perspiration
- Red face
- Staring
- Violating personal space
- Boast of previous violence
- Yelling/cursing
- Paranoid ideations

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## Observable Risk Factors

- ⇒ Always confrontational;
- ⇒ Complains about policy and procedures
- ⇒ Everyone is out to get them
- ⇒ Displays obnoxious behavior
- ⇒ Sexually or verbally harasses others
- ⇒ Displays obvious contempt for specific individuals (usually those in authority)

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## Stages of Violent Behavior

- Stage 1** - early potential for violence
  - name calling, slurs, insults
- Stage 2** – escalated potential for violence
  - damaging property, threats, stealing
- Stage 3** – potential for violence realized
  - punching, kicking, self-violence

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## Your role in Prevention

1. **Anticipation**
  - knowing the warning signs
2. **Security Measures**
  - following company policy
3. **Intervention**
  - prompt and proper action
4. **Reporting**
  - Notification of all incidents

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## Policy Considerations

- ✓ Purpose of violence prevention policy
- ✓ **Zero Tolerance for violence**
- ✓ Employee involvement
- ✓ Your role in supporting the policy

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## General Security

1. **Keep security doors closed and locked**
2. **Do not share entry codes or ID cards**
3. **Follow rules for visitors**
4. **Report unescorted strangers**
5. **Report burned out lighting**
6. **Report any security malfunctions**

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### Additional Security Measures

- ❶ Report unusual or unexpected deliveries
- ❷ Report any threats – internal/external
- ❸ Report signs of break-in or missing items
- ❹ Take appropriate precautions @ night
- ❺ If you are attacked, yell to alert others

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### Security Measures for the Road

- ✓ Keep your vehicle locked
- ✓ Don't pick up riders/strangers
- ✓ Be careful where you park
- ✓ When in doubt – don't get out

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### Prevention

- Send potentially violent employees to counseling
- Advise the employee that you want to retain them but their behavior must change
- Follow-up with employee
- Use progressive discipline

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## Intervention

Before violence erupts:

- Deal w/threatening behavior immediately
- Review policy with problem employees
- Discuss situation with your supervisor
- Refer problem for counseling\*

\*when appropriate

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## Intervention

Follow-up:

- ▶ Monitor employee's behavior
- ▶ Use progressive discipline
- ▶ Access potential for violence
  - terminated employees
  - problem employees

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## Intervention

Face-to-Face with Violence

- warn co-workers
- clear the area
- call for assistance
- remain calm and polite
- establish eye contact (periodically)

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## Intervention

Face-to-Face with an Armed Aggressor:

- do not confront
- do not try to disarm the aggressor
- do what you are told
- don't make any sudden moves
- speak clearly and carefully
- run only if safe to do so

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## Helping the Victims

1. Obtain medical assistance
2. Remain with the victim
3. Tell victim what is being done
4. Listen to their concerns
5. Relinquish care to Emergency Personnel
6. Supervisory notification

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## Reporting the Incident

Day

Date

Time

Place

Name(s) of the aggressor(s), if known

Name(s) of victim(s)

Name(s) of witness(s)

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## Review & Analysis

- ♦ What happened?
- ♦ Why did it happen?
- ♦ What would have prevented it?
- ♦ What was done?
- ♦ What should have been done?
- ♦ What could have been done **better**?

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## After-Action Report - Mgt

- 📁 Background
- 📁 Incident
- 📁 Chronology of Events
- 📁 Problems
- 📁 **Lessons Learned**
- 📁 Recommendations

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## Conclusion

- Realize that workplace violence is real
- Encourage security conscious thinking
- Deal with threats immediately
- Report all threats or violent behavior

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