

Loss Control Bulletin #36



Assaults and violent acts have increased dramatically and have become the leading cause of deaths in the workplace in some states. Although no exact figures are available, non-fatal assaults and violent acts also have risen in frequency and are several times more numerous than fatal incidents.

Incidents of workplace violence are generally grouped into three (3) categories:

Type 1 - The agent has no business or personal relationship with the target business.

Type 2 - The agent had a prior business relationship as a client.

Type 3 - The agent was previously employed by or has a personal relationship with an employee of the target business.

Restaurants are at a high risk for Type 1 incidents of workplace violence. Most restaurant fatalities are attributable to armed robbery, a Type 1 incident. Robberies most often occur between the hours of 11 PM and 6 AM and may involve an owner or employee handling money receipts.

Restaurant workplaces have a somewhat lower risk for Type 3 violent incident.

The public nature of restaurants makes them particularly vulnerable to violence committed by former employees and relatives or close friends of current employees. Unfortunately, the complex emotional component factors underlying most Type 3 events make such events difficult to prevent.

Although it may not be possible to guard against all possible threats, it is possible to plan for and deter some of the more likely scenarios that could develop at your restaurant. Employers are in fact required to address any exposure to violence in the workplace as part of their overall Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Some Basic Guidelines to Deter Type 1 Events – Robberies

- The more secure your premises are and/or appear to be, the less likely your restaurant will be targeted.
- High quality, securely installed, highly visible security cameras connected to off premises recording devices will deter most experienced thieves.
- Well-lighted entrances, exits, and parking area will provide good deterrence to crimes.
- Central station supervisory service that monitors unauthorized entry through windows, doors, and other entry points during non-business hours.
- Post signs indicating that the premises are protected by central station security monitoring.
- Maintain minimum cash on the premises. If possible, arrange for cash pick up by professional armed guard service. If that is not possible, make daily bank deposits, staggering the time of the trips made to the bank.

- Install cash registers in positions where their contents are not readily visible.
- Install a secure cash deposit drop safe on the premises that is controlled by a time-release mechanism.
- Establish a procedure for employees to check for customers in rest rooms or other public areas just prior to closing.
- Lock up entrances and exits promptly at closing time.
- Establish systems and procedures:
 - To identify security hazards
 - For employees to report security hazards to management
 - To investigate incidents involving security hazards
 - To promptly correct identified security hazards
 - For training staff on established security procedures

Employers who have employees with histories of assaults, or who have exhibited belligerent, intimidating, or hostile behaviors in the past, need to establish and implement procedures to minimize the possibilities for occurrence of Type 3 incidents.

Some Basic Guidelines to Deter Type 3 Events

- Establish and train employees on procedures to respond to workplace security hazards.
- Establish precautionary procedures for the protection of all employees against threats made by a person having a personal relationship with an employee. In some states, the employer can assist the employee in obtaining an injunction prohibiting the threatening person from entering the workplace.
- Develop lists of actions to be taken by managers, supervisors, and employees in emergency security situa-

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tions. Make certain that all employees are familiar with their respective roles in such events.

- Establish fair and consistently applied employment and disciplinary practices and procedures.
- Establish clear anti-violence policies that are applied consistently to all employees.
- Train supervisors and employees to report any belligerent, intimidating, or hostile behavior by employee or customer immediately to managers. Managers and supervisors need to recognize such behavior as a possible threat and determine the proper response.
- Develop procedures to assure that employee terminations or layoffs are handled in a considerate and respectful manner.
- In particularly volatile situations, it may be advisable to provide temporary onsite security guard protection until the security threat subsides.

Additional information on preventing violence in the workplace is available at the following websites:

Cal-OSHA

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/PubOrder.asp>

(see Workplace Security section)

Fed-OSHA

<http://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/pub>

[index.list](#) (search for Workplace Violence)

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