

PREPAREDNESS SPOKANE

Emergency & Disaster Planning for Business & Industry

Sponsored by the Spokane City/County Emergency Management Planning -- Business & Industry Disaster Committee

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A Message from the Business & Industry Committee!

John Ames

Chair – Business & Industry Disaster Committee

Although we associate the events that impact business and business continuity with elements like fires and other such disasters, violence in the workplace is often “left of the list”.

This issue is dedicated to the topic of violence in the workplace. The Business & Industry Disaster Committee encourages you to take advantage of the information you will find in this issue.

The Committee will be taking the summer off and will meet again in the August/September timeframe. We will be back in the fall to assist you in dealing with the issues you face while dealing with:

- Personal Preparedness
- Preparedness in the Workplace
- Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery
- Volunteerism in the Community

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Workplace Violence

Violence has become an unfortunate part of our lives. We see violence on the news everyday; some people experience it on the job and others at home. Below are some suggestions for addressing workplace violence and a checklist that could be helpful in assisting with incorporating a program at your business.

Possible Solutions

It is recommended that management and employees work together to reduce workplace violence.

Management Commitment: Provides the motivation and resources to deal effectively with workplace violence and should include: A policy that violence, threats, harassment, intimidations, and other disruptive behavior in our workplace **will not be tolerated**; that is all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Management should to be committed to:

- Emotional as well as physical health of the employee.
- Appropriate allocation of authority and resources to responsible parties.
- Equal commitment to worker safety and health and patient/client safety.
- A system of accountability for involved managers and employees.
- A comprehensive program of medical and psychological counseling for employees experiencing or witnessing violent incidents.
- No employee reprisals for reporting incidents.

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Complete a worksite analysis: It is recommended that a worksite analysis be completed by an appointed Threat Assessment Team or similar task force, or coordinator. This "team" analyzes records, trends, workplace security, and gives screening surveys to staff to help identify hazards. OSHA has provided the following surveys to assist employers in identifying hazards.

Workplace Violence Checklist*

The following items serve merely as an example of what might be used or modified by employers to help identify potential workplace violence problems.

This checklist helps identify present or potential workplace violence problems. Employers also may be aware of other serious hazards not listed here.

Designated competent and responsible observers can readily make periodic inspections to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards and threats of workplace violence. These inspections should be scheduled on a regular basis; when new, previously unidentified security hazards are recognized; when occupational deaths, injuries, or threats of injury occur; when a safety, health and security program is established; and whenever workplace security conditions warrant an inspection.

Periodic inspections for security hazards include identifying and evaluating potential workplace security hazards and changes in employee work practices which may lead to compromising security. Please use the following checklist to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards. **TRUE** notations indicate a potential risk for serious security hazards:

- T F This industry frequently confronts violent behavior and assaults of staff.
- T F Violence has occurred on the premises or in conducting business.
- T F Customers, clients, or coworkers' assault, threaten, yell, push, or verbally abuse employees or use racial or sexual remarks.
- T F Employees are **NOT** required to report incidents or threats of violence, regardless of injury or severity, to employer.
- T F Employees have **NOT** been trained by the employer to recognize and handle threatening, aggressive, or violent behavior.
- T F Some managers, supervisors, and/or employees accept violence as "part of the job".
- T F Access and freedom of movement within the workplace are **NOT** restricted to those persons who have a legitimate reason for being there.
- T F The workplace security system is inadequate-i.e., door locks malfunction, windows are not secure, and there are no physical barriers or containment systems.
- T F Employees or staff members have been assaulted, threatened, or verbally abused by clients and patients.
- T F Medical and counseling services have **NOT** been offered to employees who have been assaulted.
- T F Alarm systems such as panic alarm buttons, silent alarms, or personal electronic alarm systems are **NOT** being used for prompt security assistance.
- T F There is no regular training provided on correct response to alarm sounding.
- T F Alarm systems are **NOT** tested on a monthly basis to assure correct function.
- T F Security guards are **NOT** employed at the workplace.
- T F Closed circuit cameras and mirrors are **NOT** used to monitor dangerous areas.
- T F Metal detectors are **NOT** available or **NOT** used in the facility.
- T F Employees have **NOT** been trained to recognize and control hostile and escalating aggressive behaviors, and to manage assaultive behavior.
- T F Employees **CANNOT** adjust work schedules to use the "Buddy system" for visits to clients in areas where they feel threatened.
- T F Cellular phones or other communication devices are **NOT** made available to field staff to enable them to request aid.
- T F Vehicles are **NOT** maintained on a regular basis to ensure reliability and safety.
- T F Employees work where assistance is **NOT** quickly available.

*This form was taken from: Guideline for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers. OSHA 3148 1996.

Message from B & I Cont.

In the meantime, should you need assistance regarding any of the above issues, do not hesitate to contact us at the address and phone number noted below. You may also contact the Spokane County Department of Emergency Management if you need immediate assistance.

Have a great summer! See you in the fall!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPOKANE CITY/COUNTY DISASTER COMMITTEE MEETING

PLACE: DEACONESS HEALTH & EDUCATION CENTER

TIME: OFF FOR THE SUMMER

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY DR COMMITTEE PLANNING MEETING

PLACE: RED CROSS BUILDING ON WEST NORA

DATE:

TIME: OFF FOR THE SUMMER

Workplace Violence Cont.

Employee Involvement

Employees should:

- Understand, support, and comply with the established workplace violence program.
- Participate in employee complaint or suggestions sessions.
- Provide prompt and accurate reporting of all workplace violence incidents.

Employees should understand that:

- Reporting violence will benefit them, and enable management to identify, address, and solve problems.
- No reprisals will be taken by management or employer.

Employees often do not report violent incidents because:

- Of lack of administrative reporting policies, or procedures.
- They are afraid employer will think they can't handle the job effectively.
- Of misperception that violence is part of the job.
- Of fear of employer reprisals.

For more information:

www.osha.gov

If you are interested in joining the Business & Industry Disaster Recovery Planning Committee please contact us.

To contact the Business & Industry Committee e-mail us at preparedness_spokane@hotmail.com or call John Ames at (509) 835-2130.