



Workplace Feature

Workplace Violence, Steps an Employer Should Take for Your Employee Safety

by

Kristin White, Attorney | Jackson Kelly LLP

**Mark Ashby, Police Officer | Thornton Police Dept
Owner | LEAD Impairment**

Workplace violence takes the form of a physical assault down to intimidation of another employee when it occurs in a place of employment. It can include pranks, sabotage, theft, and swearing at another employee.

Employers have an obligation under the law to provide a safe workplace for their employees. Part of this obligation includes planning, training, and responding to any threat of workplace violence in the workplace.

As part of the planning, OSHA recommends that employers establish a written violence prevention program which includes:

- A zero tolerance for violence policy;
- Ensuring no reprisal is taken against employees reporting violence;
- Encouraging prompt reporting; and
- Establishing a plan for maintaining security.

After a plan is developed, employers need to train their employees. For this training, the topics should include:

- Operational procedures, security measures and engineering controls specific to your workplace designed to reduce risk;
- Warning signs of behavior or situations that may lead to assaults;
- Conflict resolution and aggression management techniques;
- Safety device locations and operation;
- Reporting procedures and recordkeeping;
- Policies for medical care or counseling after an event; and
- Emergency action procedures.

Responding takes the form of pre and post incident. First, employers should be aware of warning signs in an employee that may manifest itself in a change in behavior patterns or an increase in the frequency and intensity of the behaviors that are disruptive to the work environment. If these warning signs are exhibited, employers should intervene to help manage any conflict issues.

An employer also has response obligations after an event which includes:

- Providing medical care;
- Reporting of the incident;
- Secure the scene;
- Investigating; and
- Providing family assistance.

This overview provides the basic tenets of a comprehensive workplace violence program. Each employer must assess their worksite, and develop a program tailored to their operations and employee needs. Further, training on recognizing the signs of violence ahead of time go a long way in prevention of incidents. ***More information on this topic will be covered at the Health and Safety Summit.***

Kristin White, Attorney | Jackson Kelly LLP – Kwhite@JacksonKelly.com

Mark Ashby, Police Officer & Owner | LEAD Impairment – Mark@ileadit.net

Winter Safety Series 2018
Issue 1 | January 18, 2018