WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
Workplace Violence

- Any act of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the worksite.
  - Against a person or property and can occur outside the workplace.
  - Workplace violence can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide, one of the leading causes of job-related deaths.
Workplace Violence

- United States Department of Labor – Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)

- Exercises authority over labor laws affecting the health and safety of workers in the U.S.

- Individual states have a government entity that sets occupational safety standards for workers.
Workplace Violence

- Cal/OSHA

- The State of California, under an agreement with OSHA, operates an occupational safety and health program in accordance with Section 18 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

- What other state laws might apply to workplace violence?
Jurisdiction

The California State Plan applies to: all public and private sector places of employment in the state, except:

Enforcement Programs

The Cal/OSHA enforcement unit has jurisdiction over every place of employment in California which is necessary to adequately enforce and administer all occupational safety and health standards and regulations.

Who would have enforcement authority to prosecute local workplace violence?
Enforcement Programs

The Cal/OSHA enforcement unit conducts inspections of California workplaces in response to a report of an industrial accident, a complaint about an occupational safety and health hazard, or as part of an inspection program targeting industries which have a high rate of occupational hazards, fatalities, injuries or illnesses.
Workplace Violence

- Enforcement Programs

- The Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) investigates allegations of retaliation or discrimination for complaining about safety and health conditions or practices in the workplace within six months of adverse action. Additional information is available on the DLSE web page.
Forms of Workplace Violence

1. Verbal—direct or implied;
2. Physical Assault—Physical conduct that results in harm to people or property;
3. Possession of deadly weapons* on employer property;
4. Harassment—Intimidating conduct or harassment that disrupts the work environment or results in fear for personal safety.

- Deadly weapons: any instrument, device or thing capable of inflicting death, and designed or specially adapted for use as a weapon, or possessed, carried or used as a weapon.

- Discuss types of deadly weapons
Forms of Workplace Violence

- Sexual Assault
- Battery
- Robbery
- Homicide
- Suicide and Attempted Suicide
Who Commits Workplace Violence

The perpetrator of workplace violence can be from the inside the organization or from the outside.

1. Insider – Employee or co-worker; manager or supervisor
2. Outsider – Customer, family member, or stranger
Targets of Workplace Violence

According to studies by the National Safe Workplace Institute in Chicago, the most dramatically increasing target of workplace violence is employer-directed. Until late 1992, there was an average of one employer-directed homicide per month in the United States. Recently that has escalated to an average of five or six monthly. Workplace violence can be directed at the following:
1. **Employer directed** - violence against workplace authority: supervisor, manager, director.

2. **Domestic directed** - partner or would be partner engages in violence against the object of his or her affections.
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3. **Property directed** - acts against any property that the company/employer owns.

4. **Commercial directed** - an employee participates in events against the company that can include theft of money or property and may also involve violence.
Reduction and Prevention Program
As of 1991, a written, effective Injury and Illness Prevention (IIP) Program is required for every California employer.

Employer Responsibilities:

Assessment
- Visibility
- Alarms
- Security
Employer Responsibilities

Ensure appropriate safety and law enforcement/security personnel have completed an on-site review of safety and security of buildings and offices. Ensure alarms are working properly; visibility is unobstructed, and security issues are addressed e.g., security guard, routine checks
Policy Development

- Define WPV
- No Tolerance
- Consequences

- Develop a policy statement that indicates the organization will not tolerate violent or disruptive behavior and that all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
Workplace Violence

- Conduct Training
- Awareness & Policy Training
- Provide adequate resources for employee training and awareness. Ensure the employee manual or brochure and appropriate organization materials are available to all employees and all employees are aware of the procedures and instructions in them.
Awareness & Policy Training

Include workplace violence training in all employee orientation and supervisory training sessions.

Ensure employees know specific procedures for dealing with workplace threats and emergencies, how to contact police, fire, and other safety and security officials.
Workplace Violence

- Report Incidents
- Investigations & Follow-Ups
- Procedures for investigating incidents of workplace violence, which includes threats and physical injury, include:
Workplace Violence

1. Reviewing all previous incidents.
2.Visiting the scene of an incident as soon as possible.
3. Interviewing threatened or injured workers and witnesses.
4. Examining the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident, including any previous reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator.
5. Determining the cause of the incident.
6. Taking corrective action to prevent the incident from recurring.
7. Recording the findings and corrective actions taken.
8. Other (any other action taken)
Workplace Violence

- **Employee Responsibilities**
  1. Know your company/organization’s policies on employee conduct
  2. Be aware of the warning signs of violence
  3. Mentally prepare for "what if" situations
  4. Understand organization’s procedures for violent situations
  5. Be aware of weapons brought into the workplace
  6. Take all threats seriously
  7. Alert management immediately if any of the above occur
Warning Signs for Violence in the Workplace

Although there is no sure way to predict human behavior and while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. A person intending to commit violence in the workplace may not necessarily graduate from one stage to another before committing violence.
Workplace Violence

Stage I
- Unusual behavior changes
- Uncooperative with direct supervisor on a regular basis
- Curse profusely
- Argues with coworkers constantly
- Spreads gossip and rumors deliberately to harm others
- Unwanted sexual remarks
- Hostile toward customers or coworkers
- Irritability and anxiety escalates
- Sleep disturbances are mentioned on the job
Workplace Violence

- **Stage 2**
- Plays the role of a victim
- Writes violent or sexual notes to other employees or management
- Verbalizes desires to harm coworkers or employer
- Sabotages equipment or steals property
- Disregards company policies and procedures
- Levels of arguments or altercations increase with all personnel
- Accidents increase; either physical or traffic-related
- Noted decrease in interest and confidence in work
Stage 3
Intense anger is the frequent emotion displayed. It results in:
- Depression or withdrawal
- Property destruction
- Physical fighting
- Suicidal threats
- Use of weapons to harm others
Factors Contributing to Risk of Violence in the Workplace

- Exchange of money
- Working alone at night and during early morning hours
- Availability of valued items, e.g., money and jewelry
- Guarding money or valuable property or possessions
- Performing public safety functions in the community
- Working with patients, clients, customers or students known or suspected to have a history of violence
- Workers with a history of assaults or who exhibit belligerent, intimidating and threatening behavior to others
Circumstances Associated with Workplace Violence

The circumstances associated with workplace violence in California can be divided into three major types. However, it is important to keep in mind that a particular occupation or workplace may be subject to more than one type.
Type I – In California, the majority of fatal workplace assaults involved a person entering into a small late-night retail establishment, e.g., liquor store, gas station or a convenience food store, to commit a robbery. During the commission of the robbery, a worker, or more likely the proprietor, is killed or injured.
Type I events also involve assaults on security guards. It has been known for sometime that security guards are at risk of assault when protecting valuable property that is the object of an armed robbery.
**Workplace Violence**

- **Type II** - A Type II workplace violence event involves an assault or threat by someone who is either the recipient or the object of a service provided by the affected workplace or the victim. Type II events involve fatal or nonfatal injuries to individuals who provide services to the public.
These events chiefly involve assaults on public safety and correctional personnel, municipal bus or railway drivers, health care and social service providers, teachers, sales personnel, and other public or private service sector workers who provide professional, public safety, administrative or business services to the public.
Type III - A Type III workplace violence event consists of an assault by an individual who has some employment-related involvement with the workplace. A Type III event usually involves a threat of violence, or a physical act of violence resulting in a fatal or nonfatal injury, by a current or former worker, supervisor or manager; a current or former spouse or lover; a relative or friend; or some other person who has a dispute involving a worker of the workplace.
Workplace Violence

- Threat Assessments
- Periodic inspections for security hazards consist of identification and evaluation of workplace security hazards and changes in employee work practices. It may require assessing for more than one type of workplace violence. A threat assessment for workplace violence using the methods specified below can help identify and evaluate workplace security hazards.
Inspections for Type I workplace security hazards include assessing:

1. The exterior and interior of the workplace for its attractiveness to robbers.
2. The need for security surveillance measures, such as mirrors or cameras.
3. Posting of signs notifying the public that limited cash is kept on the premises.
4. Procedures for worker response during a robbery or other criminal act.
5. Procedures for reporting suspicious persons or activities.
6. Posting of emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services where workers have access to a telephone with an outside line.
7. Limiting the amount of cash on hand and using time access safes for large bills.
8. Other (specific to organizational need)
Inspections for Type II workplace security hazards include assessing:

1. Access to and freedom of movement within the workplace.
2. Adequacy of workplace security systems, such as door locks, security windows, physical barriers and restraint systems.
3. Frequency and severity of threatening or hostile situations that may lead to violent acts by persons who are service recipients of the organization.

4. Workers skill in safely handling threatening or hostile service recipients.

5. Effectiveness of systems and procedures to warn others of a security danger or to summon assistance, e.g., alarms or panic buttons.
6. The use of work practices such as "buddy" systems for specified emergency events.
7. The availability of worker escape routes.
8. Other (specific to organizational need)
Inspections for Type III workplace security hazards include assessing:

1. How well the organization’s anti-violence policy has been communicated to workers, supervisors or managers.
2. How well the organization’s management and workers communicate with each other.
3. The organization’s workers', supervisors' and managers' knowledge of the warning signs of potential workplace violence.

4. Access to, and freedom of movement within, the workplace by non-workers, including recently discharged workers or persons with whom one of the organization’s worker's is having a dispute.
5. Frequency and severity of worker reports of threats of physical or verbal abuse by managers, supervisors or other workers.
6. Any prior violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace.
7. Worker disciplinary and discharge procedures.
8. Other (specific to organizational need)
Corrective Measures to Hazards Identified in Threat Assessments

Hazards which threaten the security of workers need to be corrected in a timely manner based on the severity when they are first observed or discovered.
Corrective measures for Type I workplace security hazards can include:

1. Making the workplace unattractive to robbers.
2. Utilizing surveillance measures, such as cameras or mirrors, to provide information as to what is going on outside and inside the workplace.
3. Procedures for the reporting suspicious persons or activities.

4. Posting of emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services where workers have access to a telephone with an outside line.

5. Posting of signs notifying the public that limited cash is kept on the premises.
6. Limiting the amount of cash on hand and using time access safes for large bills.
7. Worker, supervisor and management training on emergency action procedures.
8. Other (any other action taken)
Corrective measures for Type II workplace security hazards include:

1. Controlling access to the workplace and freedom of movement within it, consistent with business necessity.

2. Ensuring the adequacy of workplace security systems, such as door locks, security windows, physical barriers and restraint systems.
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3. Providing worker training in recognizing and handling threatening or hostile situations that may lead to violent acts by persons who are service recipients of the company/organization.

4. Placing effective systems to warn others of a security danger or to summon assistance, e.g., alarms or panic buttons.
5. Providing procedures for a "buddy" system for specified emergency events.
7. Other (any other action taken)
Corrective measures for Type III workplace security hazards include:

1. Effectively communicating the company/organization’s anti-violence policy to all workers, supervisors or managers.
2. Improving how well the company/organization’s management and workers communicate with each other.
3. Increasing awareness by workers, supervisors and managers of the warning signs of potential workplace violence.

4. Controlling access to and freedom of movement within, the workplace by non-workers, including recently discharged workers or persons with whom one of the worker's is having a dispute.
5. Providing counseling to workers, supervisors or managers who exhibit behavior that represents strain or pressure which may lead to physical or verbal abuse of co-workers.

6. Ensure that all reports of violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace are handled effectively by management and that the person making the report is not subject to retaliation by the person making the threat.
7. Ensure that worker disciplinary and discharge procedures address the potential for workplace violence.
8. Other (any other action taken)
Preventative Measures to Workplace Violence

A. Treat each other with respect
B. Get to know the people around you and agree to look out for each other
C. Look intently for how everyone is doing
D. Improve communication throughout your company/organization
E. Improve working conditions by offering suggestions for safety
F. Notify management of any suspicious activities
G. Watch for the warning signs of violence
**Workplace Violence**

H. Encourage each other to be alert for danger signals in coworkers
I. Promote workplace integrity between all employees
J. Listen for verbal intimidation on the job
K. Watch for psychological abuse on the job between employees
L. Be aware of behavioral pattern changes in fellow workers
M. Become more responsive to each other
Awareness is the first step in preventing workplace violence. BE PROACTIVE!