

City of Russellville Safety Update

January 2011



Workplace Violence Prevention

(Following is a summary of an article which appeared in the January 2011 "FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin" written by Stephen J. Romano, Micol E. Levi-Minzi, Eugene A. Rugala and Vincent B. Van Hasselt)

Workplace violence, once unheard of, is now a widespread issue. Workplace violence includes all violent behavior and threats of violence, as well as any conduct that can result in injury, property damage, induce a sense of fear and hinder the normal course of work. Although a few high-profile incidents have led to increased awareness, prevalence rates show that nonfatal workplace violence is more common than previously believed.

Although there is no scientific way to predict workplace violence, employees can take certain actions to reduce these incidents. Workplace violence is not random. Perpetrators usually display some behaviors of concern. These behaviors can help workers recognize potential problems. If a coworker begins acting differently, monitoring the frequency, duration and intensity of the troubling behavior can be helpful. Specific behaviors of concern include

sadness, depression, threats, menacing or erratic behavior, aggressive outbursts, references to weaponry, verbal abuse, hypersensitivity to perceived slights and offensive commentary referring to violence. These behaviors when coupled with diminished work performance may suggest a heightened violence potential.

All actions have to be judged in the proper context and in totality to determine the potential for violence.

If you think that a coworker may be on the path toward committing some type of violent act in the workplace, notify a supervisor, Department Head, or Human Resource Coordinator. Authorities emphasize that "if you sense something, say something." Awareness + Action = Prevention. Awareness means understanding that workplace violence can impact anyone, in any work setting and across all levels of employment.

Research has shown that many workplace violence situations are over in minutes and law enforcement may not arrive in time. As a result, employees have to become stakeholders in their own safety and security and develop a survival mind-set comprised of awareness, preparation and rehearsal.

Vigorous prevention programs, timely intervention, and appropriate responses by organizations and their employees will contribute significantly to a safe and secure work environment.

HEALTH UPDATE

As you know, City employees are now covered by the Municipal Health Benefit Fund for health, dental, vision, and life insurance coverage. But did you know it also included eDoc America??

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