

Reducing the Risk of Workplace Violence

Publication

8.31.10

As an employer, there are a variety of steps you can take to reduce the risk of workplace violence.

First, ensure that your business has a zero-tolerance policy regarding workplace violence. When reviewing the current policy or creating a new one, explicitly define that workplace violence includes:

- Actual violence
- Threats of violence
- Verbal abuse
- Harassment of any kind
- Behaviors that can be considered dangerous

When detailing these defined acts of violence, also include several examples – from what may be considered minor to the more obvious physical acts – so there is no grey area in the policy.

The policy should also include very specific procedures for dealing with workplace violence at every level as well as a safe, confidential method for employees to report potential acts of violence on them or co-workers. Finally, review the policy with each employee on an annual basis to ensure each team member understands the repercussions of violent acts in the workplace. You should also review the document internally on a regular basis and publicize any updates with your employees.

Workplace violence cannot always be avoided. But making workplace violence policies, procedures and training a priority are effective ways to reduce your business and your employees' risk of danger on the job.

This article appeared in the August 2010 *VSHRA Newsletter*.

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Shayna Balch Santiago

Partner

602.281.3400

Email