

Workplace Violence and Bullying—How to Manage Employers' Risks

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While workplace violence and bullying are not necessarily new problems, they've garnered recent attention as the recession continues to take its psychological toll on workers. Company downsizing, increasing responsibilities and an ongoing lackluster economy are adding to stressful work environments that can spark bullying amongst employees, as well as lead to workplace violence concerns.

Each day, thousands of American workers are harassed, intimidated, threatened and verbally or physically attacked. And bullying is three times more prevalent than sexual harassment. While only the sensational cases seem to make the headlines, threats and harassment in the workplace are a serious concern for employers. But employers can manage their risk in this area by implementing preventative measures—protecting both their staff and their reputations.

Employers are encouraged to consider the following tips to help protect their workforce, stay out of the courtroom, and manage the potential risks associated with workplace violence and bullying.

- Conduct thorough background checks
- Expand company policies
- Understanding the psychology of bullying
- Learn the warning signs
- Don't discount third party harassment
- Don't forget the financial impact

This article, co-written by Dennis Moschella, appeared on December 17, 2010 on *HR.BLR.com*.

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