

Manager/Supervisor Risk Management
#152-6/13/13
A twice weekly e-mail training for YCPARMIA members

TOPIC: SAFETY – VIOLENCE MODEL POLICY ELEMENTS

As addressed in the last topic, the State requires that all employers provide a safe and healthy work environment. This includes a work environment free from violence or the threat of violence. There are a number of factors that are recognized as increasing the risk of workplace violence. These include, but are not limited to:

- Contact with the public
- Exchange of money
- Working with unstable or volatile persons in healthcare, social services, or criminal justice settings
- Working alone
- Working late at night
- Working in a high-crime area

With these factors in mind, a worksite analysis is the first step in addressing the workplace violence issue. This should probably be done by a small team made up of workers from the specific site, members of the safety committee, and law enforcement, if available. Periodic reinspections should also be done. The results of the analysis/inspection should be reported to, and monitored by the safety committee and management. It is important that there be an employer standard/practice, and that each worksite not be treated – inconsistently – as an isolated issue.

Once the potential hazards are recognized, the employer needs to respond with engineering, administrative and/or work practice controls that eliminate or at least mitigate the dangers.

- Engineering controls might include lighting, visibility, video surveillance, locking doors, physical barriers, and safe rooms.
- Administrative and work practice controls might include prevention activities, modified daily procedures, emergency procedures, liaison with local law enforcement, limited access areas, and off-site procedures.

There is no single approach as circumstances vary. Also, as conditions change the approach needs to change or be modified – hence the periodic reinspections. While most employers accept the need for periodic safety inspections, relatively few, if any, include workplace violence hazards as part of those inspections. Unfortunately until something happens the potential for injury is not appreciated or addressed. It is business as usual until it isn't.

Next Topic: Safety – Violence and the Ostrich Approach