Workplace Shootings Meeting Kit

It’s easy to take the safety of our workplaces for granted. Do not give in to that assumption. High-risk situations, especially those involving conflict and violence are the kinds of incidences that happen to other people and never us. Gun violence, in particular, is something no one likes to imagine they would be involved in or could possibly occur in their place of work.

ORIGINS

Statistics show that 90% of workplace shootings are carried out by an employee. There are a few factors that can contribute to act in a violent manner. These include if an employee has recently been let go, or their workload has increased; even workplace bullying can lead to an employee building up feelings of resentment and hostility. Some workplaces are susceptible to gun violence from other members of the wider community such as a customer or client, or even family members of an employee.

Whatever background the individual comes from, it is extremely likely that they have been struggling with any number of issues in the months or weeks prior that contribute to their decision to take such drastic actions.

The following signs and behavioral changes are common in those who perpetrate gun violence:

- Isolation from fellow employees
- Changes in attendance
- Change in personal hygiene
- Use of humor to mask violent or harmful thoughts and intentions
- Aggression

EMPLOYE ROLE

Reporting: All workspaces should have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to any kind of violence. Policies can only work in an environment where employees are encouraged and feel safe coming

forward when a co-worker’s behavior is cause for concern. This may mean developing a procedure through which employees can report anonymously.

TRAINING EMPLOYEES

Research has found that employees who are trained will act on that training in a crisis and those who have not are more likely to panic and freeze, leaving themselves and others open to greater risks.

ACTION GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES

Evacuate – Run: If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others evacuate, if possible.
- Call 911 when you are safe.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Follow the instructions of any police officers.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.

Shelter-In-Place – Hide: Find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

- Be out of the active shooter’s view.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e. an office with a closed and locked door).
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement.

To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door.
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door.
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager.
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e. radio, television).
- Hide behind large items (i.e. cabinets, desks).
- Remain quiet.

Protect Yourself

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her.
- Throwing items and improvising weapons.
- Committing to your actions.

Retaliating or acting against the shooter should always be the last resort. If the shooter enters the workplace for money or goods and makes demands, follow them as best you can.

FINAL WORD

Always take any threat or odd behavior by an employee or visitor in your workplace seriously. Report any suspicious activity to a supervisor, security, or call the police. This alone can prevent an active shooter situation. No one wants to give thought to the possibility of one of these events occurring in their workplace, but it is important to have a plan. Knowing how to respond will greatly increase the chance to survive a workplace shooting.