

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SURVEY & WHITE PAPER



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WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DISCUSS?

- Background
- Research Findings
- Survey Results
- Measures and Recommendations to Prevent and Reduce Losses
- Conclusion
- Questions?



BACKGROUND

- RIMS & RM/I ASSE Joint Project
- Survey sent to 1,000 randomly selected RIMS members & 500 ASSE Risk Management Division members in fall 1998. 299 total responses were received. Not all questions were answered on all forms.
- Purpose of survey was to assess:
 - General awareness
 - WPV prevention techniques



MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS TELL US...

- Stress on individuals is increasing at home/work.
- Coping skills are not being developed at a young age and can be hard to acquire in adulthood. (Rejection, Loss, Loneliness)
- The “support network” is not always there, or it gets there too late.
- Violence in entertainment and sports continues to be socially acceptable.
- Availability of guns is unchanged.
- The overall “rate” of WPV incidents is “flat” ... (i.e. more people=more incidents=same %) ... it’s just that there is more media.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Numerous surveys report the rising number of workplace violence incidents.
- Increase due to broadened definition of WPV that now includes homicides, physical attacks, rapes, assaults, threats, intimidation, coercion, all forms of harassment, and any other act that creates a hostile environment.
- Harassment=16 million workers/year



RESEARCH FINDINGS

■ Costs:

- Missed days off from work=\$4.2 billion in 1992.
- Increased levels of stress and lower morale which may lead to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism and turnover.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Occupations most at risk for murder:
 - Taxicab drivers or chauffeurs
 - Gas station attendants
 - Retail clerks
 - Police officers
 - Fast food and lodging services personnel



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Where does the liability lie?
 - Employers have a general duty to “furnish to each employee a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to the employee”.
 - *Respondeat superior* - An employer is vicariously liable for actions of employees.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

Where does the liability lie? (cont.)

- Employer may be liable for failure to provide adequate premises safety.
- Employers may be held liable on the ground of negligent hiring or negligent retention.
- U.S. Supreme Court stated that an employer may be vicariously liable if a supervisor creates a hostile work environment.



RESEARCH: LEGAL ISSUES

- Littler Mendelson, Employment Law Firm, recommends that employers understand your local laws on...
- Stalking and unlawful threats
- Trespassing
- Carrying of weapons
- The use of restraining orders by the employee
- The use of restraining orders by the employer
- Premises liability duty to third parties

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SURVEY RESULTS

- Workplace Violence Incidents: 41% - Stayed the same; 31% - None; 58% - Employees are fearful.
- Training: 58% provide training. Training provided by HR (24%), Safety (14%), RM (13%), Security (13%), and Legal (3%).



SURVEY RESULTS (continued)

- Recognition & Coping Methods: 58% - EAPs; 40% - Training to managers to identify warning signs; 35% - Training to employees on conflict resolution; 24% - Training to employees to identify warning signs.
- Formal Risk Assessment: 70% - None
- Written Policy: 62%



SURVEY RESULTS (continued)

- Written Programs: 82% have written policy addressing weapons.
- Post Incident Actions: 5% allow liberal leave following an incident; 55% offer counseling for employees not involved; 31% aid in job relocation; 22% offer counseling for victims.



SURVEY RESULTS (continued)

- Background Investigations: 49% did thorough background investigations; 4% did a psychological test.
- Use of Identification: 39% issue photo ID's; 31% require visitors to wear a badge; 33% do not require ID badges of any kind. 58% have added a sign-in desk to screen visitors.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT & REDUCE LOSSES

1. Establish a WPV Prevention Policy.
2. Establish & maintain security policies.
3. Examine & improve hiring practices.
4. Implement prescreening techniques.
 - Utilize background checks.
5. Encourage employees to report threats or violent behavior.



RECOMMENDATIONS, cont'd

6. Establish termination policies.
7. Provide post-termination counseling.
8. Train all employees in the warning signs of aggressive or violent behavior.
9. Train management in threat assessment & de-escalation techniques.



RECOMMENDATIONS, cont'd

10. Conduct a formal WPV risk assessment.*
11. Increase security as needed.
12. Set up a contingency plan.
13. Appoint a media spokesperson.
14. Review insurance policies.
15. Identify defensive strategies.



ASSESSMENT OF WORKPLACE HAZARDS

- Examine the “trust” factor
- Review compliance with policies
- Identify those “at risk”
- Review and DRILL the crisis response
- Use recent headlines as case studies
- Verify the availability of outside support processes such as the EAP, Intervention Teams, Grief Counselors, and Legal Services



WPV MEDIA COROLLARY

*The WPV event
will occur on an otherwise
SLOW NEWS DAY
and at the most opportune time
to allow multiple media presence
and a national audience.*



CONCLUSION

- Probability of WPV may be low, high, or somewhere in the middle.
- Addressing WPV problem is the right thing to do.
- It is up to risk managers to assure that our organizations are well equipped to manage WPV events and the risks they present.



QUESTIONS?

- RIMS Website:

- www.rims.org/govt/work.shtml
 - Survey Questions/Results
 - Bibliography & Resources
 - Other Websites

***THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST AND
PARTICIPATION!***