



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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## Safety Tips: Preventing Workplace Violence

Every year some two million Americans are the victims of workplace violence. Officials at the Department of Justice have found violence to be a leading cause of fatal injuries at work with about 1,000 fatal injuries each year.

### Violence against employees occurs in a variety of situations including:

Robberies and other crimes, actions by frustrated clients, employees or former employees, domestic incidents that spill over into the workplace. The most violent of workplace violence incidents involves bomb threats. These occur with an employee or a group of employees or a company being the target of the threat against an employee or the manager for an incident.

### Early Warning Signs of Possible Workplace Incidents-

- Intimidating/Bullying
- Discourteous/disrespectful
- Uncooperative; and/or
- Verbally abusive

**An early response to a potential workplace incident is an early warning sign that one should observe the behavior in question.**

### Roles and Responsibilities-

Employees can help make their workplaces a safe haven for work if they will endeavor to treat all the employees as they would like to be treated, practicing the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

### **Employees, including managers and supervisors responsible for:**

- Their own behavior by getting along and working with fellow employees, supervisors and clients.
- Being familiar with the workplace policies regarding workplace violence.
- Promptly reporting potential acts of alleged workplace violence to upper management
- Informing management when there are suspicions of workplace violence, unusual potential domestic altercations.
- Being familiar with university policy on handling workplace violence.

### **Managers and supervisors additionally should be responsible for:**

- Informing employees on the workplace violence policy and procedures.
- Taking all reported rumors and altercations seriously and investigating the validity of the reports.
- Being cognizant of situations that can carry the potential of an incident or altercation and take steps to mitigate them before they create an actual incident.
- Providing counseling to employees that have personality problems or conflicts with other employees.
- Provide counseling with employees that are experiencing domestic problems or workplace problems with another employee.

### Preventing Workplace Violence-

One of the major components of an effective workplace violence program is the strategy used regarding prevention. The program should contain measures that deal with threats, intimidation and potential violent behavior.

Once a policy has been written and established as "gospel," the pertinent levels of management and all employees should set down and have a session to discuss all the details and ramifications of the program. It might be a good idea to give the total employment a copy of the policy for record and, after having read the policy, have all of the employees to sign off on a record sheet to that effect.

According to the Department of Labor (DOL) the ideal prevention strategy is to maintain a friendly working environment that minimizes negative feelings such as resentment, isolation and hostility among the employees.

### Tips to Maintaining a Professional, Friendly and Healthy Working Environment-

Following are some tips that will help to maintain a great working environment, not only for minimizing workplace violence, but in all the aspects of employee relations:

- Promote sincere and open communication with employees and management.
- Offer opportunities for professional development and inside managerial development.
- Foster a family-friendly type atmosphere.
- Maintain a vehicle for employees to voice concerns, complaints, and the opportunity to express ideas that may improve methods of work at the station.
- Promote "quality of life" issues with the facilities and with job satisfaction.
- Maintain an impartial and consistent discipline for employees who exhibit improper conduct and poor work performance.

If we follow the established policy, or if we don't have one in place, prepare and install one - we can, using the above tips, recognize some of the traits that may result in an incident and how to mitigate them before they evolve into an incident, possibly hurting someone. All of us employees should learn to recognize, avoid and counsel with a troubled employee that very well could save their job or save the health of another employee.

Our MAFES division has been very fortunate over the previous years that I have been here in that we have had minimum problems that would fall in the class of workplace violence. Every station, on campus and off, has supervisors that have a great rapport with their employees to discuss problems at work or at home and to maintain their "quality of work life."

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. /Loss Control Mgr.  
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Excerpts: [www.dol.gov/osam/hrc/policies/dol-workplace-violence](http://www.dol.gov/osam/hrc/policies/dol-workplace-violence)  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

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**WORKING TOGETHER  
GETS THE JOB DONE SAFELY!!**

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**BE SAFETY SMART RIGHT FROM  
THE START**