

Just the Facts...

Medical Safety and Security Workplace Violence Management Commitment & Worker Involvement

Management Commitment

Commanders have a legal duty and a moral obligation to prevent loss of life and injuries resulting from violence in their organizations. For that reason, Commanders should implement a written program addressing the potential for and sources of work place violence. The program should be flexible and suitable for the Military Treatment Facility's (MTF's) unique goals, objectives, and needs. Nonetheless, all Violence Prevention Programs should include the following topics:

- ◆ designation of a team of individuals to implement the program
- ◆ work site analysis
- ◆ hazard prevention and control
- ◆ safety and health training
- ◆ incident reporting, investigation, follow-up, and evaluation
- ◆ record keeping

The Violence Prevention Program should be distributed, enforced, evaluated for effectiveness periodically (e.g., annually) and updated as needed. A sample Violence Prevention Program is available in the Long Island Coalition for Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention's document "Work Place Violence Awareness & Prevention." USACHPPM Fact Sheet Number 59-019-0402, Work Site Analysis, contains information that may be tailored for conducting periodic effectiveness evaluations.

Violence Prevention Policy Statement

One of the ways Commanders can demonstrate their commitment for the Violence Prevention Program is to publish a written policy statement. The Commander's Violence Prevention Policy should address:

- ◆ zero tolerance for work place violence
- ◆ equal commitment and concern for worker safety and health and patient safety
- ◆ responsibilities for various aspects of the violence prevention program
- ◆ allocation of authority and resources
- ◆ accountability for supervisors and workers
- ◆ need for worker participation
- ◆ consistent and fair treatment of all workers, including managers and supervisors
- ◆ assistance programs for victims of work place violence

All managers, supervisors, and workers should know, understand, and adhere to the Commander's Violence Prevention Policy. A sample policy statement is provided on the back of this page.

Program Evaluation

Commanders should evaluate their Violence Prevention Program after each violent incident and review/approve corrective action(s) to prevent recurrence. In addition, Commanders should review periodic safety committee minutes/security reports and periodic effectiveness evaluations. Finally, Commanders should ensure that the Violence Prevention Program evaluation results are shared with all workers and that the safety committee, worker unions, and other worker groups are included in the program improvement process.

Worker Involvement

Effective Violence Prevention Programs require worker participation and support. Therefore, Commanders should encourage all workers to:

- ◆ participate in the work site assessment
- ◆ identify and report existing or potential work place violence hazards to their supervisors
- ◆ develop/suggest ways to correct workplace violence hazards
- ◆ report all threats, intimidation, or other disruptive behavior
- ◆ participate in organization's violence prevention training program

Sample Work Place Violence Policy Statement

Memorandum for:

From:

Subject: Workplace Violence

1. It is my policy to promote a safe environment for everyone. I am committed to working with each of you to maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. While this kind of conduct is not pervasive at [insert name], no workplace is immune. Disruptive behavior at one time or another can affect every workplace.

2. Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior at [insert name] will not be tolerated; that is, all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that will communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or referral for counseling.

3. I need your cooperation to implement this policy effectively and maintain a safe working environment. Do not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior. If you observe or experience such behavior by anyone on these premises, whether the person is a worker, patient, or visitor, report it immediately to your supervisor. Supervisors who receive such reports should seek advice from [insert name at xxx-xxxx] regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action. **PLEASE NOTE: Threats or assaults that require immediate attention by security or police should be reported first to the security office at xxx-xxxx or to police at 911.**

4. I will support all efforts made by supervisors and agency specialists in dealing with violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other disruptive behavior in our workplace and will monitor whether this policy is being implemented effectively. If you have any questions about this policy statement, please contact [insert name at xxx-xxxx].

References:

- ◆ Felton, Jean Spencer, MD. "Violence Prevention at the Health Care Site." Occupational Medicine: State of the Art Reviews. Vol. 12, No. 4 (1997): 701-715.
- ◆ Long Island Coalition for Workplace Violence Awareness & Prevention. "Workplace Violence Awareness & Prevention." Online Posting. U.S. Department of Labor. 5 January 1999 http://www.osha-slc.gov/workplace_violence/wrkplaceViolence.coalition.html. Available.
- ◆ Roll, Fred G., "Violence in Healthcare," American Society of Healthcare Engineering, July 1997, pages 185-234.
- ◆ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Current Intelligence Bulletin 57, Violence in the Workplace, Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies. Washington D.C. NIOSH, June 1996.
- ◆ U.S. Department of Labor. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers, OSHA 3148-1996. Washington D.C. OSHA, March 1996.
- ◆ U.S. Office of Personnel Management. "Dealing with Workplace Violence: A Guide for Agency Planners." Online posting. United States Office of Personnel Management. 5 January 1999 <http://www.opm.gov/workplac>. Available.
- ◆ U.S. Medical Command. Memorandum Subject: Violence in the Workplace. Headquarters U.S. Army Medical Command, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. 16 October 2000.