FOREWORD

Preventing workplace violence is a growing concern in the United States. Public interest and media attention have focused primarily on dramatic but very rare types of violence such as shootings by disgruntled employees in office buildings. Planners of workplace violence programs face the dual challenge of reducing employees' anxiety about very rare risk factors while focusing their attention on more likely sources of danger. Undue anxiety about the "office gunman" can stand in the way of identifying more significant, but less dramatic, risk factors such as poorly lighted parking lots or gaps in employee training programs. This anxiety can also make it more difficult to cope with one of the most common workplace violence problems — the employee whose language or behavior frightens coworkers.

Federal employees in organizations such as the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have played a leading role in helping employers recognize and respond appropriately to the actual risks of workplace violence faced by their employees. At the same time, the risk of violence against Federal employees themselves has received increased attention, particularly in response to the tragic loss of life in the terrorist bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995. For many Federal workers, the anti-government sentiment they had handled on the job for years suddenly acquired a new and terrifying context.

Even before the Oklahoma City tragedy, Federal managers and specialists, like their private sector counterparts, were becoming aware of the dangers of workplace violence and concerned about developing preventive programs for their employees. This was a challenging endeavor. When they turned to the private sector for expert guidance, they often found advice that was not necessarily compatible with Federal laws and regulations, or that failed to cover issues faced by Federal employees. However, in attempting to develop their own programs, agencies often discovered that they lacked the expertise necessary for a truly comprehensive approach. Depending on its mission, an agency might be rich in law enforcement personnel but without the needed resources in mental health or other disciplines whose input was essential.

In the spirit of reinventing government, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management organized the Interagency Working Group on Violence in the Workplace. The purpose was to bring together a multi-disciplinary group of experienced professionals from throughout the Federal Government in order to develop comprehensive approaches to analyzing and responding to threats or incidents of violence in the Federal workplace. This document is a product of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the Interagency Working Group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This handbook reflects the contributions of experts from many professions and many Federal agencies. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) wishes to thank all those who contributed to the development of the handbook. We especially appreciate the assistance given by the Department of Justice and the General Services Administration's Federal Protective Service on issues concerning law enforcement and security. Special thanks also go to the individuals listed below whose willingness to share their expertise, experience, and talents enabled OPM to develop guidance that provides answers to some of the most difficult questions about handling potentially violent situations.

Melvin Basye, Federal Protective Service
Gary Beard, Federal Protective Service
Bernard Beidel, U.S. House of Representatives
Thomas Bresson, Smithsonian Institution
Donna Byler, Department of Army
Cathleen Civiello, Ph.D., Department of Defense
Scott Cooper, Esq., Department of Justice
Ben Elliott, Department of Justice
Robert L. Eufemia, Ed.D., Government Printing Office
Yvonne Fair, Department of Navy
Robert A. Fein, Ph.D., Consultant
Cynthia Field, Consultant
Michael Gelles, Psy.D., Naval Criminal Investigative Service
Lauretta Grier, Department of Housing and Urban Development
Lana Katz, American Federation of Government Employees, retired
Mark Maggio, Federal Judicial Center
Peter McCauley, Internal Revenue Service, retired
Michael McClure, Department of Army
Randi Mendelsohn, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Lloyd Reese, Department of Veterans Affairs, retired
Milagro Rodriguez, American Federation of Government Employees
Eugene Rugala, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Lisa Teems, Department of Health and Human Services
Bryan Vossekuil, U.S. Secret Service
Janice Walker, Department of Navy
Patricia Willman, Department of Interior
John D. Zielinski, National Labor Relations Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Handbook 1
Overview 1
The Importance of Planning 2

PART I: THE BASIC STEPS OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

SECTION 1 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Overview 7
Forming a Planning Group 7
Working with Your Union 8
Steps in the Planning Process 8

SECTION 2 DEVELOPMENT OF WRITTEN POLICY STATEMENT

Advantages of Written Policies 13
Policy Statement Contents 13
Recommended Approaches 14

SECTION 3 PREVENTION

Overview 17
Warning Signs of Violence 17
Training 18
Pre-Employment Screening 22
Security Measures 22
Using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a Preventive Strategy 23

PART II: CASE STUDIES

Introduction 29
Basic Concepts 29
How to Use the Case Studies 30
Case Study 1 - A Shooting. 32
Case Study 2 - Viciously Beating and Wounding a Coworker 35
Case Study 3 - A Suicide Attempt 38
Case Study 4 - Stalking 40
Case Study 5 - A Domestic Violence Situation 43
Case Study 6 - A Threat 46
Case Study 7 - Veiled Threats 49
Case Study 8 - A Threat 54

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART II: CASE STUDIES (continued)

Case Study 9 - A Threat Made During an EAP Counseling Session 56
Case Study 10 - Threats Made By an Ex-Employee 58
Case Study 11 - Threats From Non-Employees 61
Case Study 12 - Intimidation 63
Case Study 13 - Intimidation 65
Case Study 14 - Frightening Behavior 68
Case Study 15 - Frightening Behavior 70
Case Study 16 - Disruptive Behavior 73

PART III: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SECTION 1 FACT FINDING/INVESTIGATING

Introduction 79
Types of Investigations 80
Administrative Investigations 80
Preparation and Procedures in Administrative Investigations 82
Interview Techniques 86
Other Considerations for the Agency Planning Group 89

SECTION 2 THREAT ASSESSMENT

Introduction 91
Threat Assessment Resources 92
Excerpts from *Threat Assessment: An Approach to Prevent Targeted Violence* 93

SECTION 3 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Overview 105
Administrative Actions to Keep an Employee Away from the Worksite 106
Disciplinary Actions 107
Disabilities As a Defense Against Alleged Misconduct 108
Ordering and Offering Psychiatric Examinations 109
Disability Retirement 110
Appeals of a Disciplinary Action 111

SECTION 4 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction 113
Overview of the Employee Assistance Program 113

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 4 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

The Employee Assistance Program's Role in Dealing with Workplace Violence 114
Other EAP Considerations for the Agency Planning Group 118

SECTION 5 WORKPLACE SECURITY

Introduction 121
Security Planning 121
Law Enforcement and Security Assistance 122
Physical Security Measures 124
Physical Security in GSA Owned or Leased Buildings 124
Physical Security Survey 126
Computer Security 127
Examples of Handouts 128

SECTION 6 ORGANIZATIONAL RECOVERY AFTER AN INCIDENT

Introduction 133
Management Steps to Help an Organization Recover 133
The Critical Incident Stress Management Process . . . 135
Critical Incident Stress Debriefing 136
Critical Incident Stress Defusing 140

PART IV: RESOURCES

Federal Government Agencies 145
Non-Government Organizations 147
Computer Systems 149