



# Violence at Work

If you're like most workers, you're concerned about violence on the job. In a recent survey, 52 percent of employees said a threat or actual incident of workplace violence had occurred at their companies. Here's what you can do to help protect yourself from violence at work.

## Recognize and Report Danger

Although it's not always possible to predict who will become violent, there's an increased likelihood of violence in any employee who:

- makes threats, talks about getting even, intimidates coworkers.
- talks about how other employees are out to get him or her.
- may be using alcohol or other drugs regularly.
- gets angry easily.
- talks about getting or using a weapon or brings a weapon to work.

If you feel a coworker is potentially violent, share your concerns with your supervisor.

Customers can also be dangerous. To cope with difficult customers, ask for training that will help you deal with the public. For your own protection, when a customer talks abusively, threatens you or coworkers or becomes angry, avoid arguing or raising your voice. Remain calm and courteous; then report the customer to your supervisor as soon as you can.

## Be Prepared for Safety

Make sure you're ready in case a violent situation arises at work. Have the emergency phone number for police or security posted near every phone. Know how to use alarm systems in your work area. Develop a "danger plan" with your coworkers, including a danger signal.

## When Threatened or Attacked

If you're physically threatened by a coworker, remain calm and cooperate with the worker's demands as much as possible. Try to let other workers know there's a problem without further endangering yourself. If you're attacked and the attacker has no weapon, run away and scream to get attention.

If violence occurs on the job, call security or the police immediately. Don't clean up or change anything at the scene where the violence occurred. Describe the act and the attackers carefully and accurately.

## Working Alone at Night

Late night is prime time for work-related violence. To increase your safety when working alone at night:

- Always let security or someone at home know when you're working late and when you plan to leave.
- Avoid little-used or unlit stairways.
- Stand next to the control panel when riding the elevator. If you're threatened or attacked in the elevator, punch all the floor buttons. Don't get into an elevator if there's a suspicious-looking person in it.
- Park in a well-lit area near work, and if possible, ask a security guard or coworker to escort you to your car. Practice car safety: Have your car keys out, look under and in your car before getting in and lock your door as soon as you get in the car.
- If you take the bus or train, walk to the bus stop with a coworker, if possible. Sit near the driver or conductor.

No one likes to think about violence happening to them, but being prepared for the possibility is your best way of assuring that you won't be a victim of workplace violence.



*Always let security or someone at home know when you're working late and when you plan to leave.*