

# Managing Violence in the Workplace

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## Definition of Workplace (SHaW Act 2005 -12)

- means any place where persons work or are employed including a factory, but does not include a private household where persons work or are employed only in domestic service.
- This Act places a general duty of care on all employers to provide and maintain “a working environment for employees, that is safe and without risks to health”



## Definitions Workplace (SHaW Act 2005 -12)

- The Act also places a responsibility on the officers of the Ministry of Labour to inspect and make recommendation for occupational safety and health standards and to describe exposures that are safe for various periods of employment, including (but not limited to) the exposures at which no worker will suffer diminished health, functional capacity, or life expectancy as a result of his or her work experience.



## Definitions - Workplace Violence (WPV)

- Is violence or the threat of violence against workers. It can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide.
- It is one of the leading causes of job-related deaths.
- It is a growing concern for employers and employees in the Caribbean and globally.



## Scope of Workplace Violence (WPV)

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics, USA has estimated that 1.7 million workers are injured each year during workplace assaults.
- Violent workplace incidents account for 18% of all violent crime in the United States.
- Liberty Mutual, in its annual Workplace Safety Index, notes that "assaults and violent acts" cost about \$400 million annually.



# Categories of Workplace Violence

(University of Iowa Injury Protection Research Center - April 2000)

- Criminal Intent (Robber)
- Customer/Client
- Worker on Worker (Employer on Employee)
- Personal Relationship (Internal & External)



## Criminal Intent (Robber or Ex-Employee)

- The perpetrator has no legitimate relationship to the business or its employee, and is usually committing a crime accompanied by violence or the threat of violence. These crimes can include robbery, shoplifting, trespassing etc. The vast majority of workplace homicides (85%) fall into this category. II



## Customer/Client

- The perpetrator has a legitimate relationship with the business and becomes violent while being served by the business. This category includes customers, clients, patients, students, inmates, and any other group for which the business provides services.



## Worker on Worker (Employer on Employee)

- The perpetrator is an employee of the business who attacks or threatens another employee(s) in the workplace. Worker-on-worker fatalities account for approximately 7% of all workplace homicides.



## Personal Relationship (Internal & External)

- The perpetrator usually does not have a relationship with the business but has a personal relationship with the intended victim. This category includes victims of domestic violence assaulted or threatened while at work and accounts for about 5% of all workplace homicides.



## Relationships - Internal Threats

- Worker and Supervisor
- Low Trust
- Cultural Factors
- Religious Factors
- Job Fit (Poor Recruitment & Selection Practices)





- Domestic Violence

- Reporting

- Administrative Intervention

- Protection Orders



## Relationships - External Threats

- Criminal Intent (Type 1)
- Ex-Worker on Worker (Type 111)
- Terrorism



## Relationships - External Threats

- Safety and security policies in the workplaces must now embrace both the more traditional internal workplace threats and external threats such as terrorism. (Robert Mueller - FBI Director)



## What are the risk factors for Workplace Violence?

- Dealing with the public.
- Exchange of money.
- Delivery of services or goods i.e (Front Desk Clerks/Receptionist, Delivery Staff, Mini-Bus/Taxi Drivers, Nurses, Police/Security Officers etc).



## Prevention strategies to minimize risk of workplace violence

- Cash-Handling Policies.
- Cash collection booths.
- Physical separation of workers from customers.
- Good Lighting.



## Prevention strategies to minimize risk of workplace violence

- Escort Services (Cash & Staff)
- Employee Training & Re-Training
- Slogans, Signage, Publications for positive reinforcement i.e

“If you see something, say something”



## Prevention strategies to minimize risk of workplace violence

- Systems for documenting incidents (Incident Forms, Recording, Investigation, Report Preparation, Statements, Photographs, Submission of reports)
- Procedures to be taken in the event of incidents (HR Dept, Medical Care, Psychological Services, Ambulance Service, Follow up etc)



## Prevention strategies to minimize risk of workplace violence

- Open communication between employers and workers.
- Education, communication and practice of safety and security skills.
- This could lead to assessment of the level of risks for violence that could lead to timely responses that could mitigate and reduce impact those risks.



## Prevention strategies to minimize risk of workplace violence: Physical Structures

- Perimeter Fencing and gates
- Installation of high quality doors
- Access Control Systems
- CCTV Camera Surveillance & Recording Solutions



## Prevention strategies to minimize risk of workplace violence: Administrative Policies & Procedures

- Conflict Resolution
- Crisis Management Plan
- Sexual Harassment
- Handling Medical Emergencies
- Physically Challenged



## Primary Level: Access Control Policies

- Stop & Search
- Entrances/Exits
- Access Control
- Staff
- Visitors
- Contractors
- Property Movement
- Firearms
- Knives etc



## Secondary Level: Access Control Policies





## The Decision Makers: Micro /Organizational Level.

- Board of Management
- Departmental Managers
- Front line Supervisors/Team Leaders



## Management of violence: The First Responders

- Police & Private Security: Investigate and counsel businesses on how to avoid incidents.
- Safety Officers i.e (employers, employees): Avoidance of violence at all costs.



## The Decision Makers: Macro/National Level

- Legislators, and policymakers: Can provide the legal framework to justify action by Law Enforcement Agencies.
- Criminal Justice Agencies (Police/Courts/Probation Service/Prisons): Can provide timely and appropriate responses. (Rehabilitative or Punitive).
- Medical, Mental Health, and Social Service Agencies: Medical and emotional support.



## Why take action?

- Violence is a substantial contributor to occupational injury and death.
- Homicide has become the second leading cause of death in the workplace.
- Serious incidents of violence can halt work for hours or even several days. This could lead to reduced productivity, morale profits and service levels.



# Going Forward: The need for collaboration

- Government/Private Sector Agencies
- Worker's Unions
- Victim Support Services
- Mental Health Services
- Crisis Management Specialist



# Why collaborate ?

- Managing Violence in the Workplace can be achieved only through collaboration.
- The challenges of workplace violence are complex and demands a multidisciplinary approach.



# QUESTIONS

