11 - Workplace Violence: Safety Training

EH&S – MGA

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:
A. Be aware of the potential sources of workplace violence.
B. Know techniques to reduce the possibility of violent incidents.

OSHA Regulations: General Duty Clause Sec. 5(a)

1. Most Workplace Violence Involves Robbery or Work With Unstable People
   A. Jobs that are most likely to have violent incidents include:
      1. Security and corrections work (e.g., armored car drivers, prison guards)
      2. Handling cash (e.g., banks, retail stores, taxi drivers)
      3. Working alone and/or late at night (e.g., gas stations or hotels)
      4. Emotional situations (e.g., hospital emergency room)

2. Some Workplace Violence Occurs When People ‘Snap’ Under Extreme Personal or Job-Related Pressure
   A. Work situations that may push the emotionally unstable to violence include:
      1. Losing a job or fear of losing a job
      2. Receiving a warning or reprimand
      3. Not receiving an expected raise or promotion
      4. Believing others are acting unfairly or showing hostility
      5. Holding a grudge against a supervisor or co-worker
   B. Personal situations that may lead to violence at work include:
      1. Emotional or mental illness that causes people to blame work for their problems
      2. Substance abuse, especially with drugs that cause violent behavior
      3. Jealousy, revenge, and similar reactions to rejection by a spouse or partner
      4. Inability to cope with overwhelming personal, financial, and/or health problems

3. Cooperate With Security Measures Designed to Prevent Violence
   A. Keep all security doors closed and locked.
   B. Wear an identification badge at all times.
   C. Don’t lend your pass card, ID, or access code numbers to others.
   D. Don’t bring weapons, drugs, or alcohol to work.
   E. Require visitors (even relatives or ex-employees) to sign in and wear name tags.
   F. Meet visitors in the reception area and escort them into and out of the building.
   G. Report any burned-out or inadequate lighting.
   H. Keep security and police phone numbers close at hand.
   I. Report any threats or frightening behavior.
   J. Keep purses and valuables locked up out of sight.
   K. Arrange a “danger signal” to use with co-workers.
   L. Alert security to strangers without identification in the work area.
   M. Inform security if you’re being stalked, harassed, or fear being attacked at work.
4. Take Threats and Disturbing Behavior Seriously
   A. Co-worker or customer violence is rare. But the following behaviors may be danger signals, especially if they develop suddenly. A person may not become violent, but may need professional help if he or she:
      1. Threatens violence or talks about “getting even”
      2. Tries repeatedly to intimidate others
      3. Claims that others are out to “get” him or her
      4. Talks a lot about weapons
      5. Holds grudges and blames others for problems
      6. Displays frequent unreasonable anger
      7. Combines any of the above with substance abuse

5. Try to Reduce the Tension in Angry Situations
   A. If you’re attacked:
      1. Try to run away and yell to alert others to the attack.
      2. Hand over money, jewelry, etc., to a robber.
   B. Don’t threaten or yell at a person who threatens or gets unreasonably angry.
      1. Stay calm, polite, and respectful.
   C. Alert your supervisor or security to situations that are getting out of hand.

6. Cooperate With Investigations of Violent Behavior
   A. Don’t move or remove anything from an investigation scene without permission.
   B. Answer all questions from security personnel or police.

Summation: Help Prevent Violence in Your Workplace

Take advantage of security equipment and procedures and avoid actions that could provoke or lead to violence.