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Reporting The Bad With The Good

Failing to report violence and security threats in your workplace doesn't do anyone much good. Unless your company and your co-workers know about potential problems, they can't do anything to make your job safer. Your company likely has a zero tolerance policy on violence. This means no verbal or non-verbal threats or any other form of intimidation or assault. So why would you hesitate to report an incident or potential violence?

See if any of these worries are holding you back:

- You don't want to get someone else in trouble
- You do not trust your own judgment. What If you are wrong?
- You are afraid of being blamed for the incident.
- You are afraid of being harassed for causing trouble.
- You think you won't be taken seriously.
- You believe violent encounters with clients, customers, or co-workers are just a normal part of your job.

Your safety training stresses the importance of reporting all accidents, injuries, close calls and possible hazards. It's just as important to report any security problems, incidents or threats of violence. You can prevent something worse from happening in the future and can provide help to a victim by reporting what you observe.

You are encouraged to report any experience of workplace violence promptly, without fear of reprisal. You are also encouraged to suggest ways of reducing and eliminating risks. Better lighting, enclosed booths for dealing with the public and a worker buddy system are among measures that can improve security at various kinds of workplaces.

Making proper use of security equipment is also part of your job. Respect security procedures. Don't feel like it can't happen here. It can happen! Don't attempt to bypass safeguards such as guard stations, identification badges, surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and security card access systems. Don't leave doors propped open or permit unauthorized persons to enter a door behind you. Make use of the security tools provided, such as curved mirrors to monitor hallways and concealed areas. If you are issued a two-way radio, keep it with you and make sure it works.

Employees must remember that since September 11, 2001 the world has changed. Each employee must do his or her part to enhance security in the workplace. Know what to do in an emergency. Do you know how to summon help? Is there a safe room or an employee only exit? Do you know the security procedures at your workplace?

Get the training you need to deal safely with difficult people. Learn how to defuse potentially violent situations that are likely to occur in your workplace.

In any workplace, it's a good idea to know the danger signs of a potentially violent co-worker. This person might:

- Use intimidation
- Display a violent outburst, seemingly out of character.
- Talk about weapons
- Show paranoia
- Have a history of violence
- Be a loner without a social life.

Safety Tip: Being concerned about security on the job is not the sign of a coward. Alert, responsible employees who report incidents and observations can often avert workplace violence and possibly prevent a tragedy.

