



Preventing Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is a threat to the health and safety of employees, visitors and clients. It affects all industries, regardless of location or size, and can significantly affect a business' finances and reputation.

Read on for information on the impact of workplace violence and strategies to prevent its occurrences and minimize liability.

Workplace Violence's Impact

Workplace violence has significant effects. According to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 32% of employees develop post-traumatic stress disorder or other traumatic disorders following an incident of workplace violence.

Additionally, up to 20% of employees develop depressive symptoms, and a majority of employees may experience sadness, fear, disgust and anger. They may also be unable to maintain a safe and secure feeling at work.

For employers, workplace violence incidents can result in lost productivity, higher insurance costs, reputational damage, legal liability, operational downtime and regulatory penalties. OSHA found that 18,000 weekly workplace assaults resulted in 1,751,000 lost workdays annually. Employers' direct costs of workplace violence range from \$3 billion to \$5 billion, while indirect costs range between \$6.4 billion and \$36 billion. Also, the Society for Human Resource Management reports that workplace violence can lead to a decrease in productivity by up to 50% and lower employee turnover by 20%-40%.

Tips to Prevent and Reduce Workplace Violence and Minimize Liability

To prevent and reduce workplace violence while mitigating liabilities, businesses should implement a comprehensive violence prevention program. Aspects of the program should include the following:

- **Rigorous applicant screening**—Thoroughly screening job candidates, ensuring compliance with all relevant employment laws
- **Comprehensive training**—Regular training on recognizing, avoiding and de-escalating potentially violent situations

- **Continuous education**—Ongoing training on violence prevention policies and safety protocols
- **Hazard assessments**—Regularly scheduled assessments to identify potential hazards
- **Incident reporting and recordkeeping procedures**—Clear procedures for reporting incidents and maintaining records
- **Incident investigation**—A requirement to investigate all reported incidents
- **Zero-tolerance policy**—An unequivocal policy against violence, bullying and harassment
- **Weapons policy**—A workplace policy prohibiting weapons to the extent allowed by law
- **Emergency response**—Procedures for responding to emergencies (e.g., active shooter threats), providing prompt medical treatment and counseling services, and reporting incidents to local authorities
- **Post-incident support**—Implementing best practices for supporting staff after an incident

Employers should recognize violence warning signs (e.g., alcohol or drug misuse, behavior changes, absenteeism, depression and mood swings) and take appropriate corrective actions. Technology can also play an essential role in preventing, reducing, mitigating and reacting to workplace violence. There are numerous tools available (e.g., weapons detection systems, panic buttons and alarm systems, security cameras, access control and emergency lockdown systems, audio/video analytics, virtual reality training, digital floor planning, and artificial intelligence to identify suspicious behavior and perform other case management functions) that can be utilized for this purpose.

Employers have a legal and ethical obligation to prevent workplace violence. For more information and risk management guidance, contact us today.



Protecting Buildings and Occupants From Vehicle Crashes

Vehicle crashes into buildings can lead to expensive repairs and business interruptions. In a worst-case scenario, such accidents can cause injuries or fatalities. It is essential for business owners to take proactive measures to protect their property and building occupants from these incidents. Read on for more information on assessing this risk and tips on mitigating it.

Assessing the Risk

Business owners should take the critical first step of assessing the risk that vehicle crashes pose to their buildings. This process involves a comprehensive evaluation of several variables. Key factors to consider include the following:

- **Building design**—Identify potential vulnerabilities and areas where vehicles could pose a threat by examining the building's design and layout. Look for weak and vulnerable building materials and check for inadequate visibility.
- **Proximity to roads**—Consider the building's proximity to roads, streets and highways. Evaluate the distance between the building and the roads, assess the nearby traffic volume and research historical accident data for the area.
- **Proximity to parking lots**—Buildings near parking lots or garages where vehicles frequently move in and out are at heightened risk as drivers may misjudge distances or make mistakes when parking.
- **Traffic patterns**—Consider the traffic patterns near the property and note intersections with sharp curves or turns. Look for nearby school zones or pedestrian areas as well. These factors tend to lead to a higher incidence of accidents.
- **Building use**—The type of business or activity conducted in and around the building can impact its associated risks.

Implementing Protective Measures

To safeguard a building against vehicle crashes, various options are available. Each choice comes with its own set of benefits, and its suitability depends on specific needs and preferences. Installed protective measures include bollards, concrete barriers, decorative planters, signage, additional lighting and heavy-duty fencing. Businesses should also analyze the property's parking as spaces directly in front of the building present a substantial risk, and owners can also consider implementing multiple protective measures for layered protection. Additionally, maintaining and testing protective barriers is essential to help identify and address any issues. Key considerations include scheduling and conducting regular inspections, testing procedures to verify their functionality and promptly repairing any damage or issues.

Educate and Train Building Occupants

Building protection is the responsibility of several parties, including the business owner and its occupants. All individuals should be educated and trained on safety measures and emergency procedures. Consider the following steps:

- **Create an evacuation plan** with exit routes and assembly points in the event of a vehicle-building crash.
- **Hold safety training sessions** to educate employees on risks and the importance of following safety protocols.
- **Conduct safety drills** with employees to ensure they know how to respond effectively.
- **Provide occupants with emergency contact information**, including local emergency services and building management.

Protecting buildings and occupants from vehicle crashes is a crucial aspect of property management. Contact us for more information and risk management guidance.



According to the Storefront Safety Council, storefront crashes occur more than **100 times a day**. Furthermore, **46%** of all storefront crashes result in an injury and **8%** are fatal.