

Occupational Health & Safety

August 1994

**Steel Erection Group
Commences Rulemaking**

**Revised PPE & Hazcom Regs
ADA's View Of Back Injuries**



Point Blank

Tough questions about security



Inside: 1994/95
Purchasing Sourcebook

Measures of Security



CR. Ralphe/FPQ International

Legislation aimed at controlling workplace violence savored limited success earlier this summer. President Clinton signed into law the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which intends to protect health care workers and patients in abortion clinics from violent demonstrations. However, Gov. Pete Wilson may not be as receptive of a more encompassing bill in California, where the state assembly narrowly passed a requirement for a workplace violence standard.

Wilson's tentativeness centers on the state Department of Industrial Relations' recommendation that employers address workplace violence through injury and illness prevention plans. Nevertheless, the assembly's AB 3230 passed by a 41-36 margin and would require the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board to adopt a final workplace violence standard by Dec. 31, 1996.

California, of course, is still feeling the aftermath of the July 1, 1993, slaughter of eight employees and clients at a San Francisco law firm. Four lawsuits were filed in mid-May against weapons manufacturers by surviving spouses plus one of the six wounded. The plaintiffs say that two assault pistols and detachable ammunition magazines that were used in the attack were designed not for "sporting purposes," but to "disable or kill large numbers of people very rapidly."

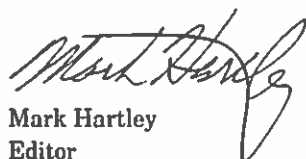
Experts acknowledge that it is not much of a stretch from these product liability suits to envision liability of employers in regards to workplace violence. Many employers have coped with the threat of workplace violence by implementing screening programs that help supervisors identify problematic employees.

Usually, psychological assistance is offered, but stern disciplinary measures (including job termination) follow if the employee refuses or does not cooperate fully. The tension created by such corporate practices has not escaped the attention of labor arbitrators. These experts openly debate whether disciplinary action is allowable if an employee refuses to participate in any psychological assessment program.

A book recently published by the former chief psychologist for the San Diego Police Department, Dr. Michael Mantell, advocates screening techniques that will help avoid employer liability. His book, *Ticking Bombs: Defusing Violence in the Workplace*, offers a seven-step "violence prevention model."

In this issue of *Occupational Health & Safety*, Craig Philson also examines measures (on page 28) to prevent workplace violence — but from a safety professional's perspective. By working with other corporate officials, Philson states that safety personnel can assist in reducing tension caused by downsizing, job stress, local crime, business travel and terrorist threats.

OSHA is sympathetic to public outcry for reassurance that work areas are secure. Ellen Roznowski, who is the executive assistant to OSHA Administrator Joe Dear, said at the annual American Industrial Hygiene Conference in May that the pattern of workplace violence is no longer "random" but "predictable." Although she said then that state governments would likely regulate workplace violence before OSHA, Roznowski asserted safety personnel should consider security measures as part of a safety and health plan.


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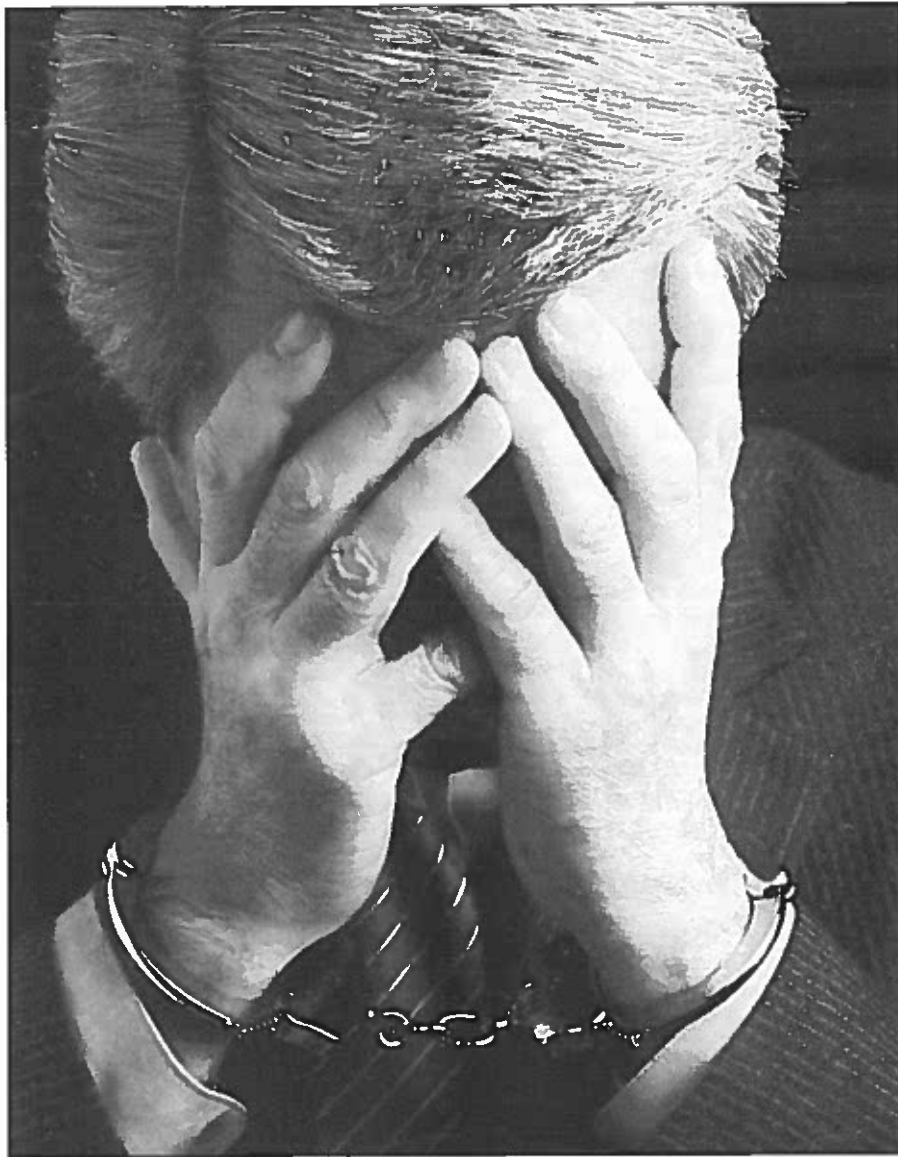
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A Safe Haven From Violence Emerges As Another Duty

By Craig S. Philson



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Workplace violence leaves its mark at companies going through corporate downsizing or worker stress for having to do 'more with less.' A neighborhood's escalating crime rate and the justice system's 'revolving door' also contributes to violent acts in workplaces. So how do safety professionals join the fight against crime? By offering skills honed by years of hazard analysis to the arena of corporate security, the safety professional can help re-establish the workplace as a safe haven from violence.

A

s technology, social values, business management styles and legal climates change in the 1990s, so do the areas of loss potential in the workplace. The combination of these changes has created a more stressful and dangerous work environment where safety professionals must consider violent crime a potential loss source.

Today's headlines, news reports and political speeches all confirm that in some respects we are a violent society out of control. President Clinton's State of the Union Address stressed that the reduction of violent crime is a priority. Statistics in our nation's capital underscored the president's concern. In 1991, the District of Columbia had a rate of 80.6 murders per 100,000 population. The next highest murder rate was Louisiana at 16.9.

One safety-engineering function is analyzing accident histories to assess trends. Consequently, a plan of action is developed to reduce or eliminate similar past incidents. Equally important is the analysis of loss potentials to ensure measures are taken to prevent possible injury or loss. The knowledge of potential exposures is generated by the collection of historically common exposures in similar industries. Safety engineers must now analyze crime histories and statistics to capture trends which could lead to potential loss sources for their employees.

Violent crime per capita has grown 371 percent since 1960. In Texas, homicide is the No. 1 cause of workplace fatalities, surpassing motor vehicles. Nationally, only one percentage point separates homicide from being the No. 1 workplace fatality cause. Motor vehicles are number one. In light of these statistics, safety professionals must consider workplace violence when evaluating loss potentials.

First, we will review contributing causes to workplace violence and then discuss preventive measures.

DOWNSIZING. A sluggish economy, coupled with strategies to overcome the "logjam" of businesses trying to stay competitive in a global economy, has significantly impacted workplace violence. "Downsizing" is the politically correct term for "layoff" in today's business structure. The downsizing of major industries has left many middle-aged employees with limited opportunities due to nationwide employee reductions.

The laid-off employees today are, on average, older than in the past and are less likely to rebound as a younger worker. The frustration of their situation can potentially escalate to a violent level. Sometimes the ex-employee goes months without taking revenge while other times it is instantaneous. Two San Diego company executives were shot by a man several months after he was laid off.

Workers' reactions to stressful situations vary. Although statistics are accurately kept concerning deaths in the workplace, it is not clear how many injuries occur from physical assaults or what vandalism due to disgruntled employees costs business.

STRESS. As companies reduce work forces and rely on technology to offset this, stress becomes a factor. People are being asked to do "more with less." Managers must realize that change creates stress, and the transition is not often smooth.

A classic example of job stress is the U.S. Postal Service. Thirty-four people were killed in 12 attacks since 1983. In 1993, attacks occurred in two different areas of the United States only one day apart. On February 5, 1993, a Postal Service mechanic, passed over for a position, killed a fellow worker in Dearborn, Mich. The next day in Dana Point, Calif., an ex-mail carrier, fired for harassing a female employee, killed two Postal Service workers.

Safety professionals must be aware of the mental strain placed on certain employees' functions. Pressure, and an employee's feeling of helplessness in a task, can lead to violent acts.

CRIME RATE. Although the overall crime rate actually declined in the first six months of 1993, the violent crime rate has steadily increased. Automobile deaths have always been a safety concern. Vehicle accidents have been the primary cause of death by injury for decades. However, a recent report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services shows that seven states and the District of Columbia have firearm deaths replacing vehicle-related deaths as the leading cause of death by injury. The report also stated that firearm deaths should surpass automobile deaths nationally in the next few years.

Since the early 1960s, much research and community effort has been directed toward reducing vehicle deaths. Seat belts, air bags and safety-driven manufacturing, combined with a massive educational blitz, has led to a 21 percent decline in automobile deaths since 1968. At the same time, gun-related deaths rose 60 percent.

Only 47 percent of firearm deaths are homicides. The majority are unintentional or suicides. The biggest crime rate increase is the age group under 18. Arrests for violent crime in this age group has increased 91 percent since 1970. Murder arrests from this group have increased 92 percent since 1985. What is more shocking is that this was when the teen population had no growth or was in decline.

Workplace trends mirror society. Violence in our society breeds violence in our businesses. The number of employees who kill their bosses has doubled in the past decade. Women in the workplace are more likely to be slain. Although they account for only 7 percent of the workplace fatalities, 40 percent of female workplace deaths are from murder.

These statistics coincide with the fact that more women work in the retail industry which is the main target of workplace violence. Convenience stores, gas stations and supermarkets are now open 24 hours in most communities. As most violent crime happens in the evening and early morning hours, it is logical that these businesses would be targets of violence for criminals seeking quick cash.

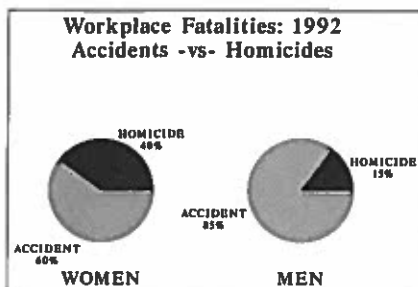
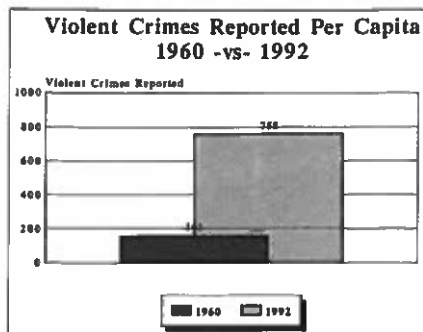
The convenience store industry has made great strides in making itself less of a target. Drastic changes have occurred in money-handling procedures and in employee training for reaction to a robbery. The National Association of Convenience Stores states that resistance to robbery accounted for 80 percent of deaths during the crime.

'THE REVOLVING DOOR.' The criminal justice system has long been criticized for its parole, early release, probation and light sentencing of violent offenders. The Polly Klaas abduction/murder case in California has once again put a spotlight on the problem of repeat offenders and the justice system.

About 60 percent of inmates have been incarcerated before, with 44 percent on parole or probation when re-arrested. Of those arrested for violent crimes, 17 percent have charges pending for other crimes when arrested. A violent offenders' average prison time is just over two years. Those charged with murder usually serve only one-third of their stated sentence. It takes about eight months from the time of arrest to the time of sentencing in most cases.

This "revolving door injustice" creates a more aggressive, street-wise criminal and exposes the workers that safety professionals try to protect to increasing undue harm.

BUSINESS TRAVEL. Travel is an important function even in today's "telecommunications marketplace." Business trav-



elers have increasingly become crime targets. In late 1993, violent crimes against Florida tourists were brought to the public's attention. Rental car companies, whose vehicles often "identify" the driver as a tourist, are now trying to make their vehicles less conspicuous. Rest stops and airports are areas where criminals can find "easy marks" for hold-ups and car-jackings.

Although the recent news stories have focused on tourists, travelers on business are subject to the same exposures. Safety professionals must explore the risk. These employees are often ignored because they assume much of the their safety responsibility in an environment that changes depending upon their destination.

Historically, many travel decisions have been "expense driven" items that must be reconsidered considering the exposures present. A hotel choice has been predicated on the company budget. Saving a few dollars staying in a discount motel can expose the employee to crime due to inadequate security. Parking at a remote lot at the airport can save money, but unless properly secured, the employee is more prone to be a crime victim.

The procedures on travel policy should be reviewed with management to ensure that employees' safety is not being jeopardized at the savings of a few dollars.

TERRORISM. The marketplace has broadened, and many companies now have international operations. The breaking down of trade barriers has seen

a mixing of cultures in countries once isolated from the world. As the United States enters some of these marketplaces, they can become the target of political and economic terrorism. About 1,000 corporate kidnappings occur annually worldwide.

As a result, companies have purchased Kidnap and Ransom insurance. Approximately 70 percent of U.S. industrial companies carry such insurance due to their international operations. The use of Kidnap and Ransom insurance is not widely reported, as it could increase the likelihood of an act of terrorism on those insured.

Terrorism unfortunately is not just limited to operations outside U.S. boundaries. Today's workplaces are subject to terrorist acts from international groups and from U.S.-based organizations. On February 26, 1993, the World Trade Center was bombed resulting in six workplace deaths. The use of explosives has more than doubled since 1988. Over the past five years, 7,140 acts resulted in 145 people killed and approximately 1,200 people injured. There was an average of eight bombings a day in the United States in 1992.

The bombing of abortion clinics by radical "Right to Life" groups is becoming commonplace. These incidents tend to happen while clinics are unoccupied. Shootings are also becoming a problem. In December 1991, two abortion clinic workers in Springfield, Mo., were shot by a protester, resulting in a doctor being paralyzed. In Pensacola, Fla., a protester shot and killed a doctor in March 1993.

Organized groups with a cause, whether it is abortion rights, environmental, political or cultural, will continue to target businesses and the employees of those they perceive as adversaries. Safety engineers must be kept informed of the complaints filed against their employees and the possible backlash from groups seeking publicity and vengeance through violence.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE. Safety professionals can help reduce the exposure of workplace violence. With upper management support, they can effectively work with human resource professionals, training coordinators and security personnel to reduce violence risks.

Some areas to investigate when addressing potential violent situations include:

- **Downsizing.** Companies should look at providing outplacement services to assist laid off employees locating work. Cutting employees loose without notice or assistance can intensify an already negative situation.

Some companies provide extra security during layoffs to reduce the potential of violence and vandalism. It often helps knowing the background of those being laid off. Employees with previous attitude or discipline problems must be handled properly to avoid aggressive retaliation. Working with human resource personnel and with supervisors can be the key to avoiding the trouble.

- **Stress.** Companies should provide access to employee assistance programs (EAP) that handle a variety of situations in a confidential manner. These programs have become very popular with addressing problems such as drug/alcohol abuse, stress and family trauma.

Training managers to recognize the signs of stress can be helpful. Recognition of a problem can lead to treatment before it leads to violence. Employees must feel free to discuss concerns about their work.

A lack of control over a work process adds to the stress. If the employee is trained to do a job but is having difficulty keeping up with work demands, the employee must be able to speak up if training is ineffective or if management objectives are unrealistic.

- **Crime rate.** Safety engineers must know the crime exposures in the vicinity of their facilities and the areas where deliveries or sales calls may be made. This can be done by obtaining a crime analysis from local police departments.

With knowledge of the types of crimes occurring in a given area, the safety professional can upgrade security and educate personnel. Procedures and training should be provided for all employees, so they will know how to react to prevent a crime situation. Security consultants can perform surveys of facilities and offer recommendations to reduce exposures.

- **Business travel.** Business travel has long been more of an "accounting" concern than one of safety. Most travel policies concern what can be placed on an expense account and do not take into consideration the employee's security.

Travel policies should be reviewed by safety personnel to incorporate procedures to reduce the crime exposure. Employees who travel should be trained on any risks in business activities away from the main facility. This could include keeping car doors locked at all times and the use of valet parking. A hotel chain's security should be reviewed and certain hotels recommended while others avoided.

Travel does not necessarily mean leaving town or staying overnight. Visits and deliveries made to high crime areas should be done in the morning if possible.

Delivery vehicles should be clearly marked and easily identifiable. If a vehicle is carrying valuables such as furs or jewelry, it should be made to look inconspicuous.

- **Terrorism.** Concerning terrorism, the more you know about your enemies and the less they know about you, the better. Although all employees are potentially the targets of terrorists, the prime targets are executives.

The activities and routines of executives should be confidential. Executives' itineraries should not be released to just anyone. Routes to and from work by upper management should vary, and parking spaces should not be marked. It is more secure to have executives placed on upper floors to provide a buffer between outside access and the executive offices. There should always be sufficient screening of visitors and packages.

The culture of countries where business is done should be studied not only to

help business but also to identify potential problems. Companies with international operations should have emergency procedures dealing with bomb threats, kidnapping and other foreseeable terrorist activities. Kidnap and ransom insurance should be considered, although its use should be kept confidential.

SUMMARY. Education is the key to avoiding violence in any situation. Safety personnel must become more knowledgeable of security procedures and how to handle situations which could lead to violence. Managers and employees must be trained to respond properly to a variety of stress, personnel and security problems.

The safety manager's role in providing a safe haven for workers in a violent society is critical to the employees' morale and well-being. Employees who are not consumed with their own personal safety will perform better and add to the company's bottom line. Safety

must be allowed to evolve to include the effects of ever-changing societal issues which will continue to challenge loss prevention in the workplace.

Craig S. Philson is the regional loss control supervisor for Crum & Forster Insurance in Dallas, Texas. He is a graduate of Central Missouri State University with a degree in industrial safety and security. Philson has 13 years experience as a safety professional, and he is the winner of the Veterans of Safety Technical Paper Award sponsored by the American Society of Safety Engineers.

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