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September 5, 2012

To: Friends and Clients

Re: Violence in the Workplace/Time is of the Essence

As you know, we have recently read in the newspaper about a horrendous attack upon a company by an outraged former employee in front of the Empire State Building.

I have taken the liberty of drafting what we consider to be important warning signs when one will notice an employee attitude which could lead to issues of violence. Do not take this as all-encompassing, but is just a guideline. It is recommended that a policy be prepared.

In addition to this, it is recommended strongly that companies consider management training to help improve management's techniques in dealing with employees and former employees. The negative treatment of employees can lead to lawsuits and potential unions as well as a course of violence.

I am most concerned about this, what I consider to be an epidemic of violence in the workplace and will be happy to work closely with you to assist in helping to prevent this and other serious legal matters.

Very truly yours,

Paul I. Weiner

PIW/dp

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE
EMPLOYEE WARNING SIGNS
(Multiple)

Change in Employee's Work Record

- Increased absenteeism
- Increased tardiness
- Decreased performance appraisal
- Increased health care usage

Change in the Climate in the Employee's Work Unit

- Co-workers complain or express concerns
- Observable deterioration in morale
- Co-workers start assuming impaired employee's responsibilities
- Lowered work unit productivity

Change in the Employee's Work Quality

- Increased errors
- Avoidance of new responsibilities
- Wasted time
- Apathy toward quality of work

Change in the Employee's Personal Appearance

- More casual or sloppy dress
- Body odor
- Poor hygiene
- Poor grooming and makeup

Changes in the Employee's Social Behavior

- More withdrawn
- Association with less acceptable peer group
- Avoids discussion of problems
- Marital problems
- Increased financial problems
- Complaints about family friends and co-workers
- Arguments and fights
- Anti-social behavior

Physical Symptoms Which Might be Observed or Reported by the Employee

- Difficulty sleeping, particularly remaining asleep or oversleeping
- Significant weight loss or gain (+ or – 5% of body weight in a month)
- Sleeping on the job
- Increased minor injuries (i.e. cuts, bruises)

Potentially Observable Psychological Symptoms

- Statements about violence
- Statements about having and using firearms
- Threats/immediate
- Remarks about prior violence in the workplace
- Tantrums/temper

Consider the Following:

1. Create an inter-disciplinary management team to monitor company activities, evaluate any problems which arise and advise the Company/Bank on the implementation of policies and programs. This team should consist of security and human resources personnel and employee assistance/medical program representatives.
2. Implement pre-employment screening for criminal records.
3. Implement a drug and alcohol testing program.
4. Conduct pre-employment interviews and reference checks. Interviewers should ask questions that indicate potential problems. For example, if someone cannot name a best friend something is wrong.
5. Be aware of all workplace transgressions, regardless of how minor. To facilitate reporting, keep procedures simple. Identify how information is recorded and who is retaining the records.
6. Assist troubled employees by increasing recognition of problems and offering professional referrals.
7. Track problem cases even if no action has been taken on a given incident.
8. Standardize procedures for assessment and action taken on problem cases. Develop a database of how cases are handled, including a list of internal and external resources for dealing with particular problems.

Sometimes, violence can be foreshadowed in the workplace. Predicators which occur in the workplace include threats of violence and intimidation against co-workers, excessive references

to real or fictional mass murders or shooting sprees, unusual interest in police activities, the military or survival, referring to or bragging about weapons or inappropriately bringing them to work, inappropriate communication to co-workers or supervisors, victimizing an individual by recording or stalking them, feelings of paranoia and/or persecution, extreme anger or irritability, depression or suicidal tendencies, repeatedly cause others or one's own problems, litigiousness or filing of unreasonable grievances.

If any of the above predictors occur, workplace violence may result. Consider the following, depending on the situation:

1. Quietly gather information as to whether the employee has a registered weapon or has violated any laws.
2. Meet with the employee in as stress free an environment as possible. Clearly establish a time to meet, who will conduct the meeting, where it will be held, and what you wish to accomplish.
3. If the relationship allows, talk to the employee as a confidant.
4. Do not have the person arrested unless the situation dictates, such as where weapons need to be removed or co-workers are not safe.
5. Do not go the police prematurely with a particular incident. Although your human resources executive should make an effort to meet and keep in touch with a ranking officer from the local police department. This way, if a concern does arise you can call the officer for advice.
6. Encourage employees to let you know if they are the target of a harasser or stalker. If such is the case, notify your security provider of the situation.
7. Make sure your health insurance coverage provides for psychiatric treatment. Let your employees know the option exists under their coverage.
8. When an employee refuses to pursue help via an EAP or other treatment, an employer representative should speak with a psychiatrist about the problem to develop a strategy for dealing with the situation.
9. Follow-up with laid off and terminated employees. Consider offering out-patient services to those terminated.
10. Treat all terminations in as sensitive and dignified a manner as possible. Provide terminated employees with an opportunity to hear the reasons for termination and to respond to those reasons. Simply providing an opportunity to be heard is one of the best deterrents to violence from a terminated employee. Remember not all terminated employees are angry.

11. If the risk cannot be confined, defuse it by having outside, rather than an inside counsel write the letter of termination.
12. A supervisor should not fire a potentially violent subordinate employee in the office without assistance.

These are general guidelines to follow for avoiding what can be a most disastrous situation. If you have any questions regarding potentially dangerous employees, do not hesitate to contact us.