

Workplace Violence & Threatening Behavior

While the Coast Guard is proud of its safe workplaces, we are concerned about the reality of violence in society and its potential incidence in our workplaces. Provision of a safe work environment is a command responsibility that cannot be delegated. Behaviors and actions defined as Workplace Violence or Threatening Behaviors will not be tolerated.

Workplace Violence is any act or attempted act of physical aggression or harm by an individual that occurs at the workplace.

Examples include:

- ◆ Causing or attempting to cause bodily harm or death to another person without legal justification.
- ◆ Acting or attempting to sabotage, destroy, violently damage, or deface real or personal property at the workplace without legal justification.
- ◆ Possessing weapons in the workplace not specifically authorized by competent authority for performing one's duties.

Threatening behavior is an individual's threat, either overt or implied, to commit an act of physical aggression or harm at the workplace.

Examples include:

- ◆ Threats to cause bodily harm or death to a person (including stalking, bullying, other abusive or aggressive behavior).
- ◆ Threats to commit sabotage, destroy, damage, or deface real or personal property located at the workplace.
- ◆ Unusual, bizarre, or menacing behavior or statements that a reasonable person would interpret as carrying the potential for violent acts.

When Coast Guard personnel engage in disruptive or threatening activities, such behavior can escalate if we do not address it promptly and appropriately.

Healthy Workplaces...

- ◆ Allow for job autonomy and encourage an inclusive, collaborative work environment.
- ◆ Promote a healthy work-life balance for individual and organizational success.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for both personal and professional development.
- ◆ Offer employee assistance and health promotion programs that encourage a healthy lifestyle and workplace safety.
- ◆ Recognize and reward employees both individually and collectively for their contributions to the organization.

Adapted from American Psychological Association, *Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards, fact sheet, 2008*

You can help promote the safest workplace possible. It's an "All Hands" responsibility!



Recognize The Warning Signs

People who commit acts of violence generally give warning signs first. If an employee, customer, vendor, delivery person, or anyone else in your workplace exhibits any of the following signs, report your concerns to command leadership or law enforcement:

- ◆ Any direct or indirect threat.
- ◆ Any type of physical assault.
- ◆ Pattern of intimidating, bullying, harassing, or exhibiting aggressive behavior.
- ◆ Uncontrollable or explosive temper.
- ◆ Stalking.
- ◆ Bringing a weapon to work or having an excessive fascination with weapons.
- ◆ Repeated fascination with incidents of workplace violence.
- ◆ Stealing from the Coast Guard or others.
- ◆ Damaging Coast Guard property or repeatedly committing safety violations.

3 Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. What, specifically, is the person doing or saying that raises my concern?
2. Am I normalizing or rationalizing behaviors that need to be brought to someone's attention?
3. Am I not coming forward because I fear that I may be overreacting?

When To Call:

- ◆ If at any time you fear for your or another person's safety.
- ◆ If you are feeling any uneasiness or concern about harm to self, others, facilities, or operations.
- ◆ If you know of any acts or planned acts of sabotage to property or facilities.
- ◆ If you detect any of the warning signs in this brochure.
- ◆ If you notice any escalation or sustained threatening behavior changes.

Discussions of the Workplace Violence and Threatening Behavior are not confidential.

What do you do if a person's anger escalates?

- ◆ Don't argue with the person. If you see changes in the person's behavior, such as screaming, shouting, or pounding fists, contact your supervisor or security personnel for assistance.
- ◆ Leave the area and contact security immediately if the person's anger seems out of control or if physical actions or threats appear imminent.
- ◆ **Contact security and notify Chain of Command if you feel threatened or unsafe.** Be careful to do so without the person noticing, so as not to cause more anger. You might need to signal a coworker that you need help. **Secure your safety.**

DO NOT TRY TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION YOURSELF!

