

Chapter 22 – Violence in the Workplace

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22.1 Foreword

The instance of violent acts in the workplace, which entail a substantial risk of physical or emotional harm, has been rising over the past few years. Many of these assaults result in fatal injury but an even greater number result in nonfatal injury.

Any preventive measure with respect to workplace violence must be based on a thorough understanding of the risk factors. Even though our understanding of the factors which lead to workplace violence is not perfect, sufficient information is available which, if utilized effectively, can reduce the risks. Strong management commitment, and the day-to-day involvement of managers, supervisors, employees, and labor unions is instrumental in reducing the risks of workplace violence.

22.2 Introduction

Santa Clara County is committed to serving a wide range of citizens, some of whom can be under severe stress and have nowhere else to turn. Providing services to these and other persons can place County employees in a position of vulnerability to violence or threatening behavior. The County values its employees and clients and so the Board of Supervisors affirms its commitment to providing workplaces and facilities that are free from violence by supporting this policy.

The circumstances associated with workplace violence can be divided into three major types. However, it is important to keep in mind that a particular occupation or workplace may be subject to more than one type.

Type I - In California, the majority of fatal workplace assaults involve a person entering a small late-night retail establishment, e.g., liquor store, gas station or a convenience food store, to commit a robbery. During the commission of the robbery an employee or proprietor is killed or injured.

Workers who have face-to-face contact and exchange money with the public, who work late at night and into the early morning hours, and who often work alone or in very small numbers are at greatest risk of a Type I event. While the assailant may feign being a customer as a pretext to enter the establishment, he or she has no legitimate relationship to the workplace.

Retail robberies resulting in workplace assaults usually occur between late night and early morning hours and are most often armed robberies. In addition to workers who are classified as cashiers, many victims of late night retail violence are supervisors or proprietors who are attacked while locking up their establishment for the night or janitors who are assaulted while cleaning the establishment after it is closed.

Other occupations/workplaces may be at risk of a Type I event such as taxicab drivers or security guards.

Type II - A Type II events involve fatal or nonfatal injuries to individuals who provide services to the public. These events chiefly involve assaults on public safety and correctional personnel, municipal bus or railway drivers, health care and social service providers, teachers, sales personnel, and other public or private service sector workers who provide professional, public safety, administrative, or business services to the public.

Type II events can involve assaults to the following types of service providers:

- (1) Medical care providers in acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, outpatient clinics and home health agencies;
- (2) Mental health and psychiatric care providers in inpatient facilities, outpatient clinics, residential sites and home health agencies;

- (3) Alcohol and drug treatment providers;
- (4) Social welfare providers in unemployment offices, welfare eligibility offices, homeless shelters, probation offices and child welfare agencies;
- (5) Correctional facility personnel and law enforcement personnel;
- (6) Teaching, administrative and support staff in schools where students have a history of violent behavior; and
- (7) Other types of service providers, e.g., justice system personnel, customer service representatives and delivery personnel.

Unlike Type I events which often represent irregular occurrences in the life of any particular at-risk establishment, Type II events occur on a daily basis in many service establishments, and therefore represent a more pervasive risk for many service providers.

Type III - A Type III workplace violence event consists of an assault by an individual who has some employment-related involvement with the workplace. A Type III event usually involves a threat of violence or a physical act of violence resulting in a fatal or nonfatal injury, by a current or former worker, supervisor or manager; a current or former spouse or lover; a relative or friend; or some other person who has a dispute involving a worker of the workplace.

Available data indicates that a Type III event is not associated with a specific type of workplace or occupation. However, Type III events account for a much smaller proportion of fatal workplace injuries than Types I and II, nevertheless they often attract significant media attention and are perceived as much more common than they actually are.

22.3 Types of Perpetrators

22.3.1 Strangers

To help protect employees from violent strangers in the community the County will provide crime prevention information to employees and will address security issues involving worksites and facilities.

22.3.2 Clients

Employees in many departments deal with clients who are distressed and who may make threats or commit acts of violence. The County will provide support and guidance to employees so that threats of violence can be recognized and prevented if possible.

Client violence may be difficult to control and employee exposure to such violence may be a result of working with special client/patient populations. As a matter of policy, the County of Santa Clara will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence by clients or other members of the public towards employees. Contact local law enforcement if as situations arise.

22.3.3 Family Members or Acquaintances

If the workplace is affected by a violent act or threat of violence by employee's family member or acquaintance the County will provide support and guidance for the victim and his or her co-workers.

22.3.4 Employees

The County of Santa Clara will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence (either verbal or implied) by employees. In such cases, the County endorses immediate and definitive use of the disciplinary process up to and including discharge from County employment, consistent with ensuring the safety of co-workers. Criminal prosecution will be pursued as appropriate. The County also advocates a preventive approach whereby merit system rules and regulations are fairly and consistently administered and where troubled employees receive guidance and professional help if necessary.

22.4 Roles and Responsibilities

22.4.1 County Executive

The County Executive shall ensure that this Policy is fully implemented and adapted to unique needs at the agency/department level, and that the County organization maintains an effective support structure for responding to acts and threats of workplace violence.

Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance will include this Policy as part of the County's written Occupational Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

22.4.2 Employee Services Agency

The Employee Services Agency has overall responsibility for maintaining this Policy and for identifying resources that agencies and departments can use in developing their training plans and violence prevention measures. The Employee Services Agency will also administer workplace violence prevention measures involving Labor Relations (including compulsory medical or "fitness for duty" examinations) and the Employee Assistance Program and will coordinate post-incident activities involving employee services and claims management.

22.4.3 Agency and Department Heads

Agency and Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented in their respective organizations and that the unique needs of their organizations are addressed through procedures and training. Each agency and/or department must develop a plan for preventing and responding to acts of workplace violence. These plans need to minimally contain a Facility Emergency Plan attachment that includes facility-specific procedures (such as alarm buttons and escape routes), notification lists, and a timeline for training designated employees.

22.4.4 Managers and Supervisors

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to make safety their highest concern. When made aware of a real or perceived threat of violence, management shall conduct a thorough investigation, provide support for employees, and take specific actions to help prevent acts of violence. Managers and supervisors shall also provide information and training for employees as needed.

22.4.5 Employees

Employees should learn to recognize and respond to behaviors by potential perpetrators that may indicate a risk of violence. Employees shall also place safety as the highest concern and shall report all acts of violence and threats of violence.

22.5 Physical Security

Since the County is a public organization that wishes to remain accessible to its clients to the fullest extent possible, it is not the County's intent to implement a widespread "fortification" of its facilities. The County prefers to train its employees to be the primary means of reducing workplace violence. However, certain facilities, due to the nature of the service provided, may need barriers, cameras, metal detectors, or other improvements. Where such structures are necessary, they should be constructed in the least obtrusive way feasible.

22.8 Training and Information

Although acts of workplace violence cannot be precisely predicted knowledge of how to respond to perpetrators can help County employees minimize the risk of violence or injury. The County will provide designated employees with training that will help them take appropriate precautions and respond wisely when confronted with a potentially violent individual. Departments will structure this training to meet the unique needs of each operation.

Since the vast majority of violent acts perpetrated by employees and employee family members are preceded by a number of behaviors that signal an escalating situation, the County will provide employees with written materials that will help them recognize the warning signs of violence and will recommend professional consultation or initiate intervention measures before a violent act occurs.

22.9 Applicable Regulations

CAL/OSHA, Title 8, CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, Section 3203

22.10 Appendices

22.10.1 Appendix A: Workplace Violence Guide

Workplace Violence Prevention

A Guide for Employees

Introduction

Workplace violence is a concern of many Santa Clara County employees. Although workplace violence is not a crisis or an epidemic (the rate has remained more or less steady for the last fifteen years), it is important to be prepared. This booklet provides a brief overview of how to deal with threats and acts of violence involving a stranger, a client, a co-worker, or a co-worker's family member or acquaintance.

A companion booklet, "Workplace Violence Prevention: A Guide for Supervisors", and the Board-approved Workplace Violence Prevention Policy are available from your department Safety Coordinator.

Protection From Violence

Protection Through Planning

Each facility should add a Workplace Violence Prevention section to its Facility's Emergency Response Plan. The development of this section should involve the Emergency Response Team Leader(s), Facility Manager, Safety Coordinator, Management, Union Personnel, and facility Safety Committee.

Each section should include the following elements:

- Specific roles and responsibilities.
- Training.
- Protective measures for employees who perform certain tasks.
- Evacuation routes and safe assembly areas.
- Means of communication.
- Liaison with other agencies and organizations.
- Notification of relatives and next of kin in the event of injury or death.
- Counseling resources.
- Media relations.

- Reception desk procedures.

Ask your supervisor about the Plan for your facility.

Protection Through Building Security

Since the County's policy is to keep its facilities as accessible as possible to its clients, the County prefers to not rely on physical security measures as the primary means of preventing workplace violence. However, there are certain measures that can be taken, and your supervisor is responsible for working with the Facility Manager to ensure the physical security of your building. These measures can include:

- Installing a central reception area for each facility, with some kind of physical barrier to help control visitor access.
- Providing an escape route for all personnel.
- Making sure that all non-public entrances are kept closed and locked. Check with the Fire Marshal at 299-3805 before locking a door that is not equipped with a "panic bar" on the inside.
- Other facility-related items (exterior lighting, adequately pruned landscaping, buzzers or silent alarms, and signs).

It may be necessary at some facilities to go beyond the minor physical measures listed above. Decisions regarding the installation of such structures as metal detectors, special locks, and bullet proof glass will be made at the department head level due to the considerable planning and expense involved. Be aware that such structures, although effective, are not a fail-safe protection against workplace violence. To be truly effective, any physical security improvements should also be accompanied by continued awareness and caution on the part of all employees. Ask your supervisor if you have concerns in any of these areas.

Protection From Strangers

With some types of workplace violence such as armed robbery and assault, the perpetrator is a stranger. This can be someone who comes to your building (but not as a client) or it could be someone you encounter while out on County business. To help protect yourself from this type of crime, consider the following tips:

- Try to have a co-worker with you, especially at night – the “buddy system”.
- If you must work late in a County building, move your car to a well-lighted area near the exit before it gets dark.
- Walk in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace. If you think you are being followed, go to a public area or building.
- Face traffic when you walk and avoid bushes, doorways, and other places where someone could hide.
- If possible, do not carry a purse; but if you do, carry it over your shoulder and wear your coat over it to conceal it, or hold it in front of you without the strap on your shoulder or neck, folding your arms over it like a football player.
- Never leave your car with the engine running, and don’t leave the keys in the ignition.
- If people ask you for directions, politely, but firmly tell them you do not know – and stay well away from them.
- Keep your car doors locked when parked and when driving. Close all windows tightly.
- To help avoid being abducted, try not to park next to vans, especially ones with no windows.
- As you approach your car, survey the area as you are walking. Have your keys out and ready to use. (You can also use them to defend yourself.) Before you unlock the door, check under the car and in the back seat.
- If your car breaks down, open the hood and tie a white flag to the antenna or display a “Call Police” sign. Stay in the locked car and if people

approach, open your window just a crack and ask them to call for help. Do not open your car door.

- Discuss any concerns about work practices (such as cash handling), building security, etc. with your supervisor. The Sheriff’s Office Community Services Unit (299-3308) can give you specific advice. Ask your supervisor if your facility has received a security inspection by the Sheriff’s Department. If not, he or she can request one. Departmental safety committees may be able to help with issues such as building improvements to improve physical security.

For more information, the Sheriff’s Office Community Services Unit (299-3308) has a wide variety of free pamphlets and publications.

Protection From Clients

Many County clients are under a great deal of stress and may be frustrated or angry before they even walk in your door or meet with you in the field. A respectful greeting, a smile, and a listening ear can help calm an inflamed temper. It is always best to use the lowest level of response when dealing with an angry client. For example, avoid raising your voice if they raise theirs. Make an extra effort to understand and be understood. If the person seems distracted, restate the problem to focus his or her mind on the issue at hand.

Stay calm and try to keep the situation from escalating by expressing empathy for the client’s feelings. Don’t argue; ask what you can do to help. Restate the client’s position to make sure he or she knows you understand the issue. You may want to momentarily distract the client by changing the subject. If you are not successful and have to take other action (such as summoning help by using a phone, an intercom, or a button that sounds a buzzer), do so calmly and quietly. If you work at 70 West Hedding, the staff of the Office of Human Relations can help; call them at 299-2206. If you work elsewhere, ask your supervisor about whom to call.

It is unlikely that you will be able to address the major stresses in the client’s life, and you may not be able to do much about the issue that may be causing frustration. In other words, there are some clients for whom no amount of gracious treatment will work. But even if the client does not calm down, there can be a great difference between a client who

is merely frustrated and one who becomes violent or resorts to threats of violence. The key is to try to recognize when a client is going to become violent.

There are certain danger signs that may precede a violent act. Observe the client's body language, facial expressions and tone of voice to see if he or she is getting more and more agitated. Clenched fists, a flushed face, or a tense posture are signals to be careful. In such situations, think of how to protect yourself. Try to keep a desk or other barrier between you and the client, and make sure that the client does not block your escape route. If the client is directly in front of you, step back so that you are out of striking range.

If you sense that a client is going to commit a violent act any second, don't hesitate to leave immediately. Find an excuse to leave the area, or if necessary, just leave – then get help from co-workers, Emergency Response Team members, or someone else, depending on the situation. Don't hesitate to call the police at 911 (or 9-911) if necessary. It is better to disrupt a work site than to be injured.

A NOTE ABOUT DIVERSITY

If your work involves clients who are unfamiliar with American customs of greeting and speech, you should be aware that cultures vary in terms of what kinds of body language, eye contact, and verbal expressions are socially acceptable. For example, some people don't like you to gesture broadly with your arms while talking. Eye contact between a man and a woman can carry different connotations to certain cultures. To avoid agitating a client without knowing it, ask your supervisor or contact the County's Equal Opportunity Division at 299-2743 for specific information about different cultures.

You may also find yourself trying to help someone who struggles with English. Slow your speech down – perhaps way down – and pronounce all consonants clearly; try using alternate or more simple wording. Refrain from raising your voice and avoid using slang, jargon, or idioms.

Threats of Violence

Reporting Threats

Threats of violence take many forms. They can be verbal, written, or implied (such as through the use of symbols, objects, or mutilated animals). If you are

the subject of a threat of violence at work or if you observe threatening behavior, it is important to document your concerns and report them to your supervisor immediately. As threat assessment expert Dr. Park Dietz said, "You wait at your peril."¹ Be prepared to provide your supervisor with details, including who made the threat (if known), and how and when the threat was made. Save all evidence of threats, including voice and E-mail messages, notes, and letters.

If, after discussions with your supervisor, you wish to convey your concerns to someone else, report the problem up your department's chain of command. You or your supervisor may not be sure if the threat should be taken seriously. When in doubt, refrain from making hasty judgments, since competent threat assessment requires extensive professional training and experience. If you or your supervisor need expert consultation, call County Mental Health Administration (885-5782) or Mental Health Adult Services (885-7575).

Bomb Threats

Bomb threats are a unique kind of threat because the stakes are so high. The two most common reasons for bomb threats are:

1. The caller knows about a bomb and wants to minimize injury or property damage. (The caller may be the bomber or someone else who has information about the bomb.)
2. The caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety and panic in order to disrupt normal operations at a County facility.

Most bomb threats are made by phone. Any employee who receives calls directly could receive a bomb threat. Copy the Bomb Threat Checklist on Appendix 22.10.26 and keep it under your phone.

The decision to evacuate will be made by the Facility Manager based on the amount of information available and whether the call appears to be a legitimate threat or a prank. If an evacuation is needed:

- Pay attention to specific evacuation directions.
- Leave doors and windows open to let the blast wave escape.

- Take your brief case, purse, lunch bag, etc. with you to minimize the search.
- The Facility Manager will work with police to keep anyone from re-entering the building.
- Refer to your facility's Emergency Plan.

The search, if required, needs to be done by people who are familiar with the facility. The police will help, but they do not have the resources to do it alone. If you are called upon to help with the search, remember:

- Check your immediate work area and report any suspicious objects to your supervisor or the Facility Manager.
- Do not touch any suspicious object – leave removal and disposal for the Bomb Squad.
- Use normal phones for communication – radios or cellular phones can detonate a bomb.

LETTER BOMBS

Letter bombs vary in size and shape and are usually addressed and booby-trapped to reach a specific target.

Be alert for unusual markings:

- Foreign mail or special delivery.
- Excessive postage.
- Hand written or poorly typed address.
- Addressed to a title only, or the wrong title with a name.
- Unknown or no return address.
- Misspellings of common words.
- Restrictive markings, such as "Personal".

Watch for strange packaging:

- Excessive or lopsided weight.
- Rigid, uneven, or sloppy envelope.
- Protruding wires or foil.

- Oil or grease stains; strange odor.
- Excessive tape or string.

If you suspect that a package may be a bomb, do not try to open it. Isolate it, keep everyone back at least 25 feet, open doors and windows, and call 911 (or 9-911).

Threats by Clients

Instead of an in-person encounter, you may receive a threatening letter or phone call from a client. Such threats may arise from a client's frustration with government in general or with a function of County government in particular such as the collection of taxes. It may also have arisen from a specific action, such as a denial of a request or claim. If you receive such a threat, save any evidence (such as voice mail messages) and report the threat immediately to your supervisor.

Threats by "Stalkers"

Stalking occurs when a perpetrator "willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or her safety".ⁱⁱ Stalking goes beyond mere harassment in that threats of violence are involved. A stalker can be anyone from an anonymous admirer to an ex-spouse.

The best way to prevent stalking is to not let a relationship, even a casual one, develop or continue any farther than you want it to. Since stalkers have never learned to take "no" for an answer, you must be clear and firm. When declining an unwanted invitation, make sure your answer cannot be interpreted *in any way* to mean "maybe." Don't give a reason or an excuse – that can only provide a challenge in the mind of the initiator – and don't waver: say simply and firmly, "I'm absolutely not interested in a relationship with you."

If the person does not accept your firm refusal, take the situation seriously and consult one of the resources listed at the back of this booklet. If the person is a co-worker, the County's sexual harassment policy may be of help to you – tell your supervisor or call the Equal Opportunity Division at 299-5865.

Stalking is now illegal in California. California law also permits an employer to seek a Temporary

Restraining Order against someone who has been contacting an employee at work. But experience has shown that these Orders often do not prevent further stalking; instead, they can trigger a violation of the terms of the Order – or a violent act. Restraining Orders should therefore be used with extreme caution, and only after thorough consultation with your supervisor, threat assessment experts, and knowledgeable legal counsel.

Threats by Employees

There can be times when a *troubled* employee becomes a *troubling* employee. This usually begins when a pattern of behavior escalates to the point where co-workers are afraid of an employee, or it can be a crisis that ultimately leads to a violent act. A violent act is almost always preceded by a number of warning signs or changes in behavior. Since these changes can be subtle, it is important to observe behavior carefully. Some of these warning signs are listed below.

Use caution when reading this list – it is *not* intended as an evaluation tool for you to assess the stability of an employee, since a display of one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that a person will become violent. The purpose of this list is to heighten your awareness and to help you to determine if you have a cause for concern.

Consider these behaviors all together and don't focus on one isolated act.

- Veiled or open threats of violence, e.g., predicting “bad things are going to happen”, especially threats that are detailed or appear to be well-planned.
- A history of discipline or litigation; reacting poorly to discipline or performance evaluations.
- Irritability, belligerence, hostility.
- Excessive focus on guns, police or the military; subscription to paramilitary magazines such as “Soldier of Fortune” or boasting of weapons collections.
- Changes in behavior, such as a deterioration of work performance or an increase in concentration problems; becoming inappropriately withdrawn, increasingly angry, or agitated – or out of touch with reality. This may also signal a substance abuse problem.
- A resumption or escalation of drug and alcohol abuse.
- Reacting with great stress to workplace events such as layoffs, discharges, demotions, reorganizations, labor disputes, or to personal/family problems such as divorce, bankruptcy, etc.
- Blaming others; inability to accept responsibility. Holding a grudge, especially against a supervisor, or a co-worker who is alleged to have received some “favor” such as a promotion at the perpetrator's expense.
- Depression.
- Paranoia – indicated by statements that everyone is against them, or by panicking easily.
- An increased propensity to push the limits of normal conduct, with disregard to the safety of self or co-workers.
- Crossing a co-worker's or supervisor's physical boundaries (“getting in their face”), physical posturing or aggressiveness, stalking, excessive phone calls, etc.
- A known personal history of violent, reckless, or anti-social behavior.
- References to or identification with mass murderer and infamous incidents of workplace violence, such as Post Office shootings. Having a fascination with recent incidents of workplace violence and expressing approval of the use of violence under similar circumstances.
- An obsessive involvement with the job, which becomes the sole source of identity.
- A “loner”, with little or no involvement with co-workers.
- A combination of the use of stimulants, paranoid behavior, and the purchase of weapons can be a particularly risky combination.

If you observe an employee displaying these behaviors in a way that frightens you or your co-workers, tell your supervisor immediately. The information you provide will be handled discreetly

and will not be shared with anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know.

Incidents of Violence

If an actual incident of violence occurs in your workplace how well, you and your co-workers respond will depend largely on how well you have prepared. Each incident is different, and each response will be different. However, some common actions to take are:

- Call 911 (or 9-911) immediately. If you can't speak freely, just calling and leaving the receiver off the hook may allow a dispatcher to hear noises that will clarify the nature of the incident.
- Remember to use your panic button if one is installed. If you don't have access to a panic button, you may be able to use the phone or an intercom system to alert co-workers.
- Give the perpetrator what he or she wants. Don't try to be a hero by denying a request for such items as money, keys, documents, or equipment. These can be replaced, lives cannot.
- Flee if you can. If you can't, try to find a hiding place.
- Cooperate fully with police officers on the scene. These are the professionals who know how to handle such situations and may be acting on information that you do not have.
- If you witness an act of workplace violence that does not directly involve you, your actions will depend on your assessment of the situation and your judgment. In some cases, your involvement may help a co-worker; other times it may be better to simply slip quietly away and call 911 (or 9-911).

As soon as you can, write down all the details of the incident, including who, what, when, how, and where. Give this information to your supervisor.

Conclusion

Hopefully, you will never be involved in an incident of workplace violence. However, it is important to understand how to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to such incidents. This booklet has provided a starting point for such an understanding,

but you should now work with your supervisor and others in your department to fully address specific training and preparedness needs.

Resources

Contacts:

- Assistance with difficult clients at 70 West Hedding: Office of Human Relations 792-2300
- Claims management (in the event of an incident involving injuries or property damage): ESA Insurance 441-4340
- Counseling: Employee Assistance Program 241-7772
- Counseling (incident recovery): Center for Living With Dying 980-9801
- General guidance, including personnel actions: Contact your union steward or field representative, or Labor Relations at 299-5820.
- Guidance regarding different cultures; information about the County's Sexual Harassment Policy: Equal Opportunity Division 299-5865
- Incident response and recovery: Employee Services 299-3682
- Incident response: Emergency Dispatch 911 (or 9-911)
- Incident response: Emergency Response Teams (trained County employees). Ask your Facility Manager for the ERT members in your facility; call 441-4343 for program information.
- Media relations: County Executive's Public Information Officer 299-5105.
- Next of kin notification (in the event of serious injury or death): County Executive's Office 299-5105.
- Security Guards: San Jose Police Reserves 277-4963 or County Sheriff's Reserves 299-4700
- Threat assessment: Mental Health Administration 885-5773

- Threat assessment: Mental Health Adult Services 885-7575
- Training videos: Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance 441-4280.
- Training, pamphlets, and security inspections: Sheriff's Office - Community Services 808-4900

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- U. S. Public Health Service, Region IX: The Prevention of Workplace Violence. San Francisco, Self Published 1994. *Conference proceedings.*
- Wheeler, Eugene D.: Violence in Our Schools, Hospitals, and Public Places: A Prevention and Management Guide. Ventura, CA Pathfinder Publishing 1994.
- Videos available for free loan from the County Office of Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance at 441-4280:
 - Workplace Violence: The First Line of Defense
 - Workplace Violence: The Calm Before the Storm
 - Crime Prevention
 - Reduce Your Risk (vehicle-related crime)
- The Sheriff's Office Community Services Unit offers a variety of brochures and free crime prevention workshops. 299-3308

Training Materials

- Call to Action: Managing Violence in the Workplace. A video available for free loan from the County Supervisors Association of California Excess Insurance Authority (916) 631-7363

22.10.2 Appendix B: Bomb Threat Checklist

Bomb Threat Checklist PLACE THIS LIST UNDER YOUR TELEPHONE FOR EASY REFERENCE.

1. Exact wording of the threat: _____

Remain calm and keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask to have the message repeated.

2. Ask the caller:

• There are a lot of people who could be injured. What can you tell me? _____

• When is the bomb going to explode? _____

• Where is it right now? _____

• What kind of bomb is it? _____

• What will cause it to explode? _____

• Did you place the bomb? _____

• Why? _____

• What is your address? _____

• What is your name? _____

3. Report the threat immediately to your supervisor, the Facility Manager, and (in some cases) 911 (or 9-911).
Wait for further instructions.

4. Be prepared to describe the threat in as much detail as possible to the police. Record information here:

a) Voice characteristics:

Sex :__ Age: (approximate) _____

__ Calm __ Loud __ Distinct __ Nasal

__ Angry __ Laughter __ Slurred __ Stutter

__ Excited __ Crying __ Lisp __ Cracking voice

__ Slow __ Normal __ Raspy __ Disguised

__ Rapid __ Deep __ Clearing throat __ Accent

__ Soft __ Ragged __ Deep breathing __ Familiar

If voice is familiar, who did it sound like? _____

b) Background noises:

__ Street noises __ Music __ Local

__ Restaurant __ Household noises __ Long distance

__ Factory Machinery __ Animal noises __ Clear

__ PA System __ Motor __ Static

__ Office Machinery __ Voices __ Other: _____

c) Threat language:

__ Well spoken __ Incoherent __ Irrational

__ Foul __ Taped __ Message read by threat maker

d) Other details:

Remarks: _____

22.10.2 Appendix B: Bomb Threat Checklist

Time of threat: _____ Date: _____ Phone # where threat was received: _____

Your name: _____ Position: _____

Footnotes:

ⁱ Personal comment during a Violence Seminar, 1994.

ⁱⁱ California Penal Code, sec. 646.9