Workplace Violence:
A Universal Threat

Unfortunately, none of us can say, "This won't happen where I work." Workplace violence (WPV) is a chronic threat across all industries and occupations. In 2020, 705 U.S. workers lost their lives to violence – approximately 15% of all fatal occupational injuries (BLS, 2021). Still, this is likely a vast underestimation; workers may be suffering as many as three times the number of injuries and illnesses than officially reported (U.S. House of Representatives, 2008). All employers should have a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan in place to be prepared for the worst.

Did You Know?

Each year, **761,000** workers experience some form of physical assault in the workplace (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2021)

Behind transportation incidents, violence is the **top cause of death for women** in the workplace (BLS, 2021)

In the past decade, workplace violence has taken the lives of **788** U.S. workers per year, on average (BLS, 2011-2021)

NIOSH estimates the annual nationwide economic cost of workplace violence is nearly **$121 billion**

Employee **productivity is estimated to decrease up to 50%** in the 6 to 18 weeks following an incident of violence, while **turnover can increase to upwards of 30% to 40%** (National Institute for the Prevention of Workplace Violence, n.d.)

Know the Four Main Types of Violence Impacting the Workplace

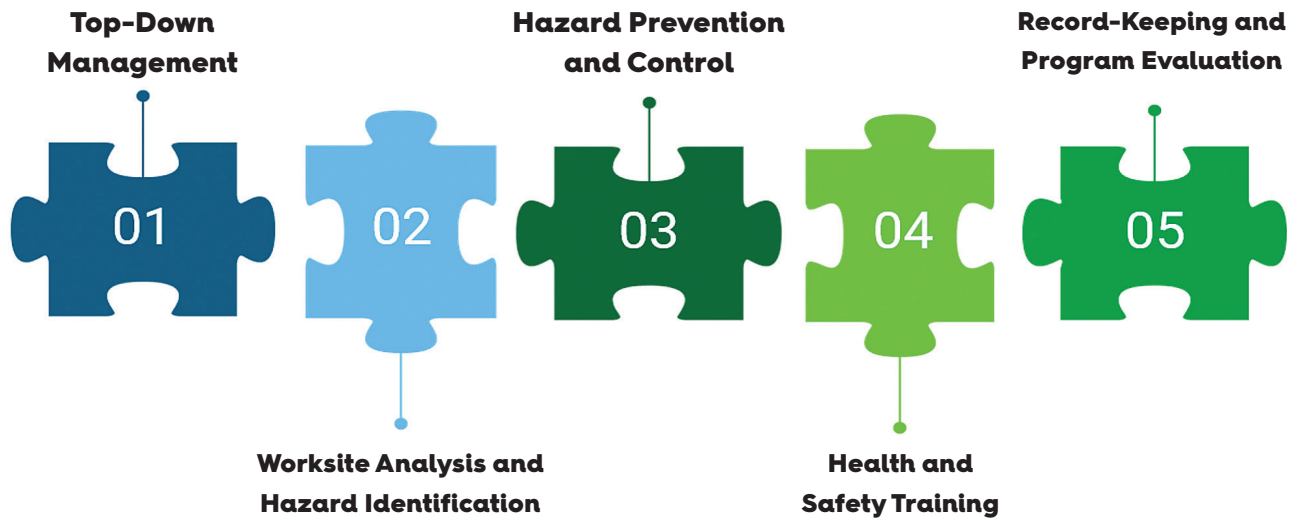| Type	Details	Estimated % of WPV fatalities (NIOSH, 2006)	Industries most impacted (OSHA, 2009)
Criminal Intent	This type of violence occurs when the perpetrator has no legitimate relationship with the business or employees and is usually committed in conjunction with another crime (e.g. robbery, shoplifting, trespassing, etc.); also includes acts of mass violence and terrorism.	85%	Public transportation, retail, liquor stores and gas stations
Worker-on-Worker	Occurs when the perpetrator is a current or former employee, vendor, contractor, etc. of the targeted workplace. This type of violence often attracts media attention despite being lower prevalence.	7%	Non-industry specific due to data limitations; predominately directed toward employees deemed "lower" than the perpetrator
Personal Relationship	The perpetrator has a personal relationship to the victim(s) outside of work that spills over into the workplace, including domestic and intimate partner violence.	5%	Non-industry specific due to data limitations; predominately impacts female workers
Customer/Client	The perpetrator has a legitimate relationship with the business, and this can include customers, patients, students, etc. This type of violence usually occurs during routine job duties.	3%	Law enforcement, flight attendants, correction officers and teachers

Be Prepared With a Plan

Unfortunately, many organizations feel ill-equipped to prevent a workplace violence event. A nationwide poll of over 2,100 American HR professionals and employees showed about 30% of employees feel ill-equipped to deal with workplace violence, while only 45% are aware whether their employer has an existing prevention plan in place (SHRM, 2019). All too often, the incentive for implementing a prevention plan comes in response to tragedy.

OSHA believes a well-written and implemented workplace violence prevention program, combined with hazard controls and employee training, can reduce the incidence of workplace violence.

OSHA's (2009) Building Blocks of an Effective Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

Top-Down Management — 01

Worksite Analysis and Hazard Identification — 02

Hazard Prevention and Control — 03

Health and Safety Training — 04

Record-Keeping and Program Evaluation — 05

Check out the **Workplace Violence: Using Technology to Reduce Risk** report and playbook from the Work to Zero initiative at NSC. This resource equips organizations with information and actionable solutions to address workplace violence. Get this resource at **nsc.org/WPVtech**.

Sources:

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4. National Institute for the Prevention of Workplace Violence. (n.d.). *Workplace violence fact sheet*. https://www.workplaceviolence911.com/index.php?q=node/975

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7. The Society for Human Resource Management. (2019). *Workplace violence: A growing threat or growing awareness?* https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/documents/shrm%20workplace%20violence%202019.pdf

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