

GA DOD Workplace Violence – AWARENESS, RESPONSE & PREVENTION – Quick Reference

COPING WITH THREATS AND VIOLENCE

The attached desk card summarizes the actions you should (or should not) take. Detach the card provided at the end, to use as a quick reference guide in dealing with workplace violence situations. Review the information in this paper and the card often. That way, if an angry, hostile, or threatening customer or coworker confronts you, you will know what you should do.

Everyone in your office or worksite, including supervisors and managers, should follow these same procedures. You can make copies of this card so that everyone has his or her own card.

COPING WITH THREATS AND VIOLENCE

For an angry or hostile customer or coworker:

- Stay calm. Listen attentively.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Be courteous. Be patient.
- Keep the situation in your control.

For a person shouting, swearing, and threatening:

- Signal a coworker, or supervisor, that you need help. (Use a duress alarm system or prearranged code words.)
- Do not make any calls yourself.
- Have someone call the supervisor and, base security, or local police.

For someone threatening you with a gun, knife, or other weapon:

- Stay calm. Quietly signal for help. (Use a duress alarm or code words.)
 - Maintain eye contact.
 - Stall for time.
 - Keep talking--but follow instructions from the person who has the weapon.
 - Don't risk harm to yourself or others.
 - Never try to grab a weapon.
 - Watch for a possible chance to escape to a safe area.
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Obscene, Harassing, or Threatening Telephone Calls

Obscene and harassing callers are primarily interested in generating fear and discomfort. The longer they keep you listening, the more satisfaction they derive from the call. Some experts say that the person who uses the phone to verbally harass or embarrass is not likely to follow up with a direct confrontation.

If obscene or harassing calls continue, keep a written record of the day, date, and time; the type of voice (male/female, pitch, and accent, if any); background noise; what was said; and whether the person gave a name.

The caller who makes personal threats to you or your family is another matter. Any threatening call should be reported to your supervisor and agency security, or the local police immediately.

Coping With Stress

Job-related stress will never be eliminated, but it can be managed. If you're feeling stress constantly, or frequently "blowing up" for no reason, you should discuss the problem with your supervisor or with a counselor.

Many times, problems at home go with you to the office. Or your office itself may be causing you stress--a personality conflict with a co-worker, a heavy workload with no time off, or a noisy or disorganized environment.

If the problems cannot be resolved, you may want to think about transferring to another office or to another type of work.

Perhaps your supervisor can arrange for a room where you and your co-workers can "get away from it all" by taking short breaks. If you can't get away from it all at work, allow extra time by getting up earlier so you don't have to rush around to get to work on time.

Physical exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress. Try walking or jogging before or after work or at lunchtime. Take up a hobby or try volunteer work in the evening or on weekends.

Federal Employee Assistance Programs

Voluntary, and confidential short-term counseling is available for Federal employees through employee assistance programs sponsored by all Federal Government departments and agencies. Counseling is offered on a variety of problems: family and marital crises; mental and emotional stress; child or spouse abuse; problems with children; care of elderly or infirm relatives; money and credit management; and alcohol and drugs.

For the Federal Employees of the Georgia Department of Defense, CMSgt William Pinkney is the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator and may be reached at (678) 569-6430.

If one requires long-term counseling, one can usually find help in the community where one lives through city, county, or State offices or through church or private organizations. Look in the government sections of the telephone directory for "health," "social services," or "counseling" and in the yellow pages for church or private organizations.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCIDENT DESK REFERENCE CARD

Everyone at your worksite, including supervisors and managers, should follow these same procedures. Make copies of the card if you need to so everyone will have his or her own card.

Information to Gather

1. Date/Time of Incident _____
2. Type of Incident -Physical Violence _____
 -Threatening Behavior _____
 -Bizarre Behavior _____
3. Complete In Detail (attach sheets if needed):

a. WHO (list all individuals involved)

b. WHAT (detailed description of the incident)

c. WHEN (Date/Time – Start & End)

d. WHERE (Location of where the incident took place)

Emergency Phone Numbers

Carefully tear out or keep handy the "Emergency Phone Numbers" card at the dotted lines. Write in all the emergency numbers for your building. Tape this card on your desk by your phone or somewhere else close to your phone for handy reference. (Copies of this card also can be made.)

Emergency Phone Numbers

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Base Security | _____ |
| Police/Sheriff | _____ |
| Fire Department | _____ |
| Ambulance | _____ |
| State/Federal Health Services Unit | _____ |
| Supervisor or Higher Headquarters | _____ |
| Human Resources Office | _____ |