



NEWS

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Illinois Department of Labor Highlights Steps to Prevent Violence on the Job

SPRINGFIELD – Each year, millions of Americans are victimized by workplace violence. The first step in preventing workplace violence is recognizing signs of stress. The next step is to ensure employers have a plan in place to respond in the case of violence in the workplace.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defines workplace violence as “any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the workplace.”

“Protecting employees on the job goes beyond worksite hazards. Unfortunately, this includes protection from violence and other outside threats,” said **Illinois Department of Labor Director Michael Kleinik**.

Healthcare is the among the most common fields for workplace violence, along with service providers, like delivery and ride-hailing drivers, and school employees. Retail workers are also among the most targeted.

OSHA classifies workplace violence into four categories: criminal intent, customer-client, worker-on-worker, and personal relationship. Workplace violence is a growing concern among both employers and employees, regardless of the type of job and is now one of the leading causes of job-related deaths.

“There are steps that should be taken to keep employees informed and aware of the warning signs to look for in the workplace. Employers should also implement a violence prevention program,” said **Illinois OSHA Division Manager Brandy Lozosky**.

Establishing a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence against or by employees is the best protection an employer can offer, according to OSHA. But other precautions should also be taken, including:

- Provide safety education for employees so they know what conduct is not acceptable, what to do if they witness or experience such conduct and how to protect themselves.
- Secure the workplace. Surveillance cameras, proper lighting, key or badge entry and guards can all help alleviate possible violence at work.
- Encourage employees to alert supervisors to any concerns they have about coworkers' erratic or potentially dangerous behavior, as well as any other safety issue they believe could lead to violence at work.
- Provide for a buddy system or escort service for employees who need it in potentially dangerous situations or at night.

Employee safety is the main reason to take such precautions, but workplace violence poses an economic price tag as well. The Department of Justice and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimate victims of workplace violence miss 1.8 million days of work each year, costing an estimated \$121 billion.

More information on Illinois OSHA is available here: [IL OSHA Laws and Rules](#)

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