

# Safetyline

Apartment Association of Michigan

## Benefits

Member

Membership in the Apartment Association carries benefits beyond savings on Work Comp insurance. Members join a network of their peers; thus gaining access to information sharing and the tools needed for effective loss control.

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## Apartment Association of Michigan

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## Violence In The Workplace; The Keys To Prevention

*Editor's Note: We encourage all of our members to use this information as a starting point for effective safety communication. Members should add to it based on their safety needs and work environments.*

Generations of Americans have seen the workplace as a center of solidarity, camaraderie and friendship. While this still holds true, statistics show that changes have taken place that, if not addressed, could put workers in harm's way.

### Why Train on This Topic?

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey,

two million assaults and threats of violence against Americans at work occur annually. This includes 396,000 aggravated assaults, 51,000 rapes and sexual assaults, 84,000 robberies, and 1,000 homicides. In addition to assaults and threats, a substantial number of employees report being bullied or harassed on the job.

This level of training also clearly communicates your organization's commitment to employee health and safety as well as providing employees practical skills for preventing,

responding to, and reporting incidents of workplace violence.

**All of us at CMI and Smith-Peabody-Stiles support efforts to make the workplace a safer and more productive place. For concerns and questions contact Brenda Boomer or Jim Peabody at Smith-Peabody-Stiles, 800-467-6645. Gary Smith, loss control representative with Citizens Management, will work with properties and management companies to establish viable safety programs and to fine tune existing plans. Contact him at: 517-540-4132.**

### What is Workplace Violence?

- Workplace violence is violence or the threat of violence against workers.
- Workplace violence can occur at or outside the workplace.
- Workplace violence can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide.
- Workplace violence is one of the leading causes of job-related deaths.

### Who is vulnerable?

- Studies show that two million American workers are victims of workplace violence each year. Workplace violence can strike anywhere. Some workers at increased risk are those who exchange money with the public. Other risk groups include workers who:
- Deliver passengers, goods, or services.
  - Work alone or in small groups.
  - Work in community settings

and homes where they have extensive contact with the public.



# Workplace Violence; Important Facts

## The First Step:

Begin by assessing the risk. This can involve the use of employee surveys, focus groups, or existing committees as a means of gaining firsthand knowledge of what the general attitudes and perceptions are in the work environment. This information should then be coupled with an assessment of the physical security, access control, and support services from the local authorities and community. Once the overall assessment is completed, an action plan can be set up based on the level of determined risk and the organizational culture.

## Workplace Violence Definition

Three main types of violence:

- Verbal Abuse/Threats.
- Threatening Behavior.
- Physical Assault.
- Any of these behaviors alone or together constitute an incident.

## Behaviors That Deserve Attention

- Physically aggressive behavior.
- Any verbal threats to harm.
- Any threat to destroy property.
- Any behavior which suggests serious emotional upset.
- Threats with or without weapons.
- Severe verbal abuse/harassment.
- Threats about revenge and/or litigation.

## Four Categories of Violence

- Violence by Strangers.
- Violence by Personal Relations.
- Violence by Residents, Tenants, Guests.
- Violence by Co-workers.

## Violence by Strangers When Showing an Apartment or Tenant Space

- Trust your instincts.
- Always follow the procedures of leaving the potential resident's/guest's drivers license at the office.
- Carry the two-way radio with you and notify other personnel that you are showing a space.
- Do not get boxed in when showing a room, space, apartment - leave an escape route for yourself.

## Violence by Personal Relations

Personal relations include

- Current or former spouse.
- Friend.
- Relative.
- Acquaintance.

Special Note: Employees should inform management of any harassment, stalking, domestic violence, or restraining orders, they are dealing with outside of work. This action allows management an opportunity to increase work security and control work site access. This action also allows management an opportunity to get local law enforcement involved. In extreme cases, management can relocate the involved worker or workers within the work site. Management will also notify other staff as needed.

## Violence by: Residents, Tenants, and Guests

Always:

- Stay calm.
- Stay at arm's length or more.
- Do not make physical contact.
- Don't try to disarm an assailant.
- Manage your body language (use an open posture).
- Take all threats seriously.

Reporting violence will benefit you, and enable management to identify, address, and solve problems.

## Violence by Co-workers

Dealing with an Angry Co-worker

*Note: All employees should conduct themselves in a manner that fosters an environment free from violence, intimidation and threat.*

- Employees must meet with management to get all disagreements out in the open so that the issue can be resolved.
- Report observation or reasonable suspicion of weapons in the workplace.
- Remember the company's no-tolerance policy for workplace violence.

# SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE APARTMENT INDUSTRY

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ JOB NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Seven Steps to Deal with Confrontation

1. Understand the mind set of the hostile or potentially violent person. The person has a compelling need to communicate his grievance to someone now
    - Give the person a verbal outlet.
    - Even if the person is wrong, the individual is acting on perceptions that are real to him.
    - In the overwhelming number of cases, the person just wants fairness.
  2. Practice "Active Listening." Stop what you are doing and give the person your full attention.
    - Listen to what is really being said.
    - Use paraphrasing to ensure understanding ("so what you're saying is...")
    - Ask clarifying, open-ended questions.
  3. Build trust and provide help
    - Be calm, courteous, respectful and patient; open and honest.
    - Never belittle, embarrass or verbally attack a hostile person.
  4. Allow a total airing of the grievance without comment or judgment. Make eye contact but don't stare
    - Allow verbal venting of emotion.
    - Let the person have his or her say (not necessarily his or her way)
    - Ignore challenges and insults - don't take it personally.
    - Redirect attention to the real issue.
  5. Allow the aggrieved party to suggest a solution.
    - A person will more readily agree to a resolution that he or she helped formulate.
    - And it might surprise you that the person's suggestion may be very reasonable.
  6. Move toward a win-win resolution.
    - Preserve the individual's dignity.
    - Switch the focus from what you can't do toward what you can.
  7. Involve the Authorities
- If none of the above steps work at diffusing a situation do the following:
- Involve a supervisor or manager.
  - If this does not work and you or any other employee, guest, resident or tenant feels unsafe, contact the police immediately.
  - TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!

SPECIAL TOPICS FOR YOUR PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting attended by:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax this page to the head of your safety team

**THE AGENDA:**

- Profile of a violent person
- How to prepare and plan for an event
- What to do while it is happening
- What to do immediately afterwards
- Fleet Safety will also be included

# Association Members You're Invited to A Safety Seminar

Sept. 12, 2007

10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Association Offices

30375 Northwestern Hwy

Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334

Contact Brenda Boomer at

[bboomer@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bboomer@spsinsurance.com) for details



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