

# THE SAFETY OBSERVER

Safety Information for Employees

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Unresolved conflict and poor communication can result in workplace violence. Conflict in the workplace is normal, but must be addressed promptly and effectively.

Employees must learn how to recognize, avoid, and diffuse any threatening situations. Everyone must report all concerns, conflicts, and confrontations of threatening or potentially threatening behavior to the Property Manager. Circumstances of incidents should be discussed with other staff members.

Familiarize yourself with the following steps to help defuse and prevent violence at work:

- Respond quietly and calmly.
- Do not take aggravated behavior personally.
- Ask questions and show concern for their problem.
- Take notes of the points the person is making.

If the person continues to be disruptive, you need to assess the level of the threat. If the person is still upset but does not come across as violent, follow these steps:

- Calmly, but firmly set the limits. "Please lower your voice." "Please be patient so we can communicate. I want to understand what you need and try to help you."
- NEVER touch the individual yourself to try to remove him/her from the area.
- If possible, find a quiet office to talk, but do not isolate yourself with an individual you believe may be dangerous. Be sure a co-worker is near to help if needed. Maintain a safe distance, do not turn your back, and stay seated if possible. Sit near an opened door in case you need to exit quickly.
- Again, ask questions and take notes to ensure a clear understanding of the issues and problems.

Hopefully by now the situation will have improved, but if not, continue as follows:

- If the disruption continues, tell the individual that he/she may be asked to leave.
- If the individual refuses to calm down, ask them to leave. If they refuse to leave, warn them that you will call the police. Do not mention the police if you fear an angry or violent response.
- Signal for assistance. Use a prearranged 'distress' signal to have another staff member check on you to determine how you are. If you need help, the co-worker should alert the police.
- If the situation escalates, find a way to excuse yourself, leave the room area and get help. "I understand your concern. Let me get the correct paperwork to address this correctly."

**For violence in progress, violent incidents or specific threats of imminent violence, call 9-1-1.**