

Warning Signs

There are a number of “red flags” or warning signs related to the person who commits an act(s) of workplace violence. They may include the following.

- History of violent behavior
- Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence
- Carrying a concealed weapon
- Verbal, nonverbal, or written threats or intimidation
- Obsessive involvement with the job
- Unwanted romantic interest in co-worker
- Paranoid behavior
- Unaccepting of criticism
- Holds a grudge
- Recent family, financial and/or personal problems
- Talks about past killings/violence
- Tests limits of acceptable behavior
- Stress in the workplace such as layoffs, RIFs, and labor disputes
- Little tolerance of others
- Gets away with unacceptable job performance ratings
- Fond of violent films and TV shows
- Non communicator -loner
- Change in quality of work

- Extreme reactions to new policies, has a hard time with authority figures
- Very neat or very sloppy - or sudden change
- Lies, exaggerates or over reacts on a regular basis
- Self-centered or aloof
- Withdrawal of funds
- Irrational beliefs and ideas
- Expressions of a plan to hurt himself or others
- Externalization of blame
- Taking up much of supervisor’s time with behavior or performance problems
- Drastic change in belief system
- Displays of unwarranted anger
- Feelings of being victimized
- Intoxication from alcohol or other substances
- Expressions of hopelessness or heightened anxiety
- Productivity and/or attendance problems
- Violence towards inanimate objects
- Steals or sabotages projects or equipment
- Lack of concern for the safety of others

Provided by: The International Association
of Chiefs of Police

Work Place Violence

**Personal Conduct
to Minimize
Violence
And
Warning
Signs**

**NC Governor’s
Crime Commission**

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Personal Conduct to Minimize Violence

Follow these suggestions in your daily interactions with people to de-escalate potentially violent situations. If at any time a person's behavior starts to escalate beyond your comfort zone, disengage.

DO

Project calmness: move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently.

Be an empathetic listener: encourage the person to talk and listen patiently.

Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.

Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture and position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person.

Acknowledge the person's feelings. Indicate that you can see he or she is upset.

Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area.

Establish ground rules if unreasonable behavior persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behavior.

Use delaying tactics which will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup).

Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller, more manageable problems.

Accept criticism in a positive way. When a complaint might be true, use statements like "You're probably right" or "It was my fault." If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.

Ask for his recommendations. Repeat back to him what you feel he is requesting of you.

Arrange yourself so that a visitor cannot block your access to an exit.

DO NOT

Use styles of communication which generate hostility such as apathy, brush off, coldness, condescension, robotism, going strictly by the rules or giving the run-around.

Reject all of a client's demands from the start.

Pose in challenging stances such as standing directly opposite someone,

hands on hips or crossing your arms.

Avoid any physical contact, finger-pointing or long periods of fixed eye contact.

Make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening. Notice the tone, volume and rate of your speech.

Challenge, threaten, or dare the individual. Never belittle the person or make him/her feel foolish.

Criticize or act impatiently toward the agitated individual.

Attempt to bargain with a threatening individual.

Try to make the situation seem less serious than it is.

Make false statements or promises you cannot keep.

Try to impart a lot of technical or complicated information when emotions are high.

Take sides or agree with distortions.

Invade the individual's personal space. Make sure there is a space of 3' to 6' between you and the person.