



## Securing Workplace Safety



risk management human resources

**Summary:** OSHA reports that 2mm American workers are victims of workplace violence every year. Although bankers do not show up in the data, it may be a good time to review some ways to keep your workplace safe.

When you go through airport security, things can quickly get lost. CNN analyzed TSA data of items passengers have reported missing and the most common ones are: jewelry/watches, clothing, travel accessories, personal electronics, computers or accessories, and cosmetics or grooming. Hopefully, this helps you see how your stack up the next time you lose something while traveling.

Today our topic is a very serious one though, namely workplace violence. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) tracks workplace violence. It describes such violence *"as any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site."*

This is important because [OSHA finds 2mm American workers](#) report having been victims of workplace violence each year, and many more cases go unreported. The OSHA research here is sadly pretty old, but some interesting things do surface.

If there is any good news, it is that the data shows the likelihood for any workplace violence is relatively low. It is also heavily dependent on the job. While bankers do not show up in the data (which is very good), the jobs that have the highest incidences of violence per 1,000 people in order are: bartender (80 per 1,000) law enforcement officer (78), security guard (65), technical or industrial school teacher (55), mental health custodial care (38).

To help both your bank team and your customers, we thought it could be helpful to provide some information on efforts the experts say may help keep the workplace safe. The Department of Health and Human Services points to interventions that are environmental (surveillance, cash control, proper indoor and outdoor lighting, entry and exit control, and signage); behavioral (training on appropriate response, training on use of equipment and training on dealing with aggressive, drunk, or otherwise problem persons); and administrative (hours of operation, precautions during opening and closing, having a good relationship with police, and implementing safety and security policies for all employees).

[Security Magazine further details](#) how to recognize verbal and non-verbal signs of violence, should the need arise.

Verbal warning signs of violence include: direct threats; veiled threats; conditional threats; boasts of prior violence; increased pitch when speaking; repetitive word use, parroting and or echoing; a nervous laugh or laughing at inappropriate times; yelling or screaming; slurred speech or talk of hurting animals.

Non-verbal warning signs include: personal space violation; standing toe to toe; finger pointing; making fists; staring through you; face flushing; heavy breathing; flaring nostrils; person refuses any eye contact; and someone blocks egress.

Meanwhile, to de-escalate the situation, simple choices can have profound results. When another person is aggressive toward you, it's natural to feel defensive. By training ourselves to stay calm through confrontation, we can often steer a situation toward a better, more peaceful outcome.

While no one expects such situations to occur, being properly prepared and trained is an important step to protect employees and avoid unexpected situations.

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