



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL
300 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0900



DAPE-CPL

1 June 1994

Employee Relations Bulletin # 78

SUBJECT: Violence in the Workplace

TO: Civilian Personnel Officers
of Commands and Activities
of the Department of the Army

1. Employee Relations Bulletin # 76, dated 11 April 1994, Subject: Violence in the Workplace, provided a copy of a TRADOC-developed campaign plan with a menu of initiatives that may be adapted to an installation strategy to combat violence in the workplace. This issue is receiving a great deal of publicity in the news media and is the subject of some new training videotapes and seminars. In addition, the Office of Personnel Management is forming an Interagency Advisory Group (IAG) working group to develop a government-wide report to assist personnelists and managers in dealing with this problem; we have a representative on the group.

2. The Army Materiel Command made this the subject of the attached employee and labor relations bulletin. As additional information is brought to our attention, we will make it available to the field.

3. Please share this with your employee relations specialist, labor counselor, employee assistance and equal employment opportunity offices, and appropriate managers.

FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL:

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JAMES M. ALWARD
Chief, Labor and Employee
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a. A profile has been developed of the type of individual that is likely to commit workplace violence. While this profile does not conclusively determine whether a particular individual will commit violence in the workplace, it can alert a supervisor to potential problems. The individual who commits violence in the workplace is typically a middle-aged white male with a migratory job history; has a fascination with exotic weapons; is chronically disgruntled or known as a trouble maker; often paranoid; enjoys violent movies and TV shows; often has a military background; and is frequently a loner.

b. Supervisors often believe that it is better to ignore a potentially violent employee. However, behavioral psychologists agree that this is the worst possible thing a supervisor can do. By ignoring unacceptable behavior, the supervisor sends a clear signal that the employee is free to repeat the behavior without adverse consequences. Employees must be held accountable for unacceptable behavior, and this includes confronting relatively minor infractions early on.

c. When dealing with a potentially violent employee, the question frequently arises as to whether the activity can order the employee to have a psychiatric examination. In most cases, the activity can not require an employee to have a psychiatric examination. Under 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 339.301, an activity can order a psychiatric examination only when a properly ordered medical examination (e.g., when a position has medical standards/physical requirements) indicates no basis for unsafe or inefficient behavior or when a psychiatric examination is required for a specific position.

d. When an employee engages in violence or makes threats of violence, it may be necessary to have the employee immediately removed from the worksite. If it is not feasible or desirable to detail the employee to another location, the employee may be placed on administrative leave until a decision is made on the appropriate course of action. However, the activity should not place an employee on administrative leave indefinitely to avoid taking appropriate disciplinary action.

e. In most cases of workplace violence, there is a history of unacceptable or confrontational behavior which was never addressed by management. Early intervention is the key to diffusing potentially violent situations. This early

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intervention includes taking appropriate disciplinary action and, more importantly, encouraging the employee to seek professional assistance. It is best if the employee voluntarily seeks such assistance, but the supervisor can and should order an employee to seek professional assistance in appropriate cases.

3. No one can totally prevent workplace violence; however, incidents similar to the United States Postal Service tragedy described above can be significantly minimized by implementing effective preventive measures. Some examples of preventive programs and guidelines are discussed below:

a. AMC activities must firmly and unequivocally be committed to doing everything within their power to prevent incidents of work-related violence. A policy statement which affirms the basic right of all employees to a safe and humane working environment should be prepared and posted on bulletin boards and publicized in employee newsletters. The policy should clearly state that acts of harassment, intimidation or threats will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be dealt with appropriately.

b. Employee Assistance Program (EAP). An employee assistance program is a structured program designed to provide intake counseling, problem identification and treatment of employees with problems of practically any nature, including possible alcohol or drug abuse. Supervisors may refer an employee to the program, or an employee may directly request assistance to solve some problem. Such problems are often related to alcohol or drug abuse, but also may be caused by other illnesses or work or non-work matters. The key action by the supervisor is encouraging self-referral by the employee; but be prepared to refer the employee if necessary.

c. Drug-Free Federal Workplace. The use of illegal drugs, on or off duty, by employees is inconsistent with the law-abiding behavior expected of all employees. Employees who use illegal drugs tend to be less productive, less reliable, prone to greater absenteeism than their fellow employees who do not use illegal drugs, and pose a serious health and safety threat to other employees. Supervisors are expected to assist in the early identification of drug abuse by employees and deal with worksite problems related to drug abuse. In this regard, local policies must be developed and implemented which address, as a minimum,

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the following: drug-free workplace policy, substance abuse awareness efforts, drug-abuse training for supervisors and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).

d. Family-Friendly Programs. Implement family-friendly workplace practices such as flexi-time, flexiplace and job sharing consistent with mission requirements.

(1) Flexible and compressed work schedules (jointly referred to as "alternative work schedules" or "AWS") have the potential to enable managers and supervisors to meet program goals which allow employees to be more flexible in scheduling their activities. As employees gain greater control over their time, they can balance work and family responsibilities more easily. Subject to the obligation to negotiate with representatives of exclusive bargaining units, the decision to establish AWS programs is at the discretion of activity commanders.

(2) Flexible workplace arrangements or flexiplace permits employees to work at home or at other approved sites away from the conventional office. Flexible workplace arrangements can improve quality of life and increase productivity. Flexiplace guidelines established for the initial pilot project should be followed in implementing flexible workplace arrangements.

(3) Managers recognize that some workers want reduced work schedules to make it easier to care for their families or pursue additional career-enhancing education. Job sharing, the filling of one position with two part-time employees, enables management to staff a full-time position and also provide part-time schedules which would otherwise not be available. Employees with health problems or other handicapping conditions may be interested in working on a reduced schedule.

(4) Adult Dependent Care. Elder care, senior care, adult dependent care, are terms generally used to describe the newly emerging program area that helps employees care for their elderly parents/relatives and dependents with mental or physical disabilities. In June 1988, OPM issued guidance to the heads of all Federal departments and agencies. The guidance pointed out that increasing numbers of Federal workers have responsibility for caring for older family members and encouraged agency heads to support programs to address these needs. Adult dependent care programs prepare employees by providing them with information.

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that can save hours and sometimes days of searching for answers to questions such as: what community services are available, how to file for medical insurance, how to obtain a power of attorney, how to recognize symptoms of serious illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease, what to expect during the course of the illnesses, the latest treatment methods, and how best to respond in caring for the afflicted person.

e. Health and Fitness Programs. Activities are encouraged to establish health and fitness to the extent possible. Programs should be designed for both group and individualized activities. Smoking cessation programs should be an integral part of your health improvement programs.

f. Placement Programs.

(1) Placement Assistance for Employees Affected by Reduction in Force (RIF). Employees adversely affected by RIF must be counseled on the programs and procedures that are available to lessen the impact of RIF actions. There are several Government-wide placement programs to assist displaced employees. For example, the Displaced Employee Program (DEP) is administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and provides federal employees scheduled for RIF separation priority referral for positions in other federal agencies. Another program is the Priority Placement Program (PPP) administered by the Department of Defense (DOD). It affords affected employees placement assistance initially in their commuting area.

(2) At the discretion of the activity commander, employees may be excused without charge to leave or loss of pay to seek placement opportunities or to participate in employment interviews in local Federal agencies or with private industry. Commanders are therefore encouraged to establish local policies that permit the granting of excused absence for this purpose. In this regard a reasonable amount of time should be authorized to adversely affected employees as their individual requirements dictate. Policies that establish specific blocks of time are discouraged.

(3) Activities are encouraged to hold local seminars on stress management to assist employees in coping with the adverse affects of RIF. In addition, workshops on interviewing techniques and Standard Form (SF) 171 preparation should be

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conducted when possible. Seminars and workshops should be viewed as training opportunities and held during normal duty hours where work load considerations permit.

4. It is essential that commanders, managers, and supervisors incorporate support personnel in preventive programs. For example:

a. Security Personnel. Security Personnel must work with managers and supervisors to ensure that any threat, no matter how vague, is reported to security immediately. Security Personnel must be notified of personnel scheduled for separation for any reason so that employee badges, government property, etc., can be confiscated. In addition, the plan should include procedures for security debriefings, recovery of classified materials, new safe combinations, and termination of access to classified automated information systems.

b. Involving employee representatives. Employee representatives can be helpful in a number of ways. A union representative may have insights into the root problem an individual may be having, either because of a personal relationship or because the employee may be willing to be more open with a union representative than with management. Unions are advocates of employee well-being, health and safety. Because of this, they will normally be a positive influence in working with the employee and with a supervisor in resolving an employee's problem.

5. Point of contact is Mr. Jay Jamison, AMCPE-CE, DSN 284-9548.

6. AMC -- America's Arsenal for the Brave.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


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