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Lone Worker Security: Staying Safe in a Violent World

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French Lick, Indiana



Carol Dodgen is the owner of Dodgen Security Consulting. Since 1998, her company has been providing services for businesses, financial institutions, and government entities to include training, ATM lighting inspections, and security assessments. Before forming her company, Carol served as the security training officer for Compass Bank. She earned her Master's Degree in Criminal Justice and spent several years as an adjunct criminal justice instructor. Carol is a nationally recognized speaker who has provided training for over 150,000 corporate, manufacturing, utility, law enforcement, and security personnel over the past 26 years. Carol earned her CPD (Crime Prevention Designation) and provides instruction on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Workplace Violence Prevention and Response, Lone Worker Security, Robbery Prevention and Response, and Personal Safety. In 2009, Carol was appointed by the governor to serve on the newly formed Alabama Security Regulatory Board and served for 6 years as vice-chair of this board which regulates the security guard industry in the state.

Carol recently produced several video and e-learning programs which provide instruction for on robbery and workplace violence prevention and response.



*In the United States, more than seven
people per hour die a violent death.*

**More than 19,100 people were victims of
homicide in 2019.
(47,500 died by suicide)**

* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



US Records Highest Increase in Nation's Homicide Rate in Modern History

Oct 6, 2021

The United States has just recorded its highest increase in rates of homicide in modern history, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Provisional data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, released early Wednesday, suggest the homicide rate for the United States rose 30% between 2019 and 2020. It is the highest increase recorded in modern history -- and confirms through public health data a rise in homicides that so far had been identified only through crime statistics.

The previous largest increase in the US homicide rate was a 20% rise recorded from 2000 to 2001 because of the September 11 terror attacks, according to NCHS.

"It is the largest increase in 100 years," Robert Anderson, chief of the mortality statistics branch at NCHS, said.



There are more than **2 million** reported acts of violence per year in America's workplaces.



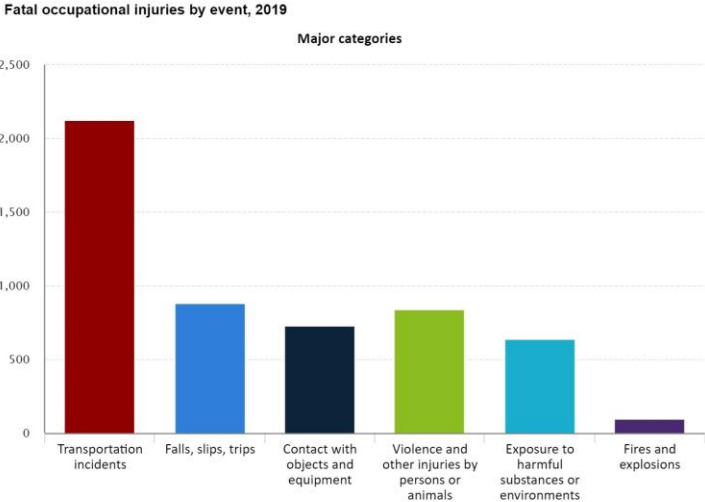
What is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting.

A workplace may be any location either permanent or temporary where an employee performs any work-related duty.



US Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2019



Domestic Violence spillover is the fastest growing category of Workplace Violence.

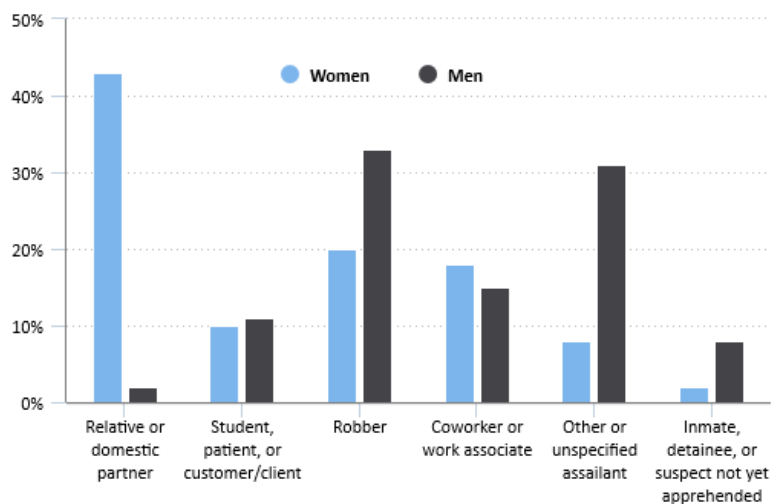


Homicide is the leading cause of death on the job for women.

More than 1 million women are stalked each year in the U.S.



Percent of work-related homicides by gender of decedent and assailant type, 2015



Where Do Our Greatest Threats Come From?

Someone we hire, work with, fire, date, marry, or divorce



Risk Factors

- Contact with the public
- Exchange of money
- Delivery of passengers, goods, or services
- Having a mobile workplace such as a taxicab or police cruiser
- Working with unstable or volatile persons in health care, social service, or criminal justice settings
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late at night or during early morning hours
- Guarding valuable property or possessions



Perception

How quickly you perceive danger and react appropriately may make a difference in whether you survive or not.



Situational Awareness

Collecting information about your surroundings so you can respond according to what is happening at any given moment.



Threats/Risk

- Eliminated
- Reduced/Avoid
- Assume/Deal with



“We evaluate people all the time, quite attentively, but they only get our conscious attention when there is a reason. We see it all, but we edit out most of it. Thus, when something does call out to us, we ought to pay attention. For many people, that is a muscle they don’t exercise.”

- Gavin de Becker



Intuition is always right in at least two important ways:

It is always in response to something.

It always has your best interest at heart.

* Gavin DeBecker, author of The Gift of Fear



Intuition is a person's sense about a situation influenced by experience and knowledge.

Intuition is the way the mind picks up on patterns and uses experiential and learned knowledge to guide a person during a given situation.

* Left of Bang by Patrick Van Horne



OODA Loop

Observe

Orient

Decide

Act



Threat Avoidance

- KNOW WHERE YOU ARE
- Notify (where you are, how long)
- Survey area
- Have a plan
- If something not right, leave and come back
- Pause and look around
- When finished, leave
- If confronted with danger, leave and call 911



Who is ultimately responsible for your safety and security?



Angry person

- Remain calm.
- Allow the person to vent.
- Show empathy.
- Identify needs and wants.
- Seek a solution or alternatives.
- Follow through on commitment.



The message the receiver gets
is the ONLY one that counts in a conflict!



How to Recognize Aggression

Physical Changes	Behavioral Changes
Sweating / perspiring	Loud speech or shouting
Clenched teeth and jaws	Pointing or jabbing with the finger
Shaking	Swearing/verbal abuse
Muscle tension	Over-sensitivity to what is said
Clenched fists	Standing too close
Rapid breathing/sharp drawing in of breath	Aggressive posture
Staring eyes	Tone of voice
Restlessness, fidgeting	Problems with concentration
Flushed face or extreme paleness of face	Stamping feet
Change in Health of a Family Member	Banging/kicking things
Rise in pitch of voice	Walking away



Understand the mindset of the hostile or potentially violent person

- The person has a compelling need to communicate his grievance to someone now! Give him a verbal outlet. Even if he is wrong, the individual is acting on perceptions that are real to him. In the overwhelming number of cases, the person just wants fairness.



Self Control

- Appear calm and self-assured, even though you don't feel like it. Relax facial muscles and look confident. Anxiety can make the other person feel anxious and unsafe which can escalate aggression.



Self Control

- Use a low monotone voice. Our normal reaction would be to have a high-pitched, tight voice when scared.



Self Control

- Be aware of any resources available for back up. Know that you have the choice to leave and/or call the police should de-escalation not be effective.

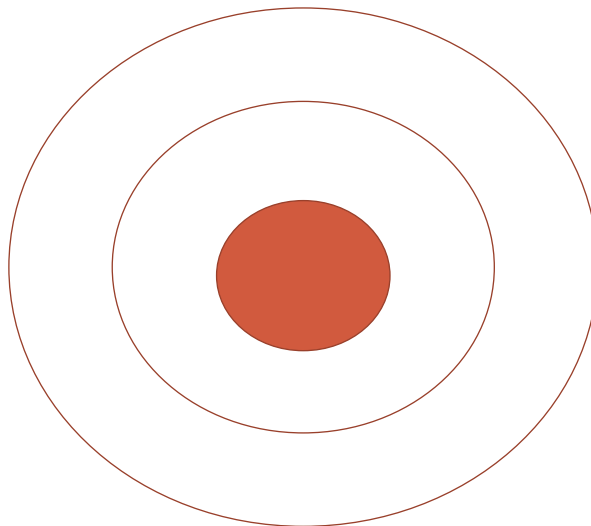


Physical Stance

- Never turn your back for any reason.
- Always be at the same eye level. Encourage the other person to be seated, but if he/she needs to stand, you stand up also.
- Allow extra physical space between you – about 4 times your usual distance. Anger and agitation fill the extra space between you and the other person.



Reactionary Gap



Physical Stance

- Do not stand full front to the angry person. Stand at an angle so you can sidestep away if needed.



De-escalation discussion

- Do not argue or try to convince.
- Do not get loud or try to yell over a screaming person. Wait until he/she takes a breath; then talk. Speak calmly at an average volume.
- Trust your instincts. If you assess or feel that de-escalation is not working, STOP! You will know within 2 or 3 minutes if it's beginning to work. Leave, and call police if necessary.



If confronted with violence...

- **Denial** – We tend to display a surprisingly creative and willful brand of denial. This denial can take the form of delay.
- **Deliberation** – We know something is terribly wrong, but we don't know what to do about it.
- **Decisive Moment** – We've accepted that we are in danger; we've deliberated our options. Now, we take action.

* [The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes—and Why](#) by Amanda Ripley



Before we are in that situation, we must have a mental plan of what we will do if violence occurs.

- What options do we have?
- What escape routes are available?
- What can we use for our defense?



Your goal is to get away from danger if possible.

You don't need permission to call for help.



Finally...

Assess

Plan

Communicate

Train





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