



Workplace Violence Safety Assessment

As a part of the NYS Workplace Violence Prevention Act adopted in 2006, every municipality in the state is required to complete a risk evaluation of their workplaces. It is a good idea to reevaluate your municipal operations for safety against workplace violence incidents, as your municipality likely completed this long ago. Consider how well-protected your employees are from workplace violence whether it be a stranger, a member of the public, or even a coworker.

Employers, with the assistance of an authorized employee representative, are required to evaluate the workplace for factors that may put employees at risk of workplace violence. These factors include:

- Working in a public setting, including offices, board meetings, and field operations.
- Working at night, after hours.
- Working with money, tax collection, and exchanging money.
- Working alone or in small numbers.
- Working in an area with uncontrolled public access.

Workplace violence incidents are occurring at an alarming rate around the state and country. In 2023, mass shootings averaged twice a day, many happening in and around business operations. Incidents can occur in a municipal hall, garage facility, park environment, or in the field. Violent interactions have occurred at work zones, at public libraries, during contentious board meetings, and during many “routine” municipal operations.

There are several protective measures you can take to prevent and minimize violent workplace incidents within your facilities and operations.

For example:

- Consider barrier protections for office staff. Counters with glass partitions can prevent immediate public access to employees.
- Utilize a secondary egress where office staff can escape when confronted with a violent situation. Also consider a side office, closet, or any secured area where staff can hide, preferably with a phone, to call for help.
- Panic buttons are an excellent, indiscriminate way to notify emergency services.
- Video surveillance can aid in reducing violence and allows for analysis of any incidents that may occur. Consider installing a surveillance camera to monitor traffic and behaviors in work zones.
- Ideally, a single, main entry point with camera surveillance is the best option. Keep all side and rear doors locked to prevent unauthorized public access.
- Remove items that could be used as a weapon from the workspace. Consider chairs in board rooms that are secured to each other or the floor to prevent them from being weaponized during a contentious board meeting.
- Improve outdoor lighting so employees can safely exit the grounds.

There are many more safety practices that your municipality can adopt as a part of the risk evaluation. Please contact your Comp Alliance Risk Control Specialist or our Director of Loss Control, Robert Blaisdell (rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com), for assistance.