

# PERMA<sup>SM</sup>

*Your Source for Solutions*

## Front Desk Safety & Security

*Presented by:*

**Pete Frisoni**

Public Safety Risk Management Specialist

**Trooper Steven Rothwein**

New York State Police

# Workplace violence can happen *anyplace at anytime.*

Front desks are the focal point for incidents involving upset/difficult people, harassment, and threatening behavior.

# ***NYS Workplace Violence (WPV) Prevention Act***

Defined as any physical assault or act of aggressive behavior occurring in the workplace.

Requires public employers to develop and implement programs to prevent and minimize workplace violence and ensure the safety of public employees.

Employees must be allowed to participate in the development and implementation of the program.

# 6 Employer Requirements

1. Risk Evaluation
2. WPV Policy Statement\*
3. WPV Prevention Program\*
4. Employee Training & Information
5. WPV Reporting System
6. WPV Incidents Report

# 1. Risk Evaluation

- Determine what factors or situations might place employees at risk from workplace assaults and homicides.
- Comprised of several items, including examining the physical workplace environment to determine if any risk factors are present

## 2. WPV Policy Statement

- State the goals and objectives of the WPV prevention program
- How employees can participate in the program
- The contact person(s) who must be notified if WPV incident occurs

# 3. WPV Prevention Program

- Develop and implement a written workplace violence prevention program.
- Must include:
  - List of risk factors identified in the evaluation
  - Safeguards employed to reduce or eliminate violence risk
  - Outline/lesson plan for employee training
  - Description of the reporting system
  - Plan to review incident reports annually

## 4. Employee Training & Information

- Provide training and information on risk of workplace violence when hired and annually
- Must include:
  - Risk factors identified in the evaluation
  - Ways employees can protect themselves and specific procedures in place to protect them



## 5. WPV Reporting System

- Develop and implement a system to report incidents of violence
- Employer can create a written report form that includes information required by the Act

## 6. WPV Incidents Report

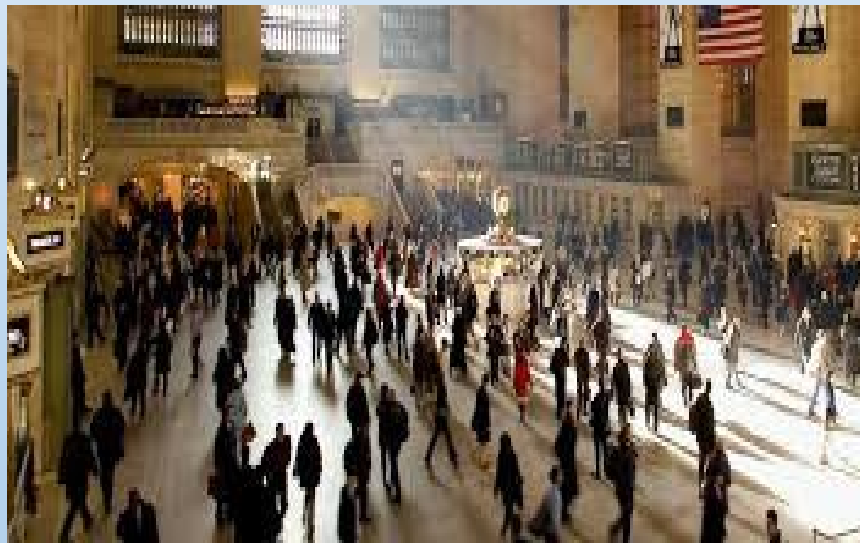
- Maintain a record of incidents in a report
- Review at least annually
- Should be used to identify possible trends in types of incidents that occurred and evaluate effectiveness of employer's attempts to prevent or reduce risk of WPV

*How safe and secure is your  
front desk area?*

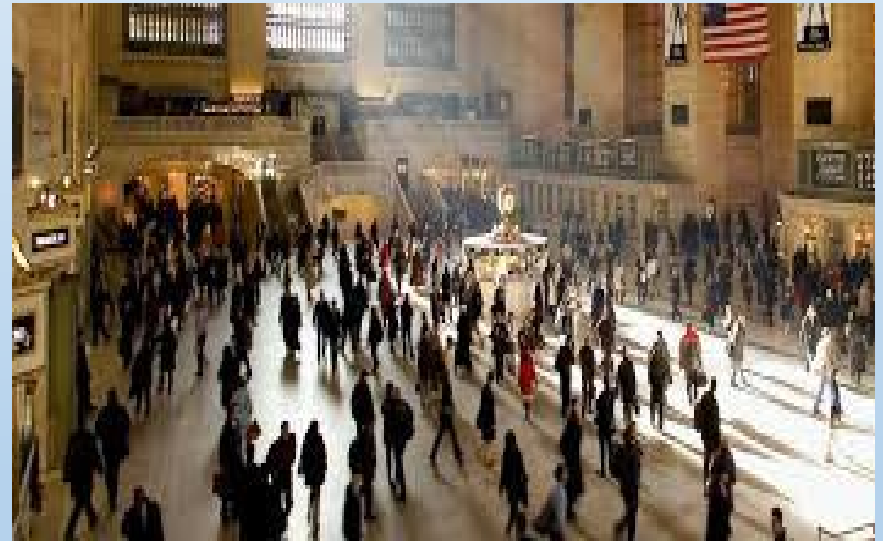
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# Conduct a Risk Assessment

- Identify your security needs (*team effort*)
- Advise your supervisor of safety/security concerns
- Concerns/recommendations should be discussed at safety committee meetings

# Safety Committees

## **PERMA can help you create a safety committee**

- Usually comprised of the municipality's department heads or representatives
- Should include bargaining unit(s)
- Should meet at least quarterly and have formal agenda



# Implementing Effective Measures

The 2 most effective control measures are:

- Engineering Controls
  - Reduce risk through physical changes to the workplace
- Work Practice Controls
  - Reduce risk by changing workplace policies and procedures

# Increasing Safety and Security

- Limit access
- Clear line of sight throughout front desk area
- Staff use entrances/exits away from front desk
- Position computer screens out of public view and sensitive documents away from public view/reach

- Panic buttons
- Cameras/audio that can be monitored and recorded
- Practice emergency response and evacuation drills
- Provide annual security training for all employees and as part of new employee orientation

- Practice emergency response and evacuation drills
- Develop policies and procedures manual
  - Visitors
  - Deliveries
  - Emergency guidelines (medical, fire, gas leak, bomb threat, etc.)

- Evacuation procedure
- Workplace harassment and violence policies
- How to discreetly signal for assistance
- Handling difficult/angry people
- First Amendment auditors

# Handling Difficult People

**Goal is to diffuse the situation/calm person**

- Focus on the behavior, not the person
- May take time – don't rush
- Minimize distractions

- Be in control w/ firm, pleasant, non-threatening tone
- Choose your words carefully
- Listen with empathy
- Paraphrase to clarify meaning

# Things to *Not* Do

- Avoid arguing
- Don't be sarcastic/condescending
- Don't make promises you can't keep



# Resources

## PERMA Safety Institute (PSI)

- *Active Shooter & Workplace Violence Response*
- *Dealing with Difficult Customers*
- *Emergency Communication in the Workplace*
- *Emergency Response in the Workplace*
- *Listening Skills*

# Resources

## NYS Department of Labor

- Workplace Violence Prevention Information
  - *[dol.ny.gov/workplace-safety](https://dol.ny.gov/workplace-safety)*