

How to Prevent a Physical Attack

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- A physical attack is a type of workplace violence.
- It is important to know the signs of potentially violent people.
- Proper handling of a potentially violent situation can save lives.
- A physical attack includes hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking and any other threatening physical contact.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Workplace violence is a common occurrence

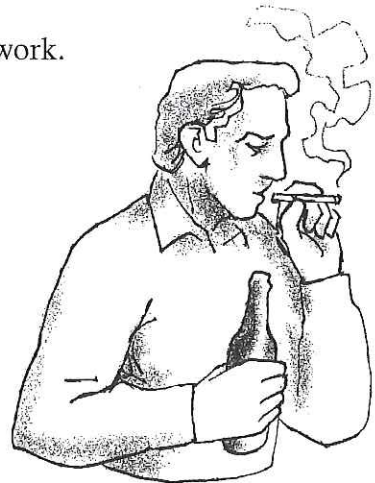
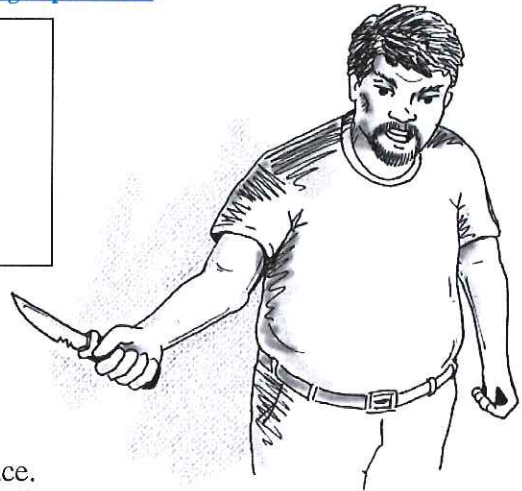
- Over 2 million violent acts occur every year in the workplace.
- Workplace violence is defined as violent acts directed toward persons at work, including physical assaults and threats of assault.
- Homicide is a leading cause of death in men and women while at work.

Potentially violent people

- Exhibit emotional highs and lows
- Display signs of extreme stress
- Experience personality changes
- Threaten violence or talk about "getting even"
- Push or test the limits of acceptable behavior
- Attempt to intimidate others
- Feel that others are out to get him or her
- Talk a lot about weapons
- Hold grudges and blame others for problems
- Show frequent unreasonable anger
- Combine any of the above with drug or alcohol abuse

How to prevent a physical attack

- Always have an easy way out of a room or location
- Know your company's established emergency communication policies
- Carry only a minimal amount of money and required identification
- Alert supervisors to any concerns about safety or security
- Maintain professional relationships with co-workers
- Analyze your worksite and identify risk factors, such as sharp objects
- Limit customer access to your workplace
- Do not allow unknown persons into your worksite
- Avoid traveling alone into isolated or unfamiliar locations, such as garbage areas or storage sheds



(Continued on back)

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

How to Prevent a Physical Attack

Reducing Anger

- Showing empathy for an upset person can help to reduce a tense situation.
- Be willing to consider others' view points in a mild tone. This creates a no blame situation where the upset person feels they have options.
- Phrases to use
 - I will check into this right now
 - This is important
 - Thank you for letting me know this
 - I understand you have a concern
 - Let me take some notes
- Phrases to avoid
 - That's a lie
 - You don't know what you're talking about
 - I may have to call the police
 - You should have known
 - I can't control that



How to handle a physical attack

- Stay calm and use anger reducing language
- Maintain eye contact as a sign of respect
- Increase your physical space by taking a step back
- Create a physical barrier between you and the aggressive person, such as a counter or table
- Adopt a formal language style, such as Mr. Smith
- Lower your voice
- Do not turn your back
- Signal or call for assistance, when you feel the situation has escalated and you can do so safely
- Never try to grab a weapon
- Watch for a safe chance to escape to a safe area
- Never touch the individual or try to remove him from the area



Note to trainer: Briefly review your company's policies for reporting and handling violent or potentially violent behavior.

Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Workplace Violence Do's and Don'ts**.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Know the characteristics of violent people.
- Properly report all violent situations.
- Take steps to prevent workplace violence, such as using anger reducing phrases.

DON'T:

- Yell at someone who is yelling at you.
- Carry large amounts of money or other valuables at work.
- Ignore people who threaten to use physical violence when angry.

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