



Partnering to reduce workplace violence

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Issue Addressed:

Workplace violence is the third leading cause of on-the-job deaths in the U.S.

Activity:

Workers experience nearly two million incidents of workplace violence each year in the U.S. Workplaces must be prepared for a wide range of potential violent events, such as robbery, workplace bullying, stalking, and active shootings. Workplace violence is a hazard for businesses of all sizes and from all industries.

Working with large and small businesses, police departments, community organizations, healthcare institutions, and other university partners, the University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center (UI IPRC) has been a research leader for the last two decades in successfully reducing the burden of workplace violence in the nation.

Impact:

Some of our key activities & impacts:

1. We sponsored a national symposium to create the white paper, "Workplace Violence: A Report to the Nation." This document was the source for the National Workplace Violence Prevention Act and remains one of the most frequently cited documents on workplace violence.
2. We worked with our partners to develop an evidence-based robbery and violence prevention program for small retail businesses. Small businesses with fewer than ten employees comprise 79% of firms and 11% of all workers in the US. Workers in smaller establishments experience the highest risk for occupational injury but have the fewest resources to address safety risks. The robbery and violence prevention program was rigorously tested and found to significantly reduce robbery and related injury.

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In addition, police agencies reported improved relationships with their business communities, and business owners reported reductions in loitering and shoplifting. Law enforcement agencies in six cities across the U.S. have disseminated the program to more than 1,300 businesses.

3. Along with our interdisciplinary research partners, we helped draft and evaluate state legislation to reduce violence in healthcare facilities.
4. We partnered with several Fortune 500 companies and the Association for Threat Assessment Professionals to evaluate corporate workplace violence and threat assessment programs. This partnership included a long-term evaluation of threat assessment training and assembling information about approaches corporations are taking to address workplace violence.
5. We examined workplace violence victimization among young workers through phone surveys and focus groups. Our work identified risk factors and described the employment and educational consequences of workplace violence victimization.
6. We created the handout "De-escalation to prevent workplace violence during COVID-19" with tips for conversations with employees, customers, patients, & more.

Population:

Large and small U.S. workplaces, young workers

A crime prevention specialist from a large metropolitan police department: "The program improved our police department's relationship with the business community and offered an opportunity to engage more proactively with businesses in crime prevention."