Workplace Violence

Introduction:

Imagine it’s a nice spring day, the sun is shining, and you are at work, focusing on the task for the day. All of a sudden you hear what sounds like a car backfiring but then, you see people dropping to the ground and at that moment, you realize you’ve been hearing gunshots. At first there is confusion, but then you instinctively remember that your survival depends on being able to adjust your state of mind and use what you learned in training on your first day on the job. You are prepared; you adjust your focus and respond by applying the protection techniques; Run, Hide, Fight! In most occurrences of workplace violence, there are warning signs leading up to the event. A coworker had a disagreement with the manager the day before, and you now remember that same person experienced some family trouble last week, and was making bizarre comments during lunch but you just shrugged it off as “having a bad day”.

Discussion Points:

- Recognition of Warning Signs
- Situational Awareness
- Reporting Incidents to Your Supervisor or HR Department
- Workplace Violence Prevention Program and Plan
- Protection Techniques: Run, Hide, Fight!

Discussion:

It is important that you be aware of your surroundings and the actions of others. Situational Awareness is an important factor in preventing workplace violence. A heightened sense of awareness and the ability to recognize warning signs and react immediately by reporting the incident to your supervisor or HR Department may save many lives, including your own.

According to OSHA, 2 million workers in the US are victims of workplace violence each year. It is recommended that all companies establish a Workplace Violence Prevention Program and create a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. Conducting an analysis of the workplace environment and identifying risks and hazards is a step in preparing a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan. It is important that the company take all precautions by installing extra security measures including extra lighting, video surveillance, an alarm system, and providing a security guard if necessary. Employers should provide training when the employee is hired and annually thereafter. Preparation for workplace violence or an active shooter incident may save your life and those of your coworkers.

As always, stay safe out there!