

What About Violence in the Workplace?

There are many forms of violence in the workplace, from raised voices, profanity, or sexual harassment to robbery or homicide. Although you hear about homicide most often, that kind of violence is the most extreme and not very common. To assess your workplace's vulnerability to violence ask yourself these questions.

- If you work in an office, is it secure? Do you have easy-to-use phone systems with emergency buttons, sign-in policies for visitors, panic buttons, safe rooms, security guards, good lighting, and safety training?
- Are all employees trained on security procedures?
- Are you encouraged to report unusual or worrisome behavior? Is there a clear written policy that spells out procedures in cases of violence and sanctions for violators? Make sure you know whom to report unusual behaviors.
- Are there procedures in place to report sexual harassment? Is it clear that violators will be punished and victims will not?

If the answers to these questions are "no," you can approach someone in the personnel department with your concerns. Employers are liable for any harm that may come to you while you're at work and most of them want to lower the risks. If your employer doesn't take action, look for another job.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Workplace

Drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace are problems that affect everyone,

not just the abuser. Approximately 68 percent of illegal drug users are employed full- or part-time. There's a good chance that someone where you work abuses alcohol or drugs.

- Workers who abuse alcohol and drugs are far less productive, miss more work days, and are more likely to injure themselves or someone else.
- Employers pass on the costs of drug and alcohol abuse on to other employees through reduced salaries, benefits packages, and privileges. Co-workers often shoulder the burden of filling in for absent or tardy users.

Don't enable a troubled co-worker to continue abusing alcohol or other drugs on the job by ignoring the problem, lying or covering up for him or her, doing his or her job, or lending money. Talk to your supervisor.



TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME

Crime Prevention Tips From
National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
www.weprevent.org

and

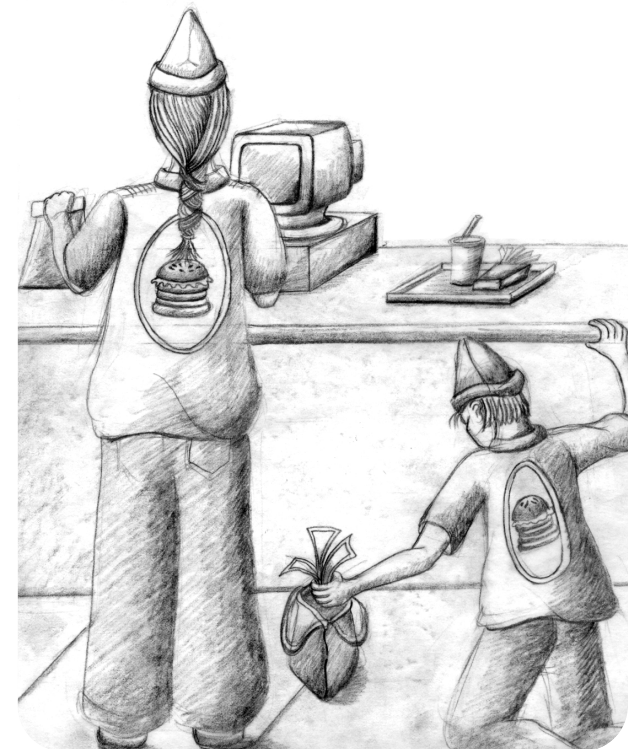


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Take Crime Prevention to Work



**National Crime
Prevention Council**

Going to work?
You need to take
your street smarts along.

Almost any crime that
can happen at home or
school can happen at
work. But common-sense
prevention skills can help
make your workplace
safer.

Whether you're working
part-time after school and
on the weekends, have a
summer job, or starting
your first full-time job, it's
smart and responsible—
and mature—to avoid
becoming a victim.

Work Sense is Common Sense

- Keep your purse, wallet, keys, or other valuable items with you at all times or locked in a drawer or closet.
- Let your parents know your work schedule, especially if you're going to be leaving work early or staying late.
- Be sure to let your supervisor know when you are going on a break or leaving the premises, even for a few minutes.
- Mark your personal items, such as a radio, CDs, or cellular phone, with your name or initials and an identification number like your driver's license number, if you choose to bring them to work.
- Report to maintenance any broken or flickering lights, dim corridors, doors that don't lock properly, and broken windows. Don't wait for someone else to do it.
- Don't advertise your social life or your family's vacation plans to people at work.
- Be clear about and always follow official procedures for handling cash.
- Check with your parents if your supervisor asks that you close up in the evening. If you feel uncomfortable, ask that someone else stay with you.
- Do not use drugs or alcohol at work or while working.
- Do not take anything from work. It's theft. You can be fired or arrested.
- Report any suspicious activity or person immediately.
- Cooperate if you are confronted by a robber. Merchandise and cash can always be replaced—people can't.

Trouble Spots

- *Stairwells and out-of-the-way corridors*—don't take the stairs alone. Talk to your supervisor or building manager about improving poorly lighted corridors and stairways.
- *Elevators*—don't get into elevators with people who look out of place or behave in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. If you find yourself in an elevator with someone who makes you nervous, press the next floor button and get off as soon as possible. Also, stand near the emergency phone or button in the elevator.
- *Restrooms*—attackers can hide in stalls and corners. Make sure restrooms are locked and only employees have keys. Be extra cautious when using restrooms that are isolated or poorly lighted.
- *After hours*—don't work late alone. Create a buddy system for walking to parking lots or public transportation or ask security to escort you.
- *Parking lots or garages*—choose a well-lighted, well-guarded parking garage. Always lock your car and roll windows up all the way. If you notice strangers hanging around the parking lot, notify security or the police. When you approach your car, have the key ready. Check the floor and front and back seats before getting in. Lock your car as soon as you get in—before you buckle your seat belt.
- *Public transportation*—exercise caution when using subways and buses. Wait at well-lighted, busy stops. Sit close to the driver or exit doors. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, tell the driver or subway personnel.