



Threat Assessment Team Guide

Publication 108

May 2015
Transmittal Letter 7

A. Purpose. Under federal law (the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970), the Postal Service has an obligation to provide its employees with a safe and healthful place to work. Among the ways the Postal Service proactively meets its obligation is by implementing strategies and tools for reducing workplace violence. One such tool is Publication 108, *Threat Assessment Team Guide*, which provides guidance to Postal Service management in responding to and assessing the seriousness of violent and potentially violent situations.

B. Explanation. This revision:

1. Establishes Headquarters and Area Threat Assessment Teams.
2. Integrates Workplace Environment Tracking System into Publication 108.
3. Changes the Threat Assessment Team Composition:
 - a. Removes (Area) Manager, Workplace Environment. The position does not exist in our organization.
 - b. Adds Workplace Environment Improvement (Headquarters).
 - c. Adds Area Threat Assessment Team (TAT) Contacts as Situational Advisor.
 - d. Adds National Preparedness Specialists (NPS) and Manager, National Preparedness Headquarters as Situational Advisor.
 - e. Changes Occupational Health Nurse Administrator (OHNA) from Ad Hoc to Situational Advisor.
4. Updates and clarifies training requirements for Core, Ad Hoc, and Situational Advisor TAT members.

C. Availability. Publication 108 appears online on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site:
<http://blue.usps.gov/cpim>.

D. Rescission. This document supersedes the June 2011 edition of Publication 108. Recycle all previous editions.

E. Comments. Submit questions and suggestions in writing to:

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F. Effective Date. This handbook is effective on May 1, 2015.



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Contents

Transmittal Letter 7	i
1 Workplace Violence Prevention	1
1-1 Workplace Violence Prevention Program	1
1-1.1 Introduction	1
1-1.2 Zero Tolerance Policy and Action Plan	2
1-1.3 Violence Prevention Strategies	3
1-2 Threat Assessment Team	3
1-3 Glossary	3
2 Threat Assessment Team Purpose and Objectives	5
2-1 Mission Statement	5
2-2 Purpose	5
2-3 Goals	5
2-4 Proactive Measures to Achieve Goals	5
2-5 Three Primary Tasks	6
2-6 Paramount Considerations	6
2-6.1 General	6
2-6.2 Domestic Violence and Stalking	7
3 Establishing a Threat Assessment Team	9
3-1 Threat Assessment Team Composition	9
3-2 TAT Members and Their Responsibilities	9
3-2.1 Core Membership	9
3-2.2 Core Member Responsibilities	9
3-2.2.1 General	9
3-2.2.2 Human Resources Manager	10
3-2.2.3 Labor Relations Manager	10
3-2.2.4 Safety Manager	10
3-2.2.5 District Manager or Operations Designee	10
3-2.2.6 Senior Plant Manager or Operations Designee	10
3-2.2.7 Postal Inspector	10
3-2.3 Situational Advisors	11
3-2.4 Situational Advisor Responsibilities	11
3-2.4.1 Workplace Environment Improvement (Headquarters)	11
3-2.4.2 Postal Service Legal Counsel	11

3-2.4.3 EAP Consultant	12
3-2.4.4 Occupational Health Nurse Administrator.....	12
3-2.4.5 Outside Mental Health Professional	12
3-2.4.6 Area Threat Assessment Team Contacts	12
3-2.4.7 National Preparedness Specialist or Manager, National Preparedness (Headquarters).....	12
3-2.5 Ad Hoc Members	13
3-2.6 Ad Hoc Member Responsibilities	13
3-2.6.1 General	13
3-2.6.2 Postmaster, Manager, or Supervisor at the Site of an Incident.....	14
3-2.6.3 Health and Resource Management Manager	14
3-2.6.4 Human Resources Generalist Principal.....	14
3-2.7 Criteria for Selecting Ad Hoc Members	14
4 Threat Assessment Team Process.....	17
4-1 TAT Notification of an Incident or Situation	17
4-2 Workplace Environment Tracking System	17
4-3 Incident Response	18
4-4 Meetings and Minutes	22
5 Training and Communication	23
5-1 TAT, Postmaster, Manager, and Supervisor Training.....	23
5-1.1 Threat Assessment Team Training	23
5-1.2 Advanced Threat Assessment Team Training.....	23
5-2 Workplace Violence Awareness Training	24
5-2.1 Postmaster, Supervisor, and Manager Training	24
5-2.2 Acting Supervisor (204b) Training.....	24
5-3 Information Is Prevention	24
6 Workplace Violence Prevention Compliance Measures.....	27

Exhibits

Exhibit 1-1.2a	
Sample Zero Tolerance Policy Statement.....	30
Exhibit 1-1.2b	
Sample Action Plan for Threats and Assaults.....	31
Exhibit 2-6a	
Risk Indicators.....	35
Exhibit 2-6b	
Environmental Conditions, Societal Factors, and Contributing Events	36
Exhibit 2-6c	
Recognizing the Warning Signs of Domestic Violence at Work	37
Exhibit 3-2.2	
Priority Risk Scale	38
Exhibit 4	
Sample Threat Assessment Data Entry Template.....	41
Exhibit 4-3.8	
Sample Threat Assessment Team Outcome Memo (Priority Risk Rating 2).....	42
Exhibit 4-3.10	
Sample Post-Incident Analysis Form (Incidents ranked Priority Risk Rating 1 & 2)	43

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1 Workplace Violence Prevention

1-1 Workplace Violence Prevention Program

1-1.1 Introduction

Every business organization, whether it is a federal or state program, in the private or nonprofit sectors, large or small, is susceptible to workplace violence. Workplace violence was not identified or recognized as a workplace issue until the mid-1980s.¹ Since that time, broad-based attention has been directed towards workplace violence research and prevention. Local, state, and federal governments, as well as private industry, labor, and academic organizations have all invested efforts to develop workplace violence prevention measures.

The Postal Service remains dedicated to violence prevention through purposefully developed policies and programs. A major component of the Postal Service's workplace violence prevention program is the Headquarters, Areas, and Districts Threat Assessment Teams (TAT).

The most effective way to respond to the problem of workplace violence is to engage prevention measures. A workplace violence prevention program provides the foundation for establishing a violence-free workplace. This program depends on a universal zero tolerance policy statement and a consistently implemented action plan for the management of threats and assaults.

This publication sets forth provisions to:

- Ensure consistency throughout the organization.
- Enhance the development of each TAT.
- Outline the TAT guidelines for Headquarters, Areas, and Districts to implement.

The Postal Service will continue to make revisions to this TAT Guide as advances in workplace violence prevention are evidenced through research and the experience of our organization's efforts. All of the supporting information and training materials associated with this guide have been updated to incorporate the revisions put forth in this guide.

The Postal Service has an image that rests in the literature and review of the history of workplace violence. The August 20, 1986, tragedy at Edmond,

1. Watson, Eleanor Lynn (2006). Active Inaction-Symbolic Politics, Agenda Denial or Incubation Period: Twenty Years of U.S. Workplace Violence Research and Prevention Activity. Dissertation, West Virginia University.

Oklahoma, is often viewed as a threshold event in categorizing workplace violence. The Edmond tragedy was not the first of its kind to occur in the private or public sector. However, the magnitude of the loss of life was a mark in time and raised public awareness of workplace violence.

Commitment to a violence-free workplace is a priority for the Postal Service. We remember each and every workplace violence fatality — in homage to our employees who lost their lives, those whose lives have been impacted by workplace violence and in our determination to prevent further acts of violence.

1-1.2 **Zero Tolerance Policy and Action Plan**

Zero tolerance means that every act or threat of violence, regardless of the initiator, elicits an immediate and firm response. The response may involve the issuance of corrective action, up to and including termination of the offender from employment in the Postal Service.

The concept of *zero tolerance* is based on the belief that no employee should have to work in the atmosphere of fear and intimidation that occurs when threats and inappropriate behavior remain unaddressed. Every employee is entitled to a safe work environment. Thus, *zero tolerance* is the most important facet of an organization's commitment to providing employees with a violence-free workplace.

The meaning of the term *zero tolerance* is commonly interpreted as resulting in a uniform and automatic response to all reported incidents. Even though the meaning of *zero tolerance* is set out correctly in Postal Service policy, many employees focus on a very narrow interpretation of the concept.

Therefore, it is important for TAT members and management to be knowledgeable about the correct interpretation regarding the *Zero Tolerance Policy*. Local management and TAT members can educate employees by explaining the term **Zero Tolerance** sets a standard of workplace behavior (violent and threatening conduct is not acceptable), not a system of corrective action.²

Corrective action may be imposed for a violation of the *zero tolerance* policy, but such decisions should be based on the specific factual circumstances of each separate incident.

By implementing a **Zero Tolerance Policy Statement**, the Postal Service reaffirms the objectives of the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace. See [Exhibit 1-1.2a](#) for a sample of the Postal Service's *Zero Tolerance Policy Statement*.

It is essential to issue an action plan that delineates reporting procedures for Postal Service management to deal with acts of workplace violence.

See [Exhibit 1-1.2b](#) for a sample of the action plan that can be used as a model for developing local plans.

2. National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (2002). Workplace Violence: Issues in Response. Critical Incident Response Group. FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia.

1-1.3 **Violence Prevention Strategies**

The six organizational strategies for reducing workplace violence are the following:

- *Selection* — Hire the right individual for the right job.
- *Security* — Ensure appropriate safeguards for employees, customers, and property.
- *Communication of policy* — Consistently communicate and enforce Postal Service policy regarding violent and/or inappropriate behavior.
- *Environment and culture* — Create a work setting and maintain an atmosphere that is perceived to be fair and free from unlawful and inappropriate behavior.
- *Employee support* — Ensure that all Postal Service employees are aware of the resources available to assist them in coping with problems at work and at home.
- *Separation* — When separation is necessary, handle the process professionally, including an assessment for potential violent and inappropriate behavior. See Publication 106, *Guide to Professional Parting*, for details on handling separations.

1-2 Threat Assessment Team

A TAT utilizes a cross-functional, multidisciplinary team approach to help assess threatening situations and to develop risk abatement plans that minimize the potential risk for violence. The TAT is one component of the Postal Service's comprehensive Workplace Violence Prevention Program. Headquarters, Areas, and Districts must establish and maintain a TAT.

1-3 Glossary

- **Area Threat Assessment Team Contacts** — Due to an organizational redesign, the Manager, Workplace Environment position was eliminated. In November 2011, Headquarters WEI asked the Area Human Resource Managers for the name of a person from each Area Office who would be overseeing the District Threat Assessment Teams. The Area Threat Assessment Team contact provides oversight to District TATs to ensure compliance of policies and procedures regarding Publication 108.
- **Assault** (broadly defined) — Any willful attempt to inflict injury on another person, coupled with the apparent ability to inflict injury, or any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.
Note: An assault may be committed without touching, striking, or doing bodily harm to another person (e.g., throwing a brick at a person that does not actually strike the person).

- **Credible threat** (as defined by the Inspection Service) — A statement or action that has the apparent capability of inflicting harm and is directed in a manner that causes individuals to know they are the target of the threat and that puts them in fear for their safety or that of their immediate family.
- **Emergency Management Team** — A team which establishes emergency management procedures, team roles and responsibilities and Postal Service emergency management activities for integration with the country's National Response Plan. The current Integrated Emergency Management Plan (IEMP) Annex 1K, Violence in the Workplace, integrates the existing TAT and Workplace Violence Prevention Program into the Incident Command System. The Emergency Management Team (EMT) will work in cooperation with the TAT to provide care and support for victims and their families, and establish an orderly return to normal operations.
- **Situation or incident** — A difficult or risky state of affairs or a combination of circumstances over time that has led to or could lead to violence.
- **Threat** (broadly defined) — A statement or act that carries the intention to inflict harm or injury on any person, or on his or her property. Threats also include words or actions intended to intimidate another person or to interfere with the performance of his or her official duties (e.g., standing in front of a corridor with a menacing posture and not permitting another person access to load a Postal Service vehicle).
- **Threat Assessment Team (TAT) Membership and Meeting Tool** — An online tool to track and capture information regarding mandated Publication 108, *Threat Assessment Team Guide, Compliance Measures*.
- **Threat maker** — A person reported to the TAT or later identified by the TAT as a person with a risk of violence toward others or oneself, or a person who has committed an act of physical violence.
- **Violence** (as defined by the Postal Service) — Any verbal or physical threat or assault on a person that has the intention of injuring or results in injury.

Note: Violence is not limited to fatalities or physical injuries. Intentional words, acts, or actions meant to provoke another can escalate and result in an injury if not immediately and appropriately addressed by management. Threats of suicide are considered acts of violence.
- **Workplace Environment Tracking System (WETS)** — A nationwide, central repository for the four workplace environment processes: Initial Management Inquiries (IMI), Workplace Harassment Fact Finding Investigations (WHFF), Threat Assessment Case Tracking (TACT), and Workplace Environment Interventions (WEI).
- **Workplace Environment Tracking System End-users** — Headquarters, Area, and District Human Resources will designate users respectively that will enter sensitive information regarding workplace environment cases.

2 Threat Assessment Team Purpose and Objectives

2-1 Mission Statement

The mission of the TAT is to prevent workplace violence.

2-2 Purpose

The TAT assesses the danger or harm that may result from a threat, both to the victim and to others affected, and recommends an appropriate risk abatement plan.

2-3 Goals

The goals of the TAT are to:

- Identify individuals who have shown signs of violence toward others in the workplace, toward themselves, or who have committed acts of physical violence.
- Assess the risk posed by the overall circumstances of the threats.
- Manage the case to reduce risk to employees, customers, and the organization.
- Contribute toward a safe workplace for every employee.
- Help reduce incidents of inappropriate behavior and resolve conflicts.

2-4 Proactive Measures to Achieve Goals

To achieve these goals, the TAT must be prepared to:

- Respond quickly to incidents that may endanger employees and customers or disrupt the workplace.
- Support management personnel, labor unions, and management organizations in handling difficult situations.
- Act as a resource and offer support, including information and recommendations.

- Act in the best interests of the Postal Service, its employees, and its customers.
- Follow up on any incident to ensure that the threat is mitigated.
- Identify proactive strategies and procedures to maintain a safer workplace.

The TAT addresses issues defined within the scope of the Postal Service definitions of violence and credible threat (see the glossary at [1-3](#)).

2-5 Three Primary Tasks

The three primary tasks of the TAT are to:

- **Identify threat makers** — The TAT must identify the threat makers and the environmental conditions, societal factors and contributing events in a situation.
- **Assess risk** — The TAT must assess the risk level of a situation or incident.
- **Recommend a risk abatement plan** — The TAT must develop a recommended risk abatement plan for managing an identified situation or incident. The primary focus of the risk abatement plan is to reduce risk and liability.

2-6 Paramount Considerations

2-6.1 General

TAT members are responsible for being careful and diligent in guarding the individual's contractual, civil and legal rights. TAT members must evaluate the workplace environmental conditions and risk factors that may indicate a potential for violence. See [Exhibit 2-6a](#) for risk indicators and [Exhibit 2-6b](#) for environmental conditions, societal factors, and contributing events — additional factors are provided to remind TAT members that *final assessment and planning are not accomplished until all relevant factors and events that contribute to the potential for violence are examined*.

When appropriate, the local TAT alerts the District Emergency Manager and the designated National Preparedness personnel to the potential for or serious nature of the incident. For more information, consult the Integrated Emergency Management Plan (IEMP) homepage on the Postal Service intranet, *Blue*.

2-6.2 **Domestic Violence and Stalking**

Workplace violence includes domestic violence. Domestic violence awareness needs to be an integral part of any workplace violence prevention program. “Every year, according to a Justice Department study, approximately 18,700 violent workplace events are committed by an intimate of the victim: a current or former spouse, lover, partner, or boyfriend/girlfriend.”³ Further, according to a study by the University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center, 5 percent of workplace homicides (that is about one-third of homicides not associated with a robbery or other “stranger” crime) fall into this category.⁴ See [Exhibit 2-6c](#) for behavior that may suggest to a manager that an employee is being victimized in a violent relationship.

A victim of domestic violence may be particularly susceptible in the workplace because the abuser knows the victim’s work location, and it is easier for a victim to change residence or phone numbers than to change jobs. Also, a domestic violence victim may work at the same location as the abuser or the abuser may have access to the work site from another job function.

The domestic violence abuser can exhibit stalking behavior. However, stalking is not always from a prior relationship. Stalking may be the result of a person’s desired or imagined relationship with another. Stalking legislation has existed in the United States since 1991; however, it varies from state to state.

In some cases, stalking begins in the workplace and follows the victim outside the workplace. In other cases, stalking begins outside the workplace and follows the victim into the workplace. Regardless of how stalking arrives at the workplace, organizations should manage reports of stalking similar to traditional workplace threat and violence cases.⁵

It may be difficult to navigate the boundary between personal and work-related issues. The report of a threat emanating from a personal relationship merits the same attention as any other threat in order to assess the risk and implement measures to reduce any likelihood of harm to employees, their co-workers, or the workplace at large. The TAT should involve Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and utilize the EAP Consultant as a situational advisor to threat assessments. The EAP consultant will also be available to provide information and services to the employee.

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3. ASIS International (2005). Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Guideline. Alexandria, VA: ASIS.
 4. National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (2002). Workplace Violence: Issues in Response. Critical Incident Response Group. FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia.
 5. Beatty, D., and Beatty, T. (2002). Bureau of Justice Assistance, South Carolina Department of Public Safety. Workplace Stalking: A Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals. Washington, DC: Justice Solutions.

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3 Establishing a Threat Assessment Team

3-1 Threat Assessment Team Composition

The TAT comprises three categories of members:

- Core members.
- Situational advisors.
- Ad hoc members.

3-2 TAT Members and Their Responsibilities

3-2.1 Core Membership

Core members of the TAT are:

- Human Resources Manager.
- Labor Relations Manager.
- Safety Manager.
- District Manager or Operations Designee.
- Senior Plant Manager or Operations Designee.
- Postal Inspector.

3-2.2 Core Member Responsibilities

3-2.2.1 General

Core team members of the TAT normally address incidents of extreme or high-priority risk (see the Priority Risk Scale in [Exhibit 3-2.2](#)). All core members should become subject matter experts in the area of workplace violence because they serve as both specialists and generalists.

The major responsibilities of each core team member are described below. These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive; other responsibilities may be assigned to core team members.

3-2.2.2 Human Resources Manager

- Coordinating and overseeing the TAT.
- Determining whether or not to convene the TAT.
- Determining whether or not ad hoc members are to participate.
- Assigning TAT member duties and monitoring core-team assignments.
- Determining what outside resources are needed and who is to contact them.
- Determining who is to prepare and maintain official hard copy TAT records, TACT module of the WETS National Database, and the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.
- Reviewing history of workplace interventions and climate assessments.

3-2.2.3 Labor Relations Manager

- Providing guidance on issues regarding an employee's work status (e.g., placing employees on administrative leave or in a non-duty, non-pay status).
- Serving as a resource to postmasters, managers, or supervisors regarding administrative and/or corrective action.
- Meeting with employees, witnesses, and concerned employees as needed.
- Reviewing an employee's disciplinary record.
- Communicating to the TAT relevant information regarding contractual issues.

3-2.2.4 Safety Manager

- Reviewing the employee's safety or accident profile.
- Communicating relevant information to the TAT.
- Preparing a brief summary of the employee's safety record for the TAT.
- Suggesting preventive measures and/or safety talks.

3-2.2.5 District Manager or Operations Designee

- Providing knowledge on how to minimize disruption of work-site operations.
- Providing information about security needs.

3-2.2.6 Senior Plant Manager or Operations Designee

- Providing knowledge on how to minimize disruption of work-site operations.
- Providing information about security needs.

3-2.2.7 Postal Inspector

- Reviewing a current or former employee's military records.
- Contacting Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), state, and local law enforcement agencies for an employee's criminal record.

- Reviewing gun registration records, vehicle identification information, or both.
- Conducting criminal background checks.
- Interviewing current or former employees and customers.
- Conducting a formal investigation of an incident.
- Preparing an Investigative Memorandum or Assault Threat Specialty Report and submitting it to Postal Service management.
- Preparing a Presentation Letter (Consider for Presentation) of an incident for the United States Attorney or District Attorney.
- Acting as a liaison with other law enforcement agencies.
- Consulting with management about security for affected work sites.

3-2.3 **Situational Advisors**

The responsibilities of situational advisors are described below. These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive; other responsibilities may be assigned.

Situational advisors include:

- Workplace Environment Improvement (Headquarters).
- Postal Service legal counsel.
- EAP Consultant.
- Occupational Health Nurse Administrator.
- Outside mental health professional.
- Area Threat Assessment Team Contacts.
- National Preparedness Specialist or Manager, National Preparedness (Headquarters).

3-2.4 **Situational Advisor Responsibilities**

3-2.4.1 **Workplace Environment Improvement (Headquarters)**

- Providing organizational development recommendations and resources to the Headquarters TAT core team on abatement strategies.
- Providing guidance to address issues impacting the workplace where the incident occurred.
- Serving as a consultant to the Area Human Resources Managers and/or Area Threat Assessment Team Contacts as requested or as needed.

3-2.4.2 **Postal Service Legal Counsel**

- Providing legal guidance in the best interests of the organization.
- Providing legal advice to management.
- Advising on confidentiality and privacy concerns.
- Providing legal developments in the area of workplace violence.
- Providing the latest information on statutes, regulations, and guidelines about violence prevention.

3-2.4.3 EAP Consultant

- Providing guidance on how to approach the situation or incident.
- Recommending and assisting, when indicated, the need to refer an employee to the EAP.
- Serving as an information expert on domestic violence, suicide, substance abuse, and mental health issues.

3-2.4.4 Occupational Health Nurse Administrator

- Reviewing an employee's medical records, fitness-for-duty examinations, and current medical history.
- Contacting an employee's private treating physician.
- Providing specific employee medical information to the TAT on a need-to-know basis.
- Scheduling fitness-for-duty examinations when warranted.

3-2.4.5 Outside Mental Health Professional

- Providing guidance to defuse a situation or incident.
- Interviewing an employee at the first indication of potentially violent behavior for an initial risk assessment.

3-2.4.6 Area Threat Assessment Team Contacts

- Oversee the Area TAT Compliance Measures.
- Monitoring District TATs' Compliance Measures using the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.
- Reviewing Districts' quarterly TAT Meeting Minutes.
- Reviewing Districts' annual TAT Self-Audit.
- Ensuring Districts' disseminate and post their annual *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures*.
- Ensuring Districts' Core Team Members complete the Threat Assessment Team Training Course, either #10015093 or the Threat Assessment Team Orientation classroom course #22203-00 that is no longer available. Also, Core Team Members must complete the current Advanced Threat Assessment Team Training.

3-2.4.7 National Preparedness Specialist or Manager, National Preparedness (Headquarters)

- Acting as the subject matter expert (SME) on emergency preparedness, response, and Emergency Management Team (EMT) related matters.
- Advising on cases that may impact operations on a macro level beyond an individual work unit.
- Advising when a case may need to be elevated from the TAT to the EMT.
- Facilitating and preparing district management for operational resiliency before, during, and after critical incidents.

3-2.5 Ad Hoc Members

Factors to be considered in ad hoc members' assignments are:

- Representation of bargaining and nonbargaining employees.
- Diversity of the workplace (e.g., gender, race, and cultural differences).

The coordinator for the ad hoc team is the Human Resources Manager.

Ad hoc members may include:

- Postmaster, manager or supervisor (at the site of an incident).
- Human Resources Generalist Principal.
- Health and Resource Management Manager.
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Specialist.
- Security Control Officer.
- Union organization and management association officials.
- Others as deemed necessary.

The inclusion of union organization and management association officials is encouraged whenever appropriate to assist the TAT in managing a case.

Teams are encouraged to develop a collaborative relationship with union organizations and management associations with respect to workplace violence prevention efforts. At the highest level of collaboration, their role should include:

- a. Supporting the Postal Service's workplace violence and prevention program;
- b. Participating in designing and carrying out prevention efforts;
- c. Attending TAT meetings by the team's invitation; and
- d. Cooperating with and participating in training efforts.⁶

3-2.6 Ad Hoc Member Responsibilities

3-2.6.1 General

Although the TAT deals with higher-level incidents of risk, the team may benefit from having these ad hoc members assist in dealing with lower-level incidents.

- Ad hoc members are employees who may be available to assist the TAT with assessing, intervening, and abating a given situation before it escalates further.
- Ad hoc members may visit sites where low-level complaints have been received to gather information for the TAT.

The major responsibilities of ad hoc members are described below. These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive; other responsibilities may be assigned to ad hoc members.

6. National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (2002). Workplace Violence: Issues in Response. Critical Incident Response Group. FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia.

3-2.6.2 **Postmaster, Manager, or Supervisor at the Site of an Incident**

- Continuing to manage the incident site.
- Determining whether or not security measures are adequate.
- Submitting the employee's work performance history to the TAT.
- Preparing a brief summary of the incident or situation for the TAT.
- Obtaining employee's written and assigned statement regarding the incident.
- Consulting with Labor Relations about administrative and/or corrective action.

3-2.6.3 **Health and Resource Management Manager**

- Reviewing an employee's injury compensation files.
- Noting whether an Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) claim has been controverted based on medical documentation.
- Noting whether an OWCP claim has been accepted or rejected.
- Communicating relevant information to the TAT.
- Preparing a brief summary of the employee's injury compensation records for the TAT.

3-2.6.4 **Human Resources Generalist Principal**

- Reviewing an employee's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).
- Reviewing an employee's work history.
- Determining any history of wage garnishments.
- Preparing a brief summary of the employee's eOPF for the TAT.
- Communicating relevant information to the TAT.

3-2.7 **Criteria for Selecting Ad Hoc Members**

Persons identified to assist the TAT must have the knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in the roles of ad hoc members. Although any single person does not need to meet all of the following criteria, ad hoc team members should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the skills and abilities listed below.

- Ability to analyze problems and complaints by listening to and observing employee behavior.
- Ability to gather, organize, and interpret information.
- Ability to communicate with difficult employees.
- Knowledge of Postal Service regulations and policies.
- Ability to demonstrate sensitivity to a wide variety of issues, to be flexible and open, and not to have a rigid belief structure regarding labor-management relationships.

Districts are encouraged to use TAT core members, ad hoc members and/or situational advisors to assist in work needs assessments and other formal workplace interventions. The experience of the ad hoc members for the TAT prepares them to be in a support role and contribute knowledge of their respective functions.

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4 Threat Assessment Team Process

4-1 TAT Notification of an Incident or Situation

An employee who is involved in or witnesses an incident should immediately report it to management or the Inspection Service. This instruction does not supersede guidelines established by local management.

4-2 Workplace Environment Tracking System

The Postal Service Headquarters Equal Employment Opportunity and Workplace Environment Improvement departments developed a user friendly, online Workplace Environment Tracking System (WETS) database to provide a nationwide, central repository for the four workplace environment processes:

- Initial Management Inquiries (IMI)
- Workplace Harassment Fact Finding Investigations (WHFF)
- Threat Assessment Case Tracking (TACT)
- Workplace Environment Interventions (WEI)

The purpose of WETS is to collect and record information that will allow the Postal Service to achieve its goal of providing a workplace environment that is safe and free of workplace harassment, discrimination, threats, and assaults.

WETS ensures standardization of documentation, operating procedures, and outcome measures when addressing workplace environment issues.

All Headquarters and Headquarters related sites, Areas and District offices are required to use the WETS National Database when managing cases related to the four processes outlined above. All Area and District Managers of Human Resources, along with end-users from their offices, will be responsible for entering data, and maintaining all cases in the WETS National Database until closure.

4-3 Incident Response

The following action steps provide guidance for addressing an incident or situation:

1. Make an Initial Assessment

The Human Resources Manager makes an initial assessment to determine if the TAT needs to convene.

- If the TAT convenes, enter the case data into the Threat Assessment Case Tracking (TACT) module of the WETS National Database. Please see the sample Threat Assessment Data Entry Template in Exhibit 4. You may use this form to collect the initial information on the incident.
- The TAT will assign an ***initial priority risk rating*** of the incident based on the preliminary information.

2. Assign Resources

- If a meeting *is called*, refer to the roles of the involved team members.
- If a formal meeting *is not called*, the Human Resources Manager assigns resources to ensure that the incident or situation receives appropriate attention. If the situation appears to be one of workplace harassment, it may be appropriate to utilize the processes outlined in ***Publication 552, Manager's Guide to Understanding, Investigating, and Preventing Harassment***.
- Enter assignments and response activities in the WETS National Database.

3. Contact the Inspection Service

TAT members should contact the Inspection Service in the situations described below. This instruction does not supersede local guidelines established by Postal Service managers or the Inspection Service:

- An emerging situation poses a risk to an employee.
- Incidents, such as physical assaults or credible threats, occurring at the work site.
- Suicide threats or attempts and deaths by suicide.

4. Collect Information

- Obtain documentation from employees reporting the situation and from any witnesses.
- Arrange for the incident site's postmaster, manager or supervisor to participate in the TAT meeting to provide the team with additional information and insight. When a management representative is not available to attend, a TAT member should have summary information to present at the meeting.

The initial collection of information may determine that there is no further need for in-depth investigatory measures as outlined in steps 5 through 8 below. This situation is applicable where a priority risk level of 4 is indicated. Steps 9 and 10 should be completed regardless of the risk level.

5. Make a Background Inquiry

Check the following information sources:

- Personnel records.
- Disciplinary records.
- Safety records.
- Medical records.
- Injury compensation records.
- Other sources such as the employee's postmaster, manager, supervisor, and co-workers, as well as former employees.

Identify and document, if already publicly known, any current psychosocial stressors, such as:

- Job-related difficulties.
- Financial difficulties.
- Legal difficulties.
- Marriage and family difficulties.
- Medical issues.
- Mental health issues.
- Substance abuse issues.

6. Review and Analyze the Case

- Review and consider all data.
- Assess the need for further interviews with victims and witnesses.
- In the **TACT General Information Section**, TACT module of the WETS National Database, the following categories are required entries:
 - Priority Risk Rating.
 - Type of Incident.
 - Typology.
 - Location of Incident.
 - Description of Participants.
 - Threat Communicated by.
 - Weapons Involved.
 - Injuries.
 - Incident Summary.

7. Document the Final Assessment

- Keep incident notes and TAT minutes to a minimum. In view of the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act, it is recommended that employee names are not recorded in the TAT minutes.
- Document the case summary in the WETS National Database. Include in the case summary all noted risk indicators, workplace environmental conditions, societal factors, and potential contributing events that have influenced or may influence the situation and the final assessed level of risk for the incident (see [Exhibit 2-6a](#), [Exhibit 2-6b](#), and [Exhibit 2-6c](#)).
- Assign a ***final priority risk rating*** to the incident at case closure (see the Priority Risk Scale in [Exhibit 3-2.2 \(p. 1 of 3\)](#)).

8. Develop a Risk Abatement Plan

Recommend a plan to alter the conditions or situation to reduce the current and future potential for violence (see [Exhibit 2-6a](#), [Exhibit 2-6b](#), [Exhibit 2-6c](#), and [Exhibit 3-2.2](#)). The risk abatement plan is a collaborative effort among (a) the TAT; (b) the incident or situation site postmaster, manager, or supervisor; and (c) the next higher level manager. Current plans should take into account all past interventions or actions.

Risk abatement plans may include the following as warranted by the situation:

- Providing EAP information.
- Assessing workplace needs.
- Recommending fitness-for-duty examinations.
- Identifying labor-management issues.
- Monitoring the work site, as appropriate.
- Increasing site security
- The TACT module of the WETS National Database provides four sections to delineate specific Risk Abatement Plan actions:
 - Administrative actions.
 - Consultation/Educational actions.
 - Inspection Service actions.
 - Safety actions.

This list is not all-inclusive. The risk abatement plan should be communicated timely to the incident manager and the TAT Outcome Memo issued. (See the Threat Assessment Team Outcome Memo in [Exhibit 4-3.8](#).) The samples and fillable forms of the memo for Priority Risk Ratings 1-4 are available in the TACT Module of the WETS National Database.

9. Disposition

- Enter the incident disposition (open or closed) in the WETS National Database.
- Include discussion of the situation or incident on the agenda for the next official TAT meeting.
- Under the **WETS TACT Case Disposition section**, the following categories are listed:
 - Final Priority Risk Rating.
 - Reason for Closure.
 - Date of Closure.
 - Date TAT Outcome Memo issued.
 - Corrective action.
 - Priority Risk Ratings 1 and 2 Post Incident Analysis.
 - Brief Narrative of Case Closure section.

10. Follow Up

- Monitor the progress of the risk abatement plan by providing updates and the status at TAT meetings.
- Assess the impact of the risk abatement plan.
- Use WETS National Database to track TAT activities.
- It is mandatory to conduct a post-incident review and analysis of each Priority 1 and Priority 2 incident when the case closes.
 - Enter the completion date of the Post-Incident Analysis into the TACT Module of the WETS National Database.
 - If the case is rated a Priority 3 or 4, then the Post-Incident Analysis is not applicable.
 - See the sample Post Incident Analysis form in [Exhibit 4-3.10](#).
The fillable form of the Post Incident Analysis is located under the Resource link, TACT Module of the WETS National Database.

11. WETS TACT Module Reports

- The **Threat Assessment Team Tracking Case Log Report** captures the data required in accordance with Publication 108. This report replaces the Excel spreadsheets previously maintained locally.
- Districts will no longer have to send their TAT Tracking Logs to the Area TAT Contacts as this data can be pulled from WETS.
- The **Case Detail Report** serves as the fact sheet for a TAT case; TATs can print their report for their hard copy files.
- TATs are required to keep hard copy files locked and secured.

4-4 Meetings and Minutes

The TAT must meet *at least once a quarter* to review team responsibilities, address unresolved action items, and discuss updates on open TAT cases.

- The quarterly TAT meetings should have all available core members in attendance, as well as those in designated roles of situational advisors and ad hoc members particular to cases under review or discussion.
- In addition to having updated information from the site managers of the individual cases, teams are encouraged, when reasonable, to have management representation in attendance at the meeting.
- Each TAT should foster an environment of involvement and direct communication of individual cases with the management at the particular work site.
- Union officials may be considered for invitation at times when there is an opportunity for maintaining or advancing risk abatement.
- Minutes must be kept of each TAT meeting.
- Although they should be kept to a minimum, the minutes must include risk assessment findings and risk abatement actions.
- As noted in 4-3, Incident Response action step #7, it is recommended that employee names are not recorded in the TAT minutes.

To manage cases, the TAT determines what is to be done, who is to do it, when it is to be completed, and time frames for reporting updates and completion of actionable items. The TAT also assigns action items related to a specific incident and regularly follows up on an agreed-upon risk abatement plan.

Copies of quarterly minutes must be sent to the district manager, all TAT members, and the Area TAT Contact. Verification that minutes were disseminated within seven (7) business days must be entered in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.

5 Training and Communication

5-1 TAT, Postmaster, Manager, and Supervisor Training

5-1.1 Threat Assessment Team Training

All core members are required to complete Threat Assessment Team Training. The courses that meet this requirement are either the Threat Assessment Team Training LMS course #10015093 or the Threat Assessment Team Orientation classroom course #22203-00 that is no longer available.

- Training dates must be entered for each core member in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.
- Situational Advisors and ad hoc members should take the training course. Training dates must be entered into the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.

Upon completion of the training course, the participants will be aware of:

- The Postal Service's commitment to a strategic plan for reducing violence in the workplace.
- The Postal Service's approach to the TAT process.
- The importance of implementing a local TAT.
- Behavioral signs of potential workplace violence.
- Steps to take when an incident of workplace violence occurs.

5-1.2 Advanced Threat Assessment Team Training

All core members are required to complete the current Advanced Threat Assessment Team Training. Situational Advisors and ad hoc members should complete the training. The topics may include areas such as current trends in workplace violence research, case studies of workplace incidents or domestic violence. Prerequisites for the Advanced TAT training are either completion of the Threat Assessment Team Training LMS course #10015093 or the Threat Assessment Team Orientation classroom course #22203-00 that is no longer available.

5-2 Workplace Violence Awareness Training

5-2.1 Postmaster, Supervisor, and Manager Training

Situations in day-to-day operations may arise where postmasters, managers, and/or supervisors may have to cope with some degree of workplace violence (e.g., disrespect, bullying, harassment, or threats). Being able to identify potential threatening situations and behavioral warning signs of at-risk employees can actually prevent more serious acts from occurring. All postmasters, managers, and supervisors with subordinate employees are required to complete the Workplace Violence Awareness training LMS course #10014893 or the classroom course #21558-00 that is no longer available. In order to accommodate offices of all sizes, and contractors such as the Occupational Health Nurse Administrators (OHNA) and the EAP staff, this training course is also available on a compact disc (course #10015196) from the Manager, Human Resources.

To keep informed of the most current information and practices affecting the workplace environment, including workplace violence awareness and prevention, the Office of Employee Workplace Programs develops periodic articles, posters and procedures to assist postmasters, managers and supervisors in addressing and managing incidents as they arise. To find these support materials go to the Workplace Environment Improvement homepage on the Postal Service intranet, *Blue*.

5-2.2 Acting Supervisor (204b) Training

When an employee is detailed to a supervisory position frequently or for extended periods, local management will determine whether to schedule the employee for Workplace Violence Awareness Training.

5-3 Information Is Prevention

It is imperative that all employees be made aware that the Postal Service has a *Zero Tolerance Policy* mandate, as defined in the 1992 *Joint Statement on Violence in the Workplace*. It is equally important to ensure that all employees are made aware of the existence of their local TAT and the local systems and processes put in place to support zero tolerance. ***The Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures are required to be disseminated to employees and posted in facilities by Quarter 2 of each fiscal year***. In addition, all new employees should be introduced to the *Zero Tolerance Policy* as part of Postal Service employee orientation efforts. This information can be disseminated through a number of field communication methods, such as:

- Area updates.
- District newsletters.
- Pay envelope inserts.

- Bulletin board postings.
- Direct mailings.
- New employee orientation sessions.
- Publication 45, *Achieving a Violence-Free Workplace Together*.
- Other employee communications.

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6 Workplace Violence Prevention Compliance Measures

The following list identifies tasks and action items for TATs to ensure the consistent application of violence prevention measures. All TATs must be able to demonstrate their adherence to the following items.

- Core team assembled as described in chapter [3](#).
- All workplace violence incidents tracked in the **TACT Module of the WETS National Database**.
- Core team, selected Situational Advisors, and ad hoc team members trained via either the Threat Assessment Team Training LMS course #10015093 or the Threat Assessment Team Orientation classroom course #22203-00 that is no longer available. All core members are required to complete the current Advanced Threat Assessment Team Training. Situational Advisors and ad hoc members should complete this training.
- Core team members, Situational Advisors, and ad hoc members' training dates entered in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool. District LMS training reports are required to be sent to the respective Area TAT Contact at the end of each fiscal year.
- All postmasters, managers, and supervisors with subordinate employees are required to complete Workplace Violence Awareness training.
- Quarterly TAT meeting requirements:
 - Meeting dates entered in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.
 - Only Quarterly TAT meeting minutes are required to be disseminated to the District Manager, all TAT members, and Area TAT Contacts within seven (7) business days of the date entered in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.
- Upon completion of the **Risk Abatement Plan**, the **TAT Outcome Memo** needs to be issued to the incident manager where the threat occurred. The completion date of the TAT Outcome Memo (see [Exhibit 4-3.8](#)) needs to be entered in the TACT Module of the WETS National Database.
- Post-incident analysis conducted on all cases ranked Priority 1 or Priority 2 (see [Exhibit 4-3.10](#)) and the completion date entered in the TACT Module of the WETS National Database.

- Threat Assessment Team Self-Audit completed during Quarter 4 each fiscal year and date entered in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool. District TATs are required to send a copy of their Annual Self-Audit to their respective Area TAT Contact. Headquarters and Area TATs must also complete an annual Self-Audit.
- **WETS TACT Tracking Case Log** report cross-referenced with the hard copy TAT case files at the end of each quarter.
- The *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* disseminated to employees and posted in facilities by Quarter 2 of each fiscal year. An example is provided in [Exhibit 1-1.2a](#). The dissemination date must be entered in the TAT Membership and Meeting Tool.
- TAT Membership and Meeting Tool should be updated and in compliance by the end of each quarter of the fiscal year.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1-1.2a

Sample Zero Tolerance Policy Statement

All Employees [District, Area, or Headquarters unit name]

A Postal Service employee has a right to perform his or her assigned duties in an atmosphere free of threats, assaults and other/or acts of workplace violence. We are committed in the effort to ensure a safe working environment for all employees.

Threats or assaults made directly or indirectly toward any employee or Postal Service customer, even in jest, will not be tolerated. This misconduct causes very real concern and apprehension on the part of employees and customers to whom this type of action is directed.

This *Zero Tolerance Policy* places all employees on notice that threats, assaults or other acts of violence committed against other Postal Service employees or customers indicates that each and every act or threat of violence, regardless of the initiator, elicits an immediate and firm response. This response will result in corrective action, up to and including removal from the Postal Service. Any employee who has been subjected to a threat or assault is by this policy instructed to immediately report the incident to a postmaster, manager or supervisor and/or to the Inspection Service. Employees should report any unusual situation that has the potential to cause workplace violence. This includes threats of suicide which are considered acts of violence. Reports to the Inspection Service, at the request of the employee who reports the incident, will be handled anonymously.

Below are definitions to help you understand and clarify when a threat, assault or other act of workplace violence has occurred:

Threat (broadly defined) — A statement or act that carries the intention to inflict harm or injury on any person, or on his or her property. Threats also include words or actions intended to intimidate another person or to interfere with the performance of his or her official duties (e.g., standing in front of a corridor with a menacing posture and not permitting another person access to load a Postal Service vehicle).

Assault (broadly defined) — Any willful attempt to inflict injury upon the person of another, when coupled with an apparent ability to do so, or any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm. Note: An assault may be committed without touching, striking, or doing bodily harm to another person (e.g., throwing a brick at a person that does not actually strike the person).

Violence is not limited to fatalities or physical injuries. We recognize that any intentional words, acts, or actions meant to provoke another can escalate and result in injury if they are not immediately and appropriately addressed by management.

[__name__]

District Manager

[__name__]

Senior Plant Manager

Exhibits

Exhibit 1-1.2b (page 1 of 4)

Sample Action Plan for Threats and Assaults



DATE:

MEMORANDUM FOR MANAGERS, POSTMASTERS, AND SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: Action Plan for Threats and Assaults

A Postal Service employee has a right to perform his or her assigned duties in an atmosphere free of threats and assaults. We are committed in the effort to ensure a safe working environment for all employees.

Due to the seriousness of these situations, threats or assaults made directly or indirectly toward any employee or Postal Service customer, even in jest, will not be tolerated. This misconduct causes very real concern and apprehension on the part of employees and customers to whom this type of action is directed.

All threats and assaults are to be taken seriously and reported immediately to the appropriate Postal Service management officials and to the Inspection Service. Also, all unusual situations that have the potential to cause workplace violence should be reported immediately to these officials.

All management personnel must recognize when these circumstances exist and take prompt, appropriate action when necessary to eliminate the possible causes of violence in the workplace. Failure to take the necessary appropriate action, as determined by a thorough investigation, may result in disciplinary action.

In light of the above, the attached Action Plan has been developed to aid you in dealing with potential situations of violence. This plan should be strictly adhered to by all management employees in all Postal Service facilities.

[__name__]

District Manager

[__name__]

Senior Plant Manager

Exhibit 1-1.2b (page 2 of 4)

Sample Action Plan for Threats and Assaults

1. An employee who has been the victim of a threat or assault will immediately report the situation to any Postal Service management official. The management official to whom the incident is reported will immediately report the matter to the Postal Inspection Service and the Human Resources Manager. In those cases where an employee has been the victim of a threat or assault perpetrated by his or her supervisor, the employee will report the incident to the manager of the supervisor concerned, who will immediately report the incident to the Inspection Service and the Human Resources Manager. This reporting requirement must be adhered to without exception for all incidents involving threats and assaults. Upon receiving notification, the Inspection Service will determine the extent to which they will or will not become involved in the matter.
2. Immediately following an incident, all parties to the incident should be interviewed by a local manager or supervisor, as directed by the Human Resources Manager or the TAT team member tasked to review the incident. Every effort must be made to have witnesses, including the participants, provide a written statement. In most instances of actual physical violence, if possible, and with the employee's permission, the management official should obtain photographs of the employee's injuries.
3. Any employee found to be responsible for a threat or assault is to be immediately placed in a non-duty, non-pay status pending further investigation of the matter. This should be done in accordance with the appropriate article of the applicable craft national agreement, unless the Inspection Service advises to keep the employee on-site in support of their investigation. A third-party supervisor will be assigned to the employee to address issues such as escorting the employee to obtain personal items from his or her locker or to pickup a paycheck. The employee is required to provide a telephone number and address where he or she can be reached during regularly scheduled working hours. After receipt of this information, it is recommended to advise the employee that they will be contacted concerning their return to duty. If nonbargaining unit employees are involved in inappropriate behavior, refer to **Employee and Labor Relations Manual 651.4, Emergency Placement in Off-Duty Status**. Normally, within 72 hours of the incident, a determination should be made as to the appropriate action to be taken. Ensure that the parties in an incident are issued corrective action appropriate to each party's involvement.
4. If the situation does not appear dangerous, take the following actions: (a) separate the employees involved and isolate them until interviewed; (b) interview all employees (individually) who have information concerning the incident immediately, while the facts are fresh in their minds; (c) establish circumstances leading to the incident; (d) obtain written statements from each witness and employees who were present but claim they did not hear or see anything; and (e) do not allow witnesses to discuss what happened with each other before preparing their statements.
5. If the situation appears dangerous, e.g., there is a likelihood of physical violence, order the employee to leave the facility immediately. If an employee refuses to leave, contact the local police and the Postal Inspection Service. Under no circumstance should a supervisor personally attempt to physically remove an employee from a facility.
6. All incidents of employee altercations are to be reported to the Human Resources Manager and to the Labor Relations Manager. To ensure that timely action is taken in these instances, requests for disciplinary action, with all supporting documentation, should be sent to the Labor Relations Manager by the management officials where the incident occurred, as soon as possible after the investigation. Additionally, every effort should be made to notify the employee of his or her status within 72 hours.
7. Any employee found responsible for a threat or assault on another employee or customer should be encouraged to make an appointment with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) by his or her postmaster, manager, or supervisor upon return to duty. Any employee who is found to be a victim in connection with an altercation should also be offered the opportunity to visit with the EAP counselor.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1-1.2b (page 3 of 4)

Sample Action Plan for Threats and Assaults

Listed below are definitions to help you understand and clarify what is meant by a threat or an assault. The next page contains a checklist of tests to determine whether or not an actual threat has occurred.

Threat (broadly defined) A statement or act that carries the intention to inflict harm or injury on any person, or on his or her property. Threats also include words or actions intended to intimidate another person or to interfere with the performance of his or her official duties (e.g., standing in front of a corridor with a menacing posture and not permitting another person access to load a Postal Service vehicle).

Assault (broadly defined) Any willful attempt to inflict injury on the person of another, when coupled with an apparent ability to do so, or any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Exhibit 1-1.2b (page 4 of 4)

Sample Action Plan for Threats and Assaults

Checklist for Threats and Assaults

If you believe that a crime has been committed (persons have been injured or property has been damaged):

1. Seek first aid and medical treatment for all those injured.
2. Immediately call the local police and the Inspection Service (and/or postal police officers).
3. Preserve the scene; **do not** allow **anyone** to touch anything.
4. Identify witnesses, especially if they cannot or will not remain at the scene.
5. To the extent possible, ensure that information received remains confidential.
6. Seek additional assistance if needed.

Otherwise, immediately:

7. Restore order and safety to the work area.
8. Assign involved employees to separate rooms. Instruct or order involved employees to leave the workroom floor, if appropriate. If an employee refuses, call the **Postal Inspection Service and, if necessary, local law enforcement**.
9. Advise your manager of the incident.
10. Notify the Human Resources Manager and/or Labor Relations Manager.
11. Contact the Inspection Service for guidance, if necessary.

Then:

12. Identify participants and witnesses and obtain statements from them (with concurrence of Inspection Service and/or local police if called).
13. Investigate all observed or reported altercations.
14. Obtain the telephone number and address of each participant.
15. If necessary, place the employee in a non-duty status. When placing an employee in this status, remember to obtain the most current address and telephone number before he or she leaves.
16. Complete the investigation.
17. Notify the Human Resources Manager and the Labor Relations Manager as well as the appropriate management officials in the chain of command.
18. Normally, if circumstances allow, within 72 hours, the employee's supervisor renders a decision and notifies the employee of his or her duty status. If the decision is not to return the employee to duty, the supervisor must send a request for emergency off-duty placement to Labor Relations within 72 hours of that decision.
19. If additional corrective action is to be issued, forward a properly completed request with all supporting documentation to Labor Relations.
20. Encourage the employee found responsible for a threat or assault on another employee or customer to make an appointment with the EAP. Offer the other affected party (or parties) the opportunity to have an on-the-clock appointment with an EAP counselor.

Remember, prompt and appropriate action is essential to reducing and/or eliminating employee altercations. Failure to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation can be detrimental to disciplinary proceedings.

Exhibits

Exhibit 2-6a **Risk Indicators**

Risk indicators include the following:

- Past history of violent behavior, e.g., physical assaults or verbal altercations.
- Having a concealed weapon or flashing a weapon in the workplace.
- Fascination with semiautomatic or automatic weapons and their capability to cause great harm.
- History of mental health problems requiring treatment, especially a history of arrest leading to hospitalization.
- Altered consciousness (including blackouts and “lost” or unaccounted-for time lapses).
- History of suicide or homicide risk.
- Odd or bizarre beliefs (magical or satanic beliefs, or sexually violent fantasies).
- Fascination with homicidal incidents of workplace violence and empathy for those who commit acts of violence.
- Preoccupation with violent themes (in movies and literature).
- Instilling fear in others. (This exceeds mere intimidation).
- Romantic obsession with a co-worker characterized by harassment, intimidation, and/or stalking.
- Intimidation and harassment of others.
- Current or history of alcohol or drug abuse.
- Obsessive focus on grudges — often quick to perceive unfairness or malice in others, especially supervisors and managers.
- Especially for males, great concern or emphasis on sexual fidelity of mate.
- Recent stressful events or severe losses.
- Perceived loss of options.
- Direct or veiled threats of bodily harm toward management personnel, co-workers or customers.
- Physical deterioration or medical conditions causing concern (head injuries, cancer, disability, kidney failure, etc.).
- Extreme sense of moral righteousness about things in general as well as believing that the organization does not follow its own policy and procedures.
- History of poor impulse control and poor interpersonal skills.
- Inability to handle constructive criticism well and projecting blame on others.
- Demonstrated disregard for safety of co-workers.
- Tendency to be a loner with minimal family or social support and often having an excessive investment in the job.

Note: Remember, no definite profile exists to determine whether or not a threat maker will ultimately commit an act of workplace violence. However, these signs, especially if they are in a cluster, can help to determine risk abatement action(s) relative to the TAT's initial risk assessment of a potentially violent person. Actions, such as a fitness-for-duty examination, may be necessary to assess the risk more adequately.

Exhibit 2-6b

Environmental Conditions, Societal Factors, and Contributing Events

Evaluation of additional information may help the TAT better understand a pattern of behavior and/or events and thereby help the TAT develop preventive measures to abate risk and liability. The TAT must evaluate workplace climate issues and potential contributing events that may escalate the potential for violence. For example, additional information such as the following environmental conditions and societal factors and contributing events are relevant considerations:

Environmental conditions at the work site:

- Labor-management relations are strained.
- Ineffective communications between and among managers and employees prevent dissemination of information.
- Preferential treatment and inconsistent application of rules and standards are apparent.
- Conflict management mechanisms (e.g., grievances, EEO complaints and due process) are not understood or used.
- Discipline is perceived as inappropriate, unfair or ineffective.
- Complement or resources are inadequate for performance expectations.
- Employees feel depersonalized.
- Changes in management behavior or style have occurred.
- The accident rate is up; safety is compromised or is perceived as compromised.

Societal factors:

- The level of violence in the surrounding community or neighborhood of the threat maker (assaults, rape, suicide and homicide rates).
- Local news coverage (both amount and detail) of violent events (e.g., September 11, 2001, or the Virginia Tech shootings).
- Activity of violent groups in the community (gangs, militant groups, etc.).
- The level of violence on television, in the movies, etc.

Contributing events:

- Pending divorce.
- Pending financial or legal problems.
- Perceived or pending job suspension or termination.
- Loss of a loved one.
- Onset of a serious health problem.
- Alcohol or other drug abuse.
- Discontinuance of medication or medication not working.
- Discontinuance of therapy sessions with psychiatrist or other mental health professional.

Note: The above does not constitute an all-inclusive listing.

Exhibits

Exhibit 2-6c

Recognizing the Warning Signs of Domestic Violence at Work

These behaviors do not necessarily signify that a relationship is abusive. They are listed here to provide the scope of behaviors that could indicate someone is a victim of domestic violence. If you have concerns that an employee may be a victim, the manifestation of these behaviors increases the likelihood that they could be victims. Managers should ensure that EAP information and contact numbers are posted or available at their facility. Managers must be sensitive and attentive when approaching employees who are suspected to be victims of domestic violence. Managers should immediately contact the EAP if they are seeking additional information or the TAT to report a threat.⁷

Physical Indications:

Abusers know where to strike their victims to inflict pain and not leave any evidence. Look for any of the following apparent physical signs that the victim is in pain or hurting:

- Visible injuries or signs of trauma, like bruises or scars.
- Bruises or handprints on wrist or throat.
- Signs of hair being pulled out.
- Excessive make-up.
- Clothing or accessories that might be worn to cover injured area.
- Limping or tenderness in joints or muscles.
- Moving slowly or carefully because of pain or soreness.

Behavioral Indications:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Depression■ Guilt■ Fear■ Anxiety■ Withdrawal■ Indecision | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Anger■ Sadness■ Irritability■ Fatigue■ Dependency■ Distracted, unfocused, preoccupied |
|---|--|

Job Productivity and Performance:

- Tardiness.
- Leaving early.
- Increased use of sick benefits.
- Mistakes or forgetfulness.
- Fear or reluctance to answer the phone.
- Fear or anxiety about leaving the building or going to the parking lot.
- Absenteeism.
- Excessive time spent on phone or personal tasks.

7. Lee, J. (2005) Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace. Amherst, MA: HRD Press.

Exhibit 3-2.2 (p. 1 of 3)

Priority Risk Scale

Priority Rank	Explanation
Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)	A clear and immediate threat of violence to an identifiable target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Directly stated threat of violence; b. Clearly identified target (person, work site, or organization); and c. Specific description of the intended violent act.
Priority 2 (High Risk)	A threat of violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacking immediacy and/or a specific plan; or a specified plan of violence, but currently lacking a specific target.
Priority 3 (Low or Moderate Risk)	A relatively nonspecific threat of violence from a person expressing concerns with personal and/or organizational issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The threat maker does not indicate a clear and immediate threat of violence to an identifiable target. b. The threat maker appears to be insufficiently influenced by current circumstances to engage in a dangerous act. <p><i>Such threats frequently arise from a volatile workplace climate, or deterioration of an employee's personal appearance and workplace relationships.</i></p>
Priority 4 (No Risk)	No threat of violence indicated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No suggestion of current danger or threat of violence. b. Possibility of verbal or other inappropriate communications, which include derogatory comments without specific or implied threats of violence.

Exhibits

Exhibit 3-2.2 (p. 2 of 3)

Priority Risk Scale

Discussion of Priority Risk Scale

Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)

A clear and immediate threat of violence to an identifiable target.

Priority 1 means that the threat maker has:

- Directly stated a threat of violence;
- Clearly identified a target (person, work site, or organization); and
- Appears to have communicated a specific description of the intended violent act, including the means, opportunity and motivation to carry out the threat.

Priority 1 threats:

- Are specific and credible.
- Have a stated intention by the threat maker to seriously harm or kill themselves or others, or may be directed at a specific work site.
- May be communicated to a third party, e.g., social media, co-workers, friends, spouse, instead of directly to the potential victim.
- Often have a vindictive, revengeful quality in which retribution plays a role.

At priority 1, the degree of danger increases and credibility is enhanced by:

- Signs that the threat maker has specific knowledge of the location, activities, and/or personal life of the target.
- Specific plans and preparation such as a recent purchase of weapons or driving by a potential victim's residence or workplace.
- The extent to which the threatened action is realistic or practical in design.
- Repeated, escalating, and increasingly detailed threats.
- A progressive decline in the employee's physical and/or psychological health.
- A person experiencing intolerable levels of frustration or stress, as specified in [Exhibit 2-6a](#).
- Substance abuse.

The TAT should give immediate priority to threats at this level, including:

- Active review of the safety and security for the identified targeted person and/or work site.
- A response that should incorporate the continuation of case management, documentation of a risk abatement plan that includes support to the identified target and intervention with the threat maker and/or work unit.
- Consulting with the Inspection Service. Notifying Local Law Enforcement when necessary.
- Planning immediate action to prevent a violent outcome.
- Monitoring implementation of the risk abatement plan to determine if additional actions are necessary.

Exhibit 3-2.2 (p. 3 of 3)

Priority Risk Scale

Priority 2 (High Risk)

A threat of violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacking immediacy and/or a specific plan; or a specified plan of violence, but currently lacking a specific target.

A priority 2 rating indicates a threat that is real and feasible, often with a vengeful, menacing quality, but lacking the level of specificity and credibility of a priority 1 threat.

- The threat maker does not know or has not identified a specific target.
- The threatened action may be vaguely defined, unrealistic, or impractical in design.
- A priority 2 threat may also result from a volatile workplace climate or close connection to work sites previously or currently experiencing threats of violence.
- High-risk indicators may be present (see [Exhibit 2-6a](#)).

The TAT's response should incorporate the continuation of case management, documentation of a risk abatement plan that includes support to any identified target and intervention with the threat maker and/or work unit.

- Consult with Inspection Service regarding safety and security measures.
- Monitor implementation of the risk abatement plan to determine if additional actions are necessary.

Priority 3 (Low or Moderate Risk)

A relatively nonspecific threat of violence from a person expressing concerns with personal and/or organizational issues.

A priority 3 rating does not indicate:

- A clear and immediate threat of violence to an identifiable target.
- That the threat maker is sufficiently influenced by current circumstances to perform a violent act.

Priority 3 threats may include:

- General expressions of concern or dissatisfaction with personal issues and/or interpersonal relationships.
- General expressions of concern or dissatisfaction with organizational issues that may result from a volatile workplace climate.

The TAT's response to a Priority 3 risk should include an assessment of the validity of specific complaints or concerns, a reasonable amount of monitoring and a risk abatement plan that intervenes at the individual and/or work unit level. Specific concerns include a progressive decline in an employee's physical health, psychological health or a declining organizational climate.

Priority 4 (No Risk)

No threat of violence indicated.

Priority 4 means that no current danger or threat of violence exists. The threat maker may engage in verbal or nonverbal communication that includes offensive, inappropriate, or derogatory content, or expressions of anger or dissatisfaction without a specific or implied threat of violence.

The TAT's response to a Priority 4 risk should include an assessment of the validity of specific complaints or concerns and a risk abatement plan as deemed appropriate. The TAT should consult with Human Resources to develop strategies to resolve issues and improve the workplace environment.

Exhibits

Exhibit 4

Sample Threat Assessment Data Entry Template

District: _____	Threat Report Date _____
1. Summary of Incident	
Date of Occurrence:	Reported By: _____
Injury: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Location (Station/Facility): _____	
Phone Contact:	Station/Facility Manager Contact: _____
Describe Incident: _____	
Priority Risk Scale: <input type="checkbox"/> Priority 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Priority 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Priority 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Priority 4	
2. Employee 1	
Last Name:	First Name: _____
Middle Initial:	
Current Position:	DOB: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Description of Involvement: _____	
3. Employee 2	
Last Name:	First Name: _____
Middle Initial:	
Current Position:	DOB: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Description of Involvement: _____	
4. Inspection Service or Police Action	
Inspection Service Involved: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Investigative Memorandum: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Weapons Used: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Police Involved: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (If YES, Complete Next Line.)
Police Action Taken:	Police Report Number: _____
5. Threat Assessment Team Assignments	
TAT Members Assigned: _____ _____	
Recommendations: _____ _____	
Actions Taken (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
6. Additional Witnesses/Employees	
Last Name:	First Name: _____
Middle Initial:	
Contact Information: _____	
Last Name:	First Name: _____
Middle Initial:	
Contact Information: _____	
Last Name:	First Name: _____
Middle Initial:	
Contact Information: _____	
TAT Member Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Exhibit 4-3.8

Sample Threat Assessment Team Outcome Memo (Priority Risk Rating 2)

DATE:

TO: [Name and Title of Incident Manager]
 RE: Threat Assessment Team Outcome Memo
 CASE: [WETS TACT Case Number]

The _____ (HQ/Area/District Name) TAT has completed the inquiry in response to your request for a TAT review of the incident that occurred on _____ (date). The inquiry included the review of Inspection Service interviews with the alleged victim, alleged threat maker and witnesses. The inquiry included the review of management interviews with the alleged victim, alleged threat maker and witnesses. The Postal Inspection Service conducted a criminal background and weapons check with negative findings. The Inspection Service provided an Investigative Memorandum for your consideration.

Using the Priority Risk Scale, the TAT assigned a Priority Risk Rating (PRR) of 2 to this incident. The TAT determined that the overt threat by the alleged threat maker towards the intended target was feasible but lacking the level of specificity and credibility of a PRR 1 threat.

Priority 2 – High Risk

A threat of violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacking immediacy and/or a specific plan or a specified plan of violence, but currently lacking a specific target.

The TAT's response to a Priority Risk Rating 2 should incorporate the continuation of case management and documented risk abatement plan that includes support to the identified target, threat maker and organizational unit. The TAT will conduct a follow up review to assess any needs.

TAT Risk Abatement Recommendations:

- The Manager will consult with the Manager, Labor Relations, to determine if immediate action is required and appropriate corrective action, as warranted.
- Alleged victim to immediately notify management and the Inspection Service of any subsequent threats.
- Consult with the Inspection Service regarding safety and security measures.
- Monitor implementation of the risk abatement plan to determine if additional actions are necessary.
- The Manager will offer EAP information to the alleged victim and alleged threat maker.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at _____ (phone number).

[Name and Title of TAT Member]

CC: Manager Human Resources

Exhibits

Exhibit 4-3.10

Sample Post-Incident Analysis Form (Incidents ranked Priority Risk Rating 1 & 2)

Review and Analyze Incident after Final Resolution

WETS Case Number:

DATE OF INCIDENT:

INCIDENT MANAGER:

PHONE:

FACILITY:

PHONE:

ALLEGED THREAT MAKER:

PHONE:

VICTIM THREATENED:

PHONE:

REPORTING PERSON:

PHONE:

1. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT: (What happened?)

2. ANALYSIS: (Why did the incident happen? Could it have been prevented? How?)

3. PREVENTION: (How could the situation have been handled differently by management and the TAT?)

4. STATUS AT CLOSURE: (What was done to resolve it? Describe the current conditions in the workplace.)

CASE CLOSED (DATE):

FINAL PRIORITY RISK RATING:

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