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WHAT'S INSIDE:

CFATS and Workplace Violence

Chemical Educational Foundation

Security: Lessons From a Street Vendor

Ghosts in the Machines

NACD's 2010 Washington Fly-In

CFATS: Keeping DHS's Eyes on the Prize

Leadership When "It" Hits the Fan

NACD's Member to Member Column

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CFATS and Workplace Violence

By **Robert “RJ” Hope**, CPS, ABCP, Senior Physical Security Analyst, Burns & McDonnell

A comprehensive master security plan can provide a guide for protecting your people and your company, as well as visitors to your operation, from workplace violence and other threats that fall outside chemicals of interest (COI).

No matter where your company is in the development of the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) Site Security Plan (SSP), you will notice that all questions are designed to revolve around chemicals of interest (COI) security. The largest benefits of creating the plan, outside of Department of Homeland Security compliance, may be that it forces decision makers to examine security from two perspectives: physical hardening and the procedures that implement the organization’s security philosophy and policies. The SSP process falls short of providing a master security plan from which to manage security initiatives. Its focus on chemicals of interest, while critical to the community and national security, does little to address other threats in the workplace such as internal theft of non-COI, destruction of property and workplace violence. An effective master security plan addresses all facets of your facility’s security, but this article will focus on workplace violence.

The Department of Justice reports that approximately 13,000 incidents involving domestic violence occur each year at the work site, in part because the abuser knows he or she can locate the victim there at predictable hours. Some of the violence occurs because certain workplace characteristics increase the possibility violence may occur. Homicides have surpassed machine-related injuries in the United States as the second leading cause of job-related deaths, according to Reuters news service. Only motor vehicle accidents cause more workplace deaths. As companies complete the SSP, the data gathered and the examination of current operations can be a starting point for assessing the threats, risks and vulnerabilities that go beyond COI. The SSP is certainly not a panacea for any or all security issues within your organization, but it can certainly be the genesis for Security Plan development.

A comprehensive master security plan can provide a guide for protecting your people and your company, as well as visitors to your operation, from workplace violence

and other threats that fall outside COI. Many companies wisely spend a significant amount of time and money to practice fire and dangerous chemical drills, but how many provide training, planning and education for workplace violence prevention? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 794 American workers died from assaults and/or violent acts in 2008. In that same period, 432 died from exposure to harmful substances, and 173 from fires or explosions. In other words, more workers died from workplace violence than fires, explosions and harmful exposures combined. The sobering point is that many of these same companies do not have workplace violence prevention programs in place, although they practice fire drills regularly. The absence of a plan can lead to liability exposure in the event something was to occur.

Understanding the Issue

Workplace violence is defined by the BLS as violent acts directed towards a person at work or on duty — physical assaults, threats of assault, harassment, intimidation or bullying, for example. All organizations have a legal duty to provide some level of security for those who enter their property. Employees, visitors and even trespassers must be afforded some level of protection. There is no specific formula for determining the adequacy of security in any given situation, but the generally accepted criteria for evaluating adequacy is based on the foreseeability of the loss incident — the likelihood that a given combination of security measures would prevent such a loss and the duty to provide such measures.

Workplace violence certainly falls into the category of foreseeability. Workplace violence resulting in the loss of life makes the news quite often, but organizations often dismiss the incident as the act of a desperate or deranged individual. But in reality, the only acts of workplace violence that garner national attention are those that are sensational. An estimated 1.5 million other

assaults occur every year in the U.S. alone. Once a company acknowledges this issue, what can be gleaned from the SSP to build a foundation for a workplace violence program?

The SSP contains some pieces that can be a solid foundation for a workplace violence prevention program. One critical piece is the verification of background information on individuals seeking employment. This process alone, effectively administrated, can help reduce the liability associated with negligent hiring. The best indicator of future performance is past performance. What better way to determine an applicant’s propensity for violence than with a thorough background check and contact with references? These two elements, undertaken during the new hire process, have proved to more effectively vet a prospective hire than an interview alone.

The SSP also requires information about personnel screening. The enactment and enforcement of a clear and concise weapons policy goes a long way toward eliminating weapons within a facility. An environment of security takes hold as employees and visitors are informed of the policy through various forms of communication, including appropriate signage, and, most importantly, through stringent enforcement by supervisors and management. As these steps are taken, the environment not only feels safe but is safer because infractions are quickly and firmly enforced. The existence of communication and enforcement activities within an organization can be taken into account by those contemplating bringing violence to the workplace and can act as a deterrent. They can be a determining factor in someone not acting out violently at work due to a belief that the programs in place will make the attempt unsuccessful.

Successful Implementation

Once an organization understands some of the building blocks present in its prevention plan, it can consider some of the other attributes of a solid plan and identify signs of workplace violence. Trust in management is a key component of a workplace violence prevention program. Employees at all levels have to trust that if they bring an issue to light that it will be handled discreetly, professionally and in a timely manner. Many victims of workplace violence knew

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