Domestic Violence in the Workplace



1. On March 29th, 2009, Robert Stewart murdered 7 elderly residents and 1 nurse in the Carthage, NC retirement home where his wife was working. He reportedly shot out her car windows before starting the rampage inside the facility. At the time, she did not know that it was him as she reportedly hid in a bathroom.
2. Raina Johnson allegedly made threatening calls to her ex-girlfriend's workplace when they broke up in early September 2007. Despite court orders for Johnson to stay away from her ex-partner after an earlier assault, she shot the victim outside a Safeway Supermarket in Washington, D.C. Shot in the neck at point blank range, the victim is paralyzed for life.
3. It was October 2007 in St. Louis, MO when Sara Speer arrived for work at the food factory where her estranged husband also worked. As the employer remotely opened the security fence to let her in, he then heard two shots. When he went outside to investigate, he found Ernest Speer smoking a cigarette who claimed that it was just back-fire from a truck. As her body and the weapon were later found at the workplace, the husband was convicted of her murder.

These three real-life cases of domestic violence escalating and culminating in violent incidents and death at work, are only a glimpse into the countless incidents and deaths occurring daily in workplaces in North America.

Employers

Protecting employees from harm is the foundation of every safety program and piece of safety legislation. Protecting employees from workplace violence must be part of your safety program. Further still, having a plan and program in place to help employees experiencing domestic violence should be, and in many cases must be, part of your safety program.

Employees

Notify your supervisor and/or HR if you are experiencing domestic abuse. Find out what programs they have in place to protect you and work together to put together a plan to keep you and others safe. If you have concerns for your privacy, job security, or other concerns, talk to your HR contact first. Remember, it is not your fault and you deserve to ask for and receive help.