

# Safe AND Secure Termination Procedures are Key to Prevent Workplace Violence

## Terminating Employees Gently

Many companies will be downsizing in the coming weeks and months to improve their chances of surviving financially post COVID-19 crisis, and terminating employees, including through reductions in force (RIFs), will be a part of reducing cost.

Employee terminations are always difficult situations regardless of the circumstances. This is especially true when the target employee has exhibited workplace violence tendencies that can result in violent behavior during termination. Understanding the risks that a termination represents is the first step in safely and securely letting employees go.

### What you need to know

When planning a termination, there are several steps that can be taken to minimize the risk of violence and prevent workplace violence incidents. The following are tips that human resources professionals, managers and supervisors should keep in mind when planning and executing a termination:

- Be mentally prepared to handle all terminations in a respectful and thoughtful manner
- The responsible management official should prepare a termination plan with consideration of security needs for possible circumstances including belligerence, non-compliance or other foreseen issues
- Follow all workplace policies and procedures dictated by human resources and applicable law
- Purposeful disengagement should be pursued by letting the employee go as gently as possible and without any unnecessary friction



- Security professionals should be utilized during the termination to handle any potential violence
- The termination location should be carefully selected, including the following:
  - The room should be private
  - A manager's office should be avoided to conduct terminations
  - A conference room is a good setting, especially if it is located close to an exit
  - Any items that could be used as a weapon should be removed from the room
- If a threat of violence is identified, consider having a professional conduct a workplace violence (WPV) threat assessment

Creating a plan for each specific termination incorporating the tips mentioned above is important. A security expert with specific workplace violence expertise should be consulted if internal security and risk mitigation resources are limited.

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