

# **Preventing Violence in the Workplace**

## **A health and safety curriculum for retail businesses**



**Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MASSCOSH)**

*In collaboration with*

**UC Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP)**

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**Youth @ Work—Talking Safety. A Safety and Health Curriculum for Young Workers.**  
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**OSHA's 11. An OSHA 10-hour curriculum for Young Workers.** 2009.  
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# Workplace Violence Prevention at Retail Establishments

Note: Agendas can be adapted further based on the needs of the audience and the time available.

## 90 minute Sample Training Agenda

Activity	Time	Materials
<b>Introduction: Workplace Violence Prevention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why workplace violence</li><li>• Experience with violence?</li><li>• Pre-Questionnaire</li></ul>	15 min	
<b>Video: Is It Worth Your Life? (Part 1)</b> <b>Best practices for addressing workplace violence:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contributing factors to workplace violence</li><li>• Physical design of businesses</li><li>• Policies and procedures</li><li>• Training</li></ul> <b>Video: Is It Worth Your Life? (Part 2)</b>	25 min	
<b>Developing a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan</b>	40 min	
<b>Summary, Resources &amp; Post-Questionnaire Evaluation</b>	10 min	
		<b>TOTAL 90 min</b>

# Introduction to Workplace Violence Prevention

**Time Needed:** 15 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- ❖ Make a copy of *Pre-Questionnaire: What do you know about workplace violence prevention?* for each participant
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## Detailed Leader's Notes

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### A. Introduction (5 minutes)

#### 1. Introduce presenters and purpose of the workshop.

By the end of the workshop, we hope participants will be knowledgeable about:

- Factors that can increase the risk of violence in the store.
- Ways to reduce violence and the risk of violence –including store physical design, policies and procedures and employee training.
- Resources to help

The attendees will receive information and recommendations from the presenters but also, we expect, learn a great deal from each other.

#### 2. Participant introductions. Name, name of company, one thing they would like to learn

### B. Why Job Health and Safety (5 minutes)

#### 1. As a warm-up discussion, ask participants:

- How many of you have employees?
- How many have employees who are under 18?
- How many of you have ever either experienced violence or believed that you or an employee might have been at risk of being attacked by a customer or another person in the store?
  - Have two or three participants describe their experience.

#### 2. Summarize what they will learn. Explain that these are the kinds of things they are going to learn more about today – how to recognize risks, how to prevent and reduce the risk of violence and how to train employees to both help prevent violence and respond in the event of a threat to their safety.

### **C. Pre-Questionnaire (5 minutes)**

1. **Hand out the Pre-Questionnaire.** Explain that they will take a short quiz, to see how much they know now. Then we'll do it again at the end, and go over the answers.
2. **Collect the Pre-Questionnaires,** and put them in the "pre-Q's" folder.

## Video and Discussion: Is It Worth Your Life?

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify five things a store owner/manager can do to make the store less likely to be targeted for a robbery.
- Name at least three policies a store owner should develop to reduce the likelihood he/she or an employee will be assaulted.
- Name at least three actions the store owner/manager should include in worker training to reduce the likelihood that employees will be *injured during* a robbery.

**Time Needed:** 30 minutes

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### Materials Needed

- ❖ DVD player and TV or LCD projector (with speakers)
- ❖ Video: *Is It Worth Your Life?*
- ❖ Checklists on store design, policies/procedures and training (Handout 1)

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### Preparing to Teach This Lesson

Before you present this lesson:

- ❖ Locate the DVD file *Is It Worth Your Life?* on disc or go on online at <http://archive.org/details/gov.dol.osha.vt01262a> and preview prior to showing it to participants. Identify potential points to pause the video to elicit group discussion.

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### Detailed Leader's Notes

#### A. Introduction: Why is this subject important? (5 minutes)

1. Explain that we will be discussing ways to preventing injury and stress from workplace violence.
2. What do we mean by workplace violence? Get their input. Make sure they include in the brainstormed list physical assault, intimidation, threatening behavior, verbal assaults, and other harassment.
3. **Say:** Here are some facts about workplace violence.
  - Although workplace violence can occur in any workplace, it is common in the types of places in which money is present.
  - Every year nearly 2 million workers report being victims of workplace violence.
  - Every week, 9 people in the United States are victims of a homicide in the workplace.

- Violence that occurs during a robbery is a major threat to workers in convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants, and other retail businesses, particularly young workers.
- The risk of violence during a workplace robbery in retail establishments increases after dark.

## B. Video and Discussion (20 minutes)

1. Before beginning, title a flip chart *Preventing Workplace Violence*, then divide the flipchart with a vertical line into three sections labeled *Store layout/design*, *Policies/procedures* and *Worker training*. Encourage participants to make a note of what they think would reduce the likelihood of violence in the three areas. Use this chart to record answers in the appropriate category, after you stop the video. You will refer back to this chart at the end.

**An example of a completed chart:**

Preventing Workplace Violence		
<p><b>Store layout/design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lights</li> <li>➤ Cameras</li> <li>➤ Guards</li> <li>➤ Chimes at Door</li> <li>➤ Signs</li> <li>➤ Alarm system</li> <li>➤ Remove clutter in windows</li> <li>➤ Assess outside areas of store</li> <li>➤ Use mirrors</li> <li>➤ Limit cash/use a drop box</li> <li>➤ Post signs noting that the store has limited cash</li> <li>➤ Do not keep weapons in the store</li> </ul>	<p><b>Policies/procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sufficient number of workers</li> <li>➤ Have a plan/program</li> <li>➤ Limit cash</li> <li>➤ Pay attention</li> <li>➤ Walk around</li> <li>➤ Don't be aggressive</li> <li>➤ 2<sup>nd</sup> worker can be the watchdog/call the police</li> <li>➤ Make eye contact</li> <li>➤ Keep the door to the delivery area locked</li> <li>➤ Post emergency phone numbers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worker training</b></p> <p>Train workers in ways to reduce risks such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pay attention</li> <li>➤ Don't be aggressive</li> <li>➤ Make eye contact</li> <li>➤ Keep busy when there are no customers; don't sit near the cash register;</li> <li>➤ Keep watching the parking lot and call the police about anything suspicious</li> <li>➤ Put money in a drop box</li> </ul> <p>Train workers in what to do in the event of an emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cooperate fully, do not argue or challenge</li> <li>➤ Explain each of their actions, avoid surprises and use a calm tone.</li> <li>➤ Hand over the cash</li> <li>➤ Don't try to fight or chase the assailant</li> <li>➤ Lock the door when the assailant leaves and call the police</li> </ul>

2. Explain that the group will now watch the first three minutes of a video, *Is It Worth Your Life?*, which will be stopped at that time for a group discussion.
3. Before starting the video, ask the group to think about 1) why the store might be an attractive target for a robber while they watch the first minute of the video, 2) what the clerk was doing that made him an easy target for robbery, what were policies and training that might have reduce the chances that workers would be hurt. Play the first ). Stop the video.

Write their answers on the chart. Note that many of the responses that fall under policy will also fall under training.

4. **Distribute the checklists for Design/layout, Policies/procedures and Training.** Ask participants to review the checklist for a few moments. Then show the final section of the video, which shows an “ideal” scenario in preventing workplace violence.

What were **design, policies** and **training** that were included in the chart they helped create and which should be added. Check them off as they are identified. Ask participants what other ideas they heard in the video, and add them to your list.



## Developing violence prevention policies and training plans

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Determine what policies and procedures participants should include in their own plans.
- Identify what components should be included in a training for employees.

**Time Needed:** 35 minutes

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### Materials Needed

- ❖ Flipchart
- ❖ Scenario (Handouts #2 and #3)
- ❖ Workplace Violence Prevention Plan Self-Assessment Form (Handout #4)

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### Preparing to Teach This Lesson

Before you present this lesson:

- ❖ Pre-write the four types of workplace violence on a flipchart:
  - **Stranger (robbery)**
  - **Customer or Client**
  - **Co-worker**
  - **Family member or personal friend**
- ❖ Make extra copies of Handout #2

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### Detailed Leader's Notes

#### A. Introduction: Types of Workplace Violence (5 minutes)

- Ask participants what types of workplace violence might occur in a retail store?
- Review the following (building on the suggestions of the participants):
  - **Robbery** is, by far, the most common type of workplace violence
  - The types of places in which young people work, like convenience stores, are common targets of robbers
- Point out that there are other types of violence that occur in workplaces, which may require different types of protections or policies. These include customers or clients attacking workers, workers attacking other workers, and intimate partner violence. Read the following examples aloud.

- **Customers or clients attacking workers**-- can include customers in a store, gas station, or restaurant; patients in a health care setting; clients of a business or social service agency.
- **Workers attacking co-workers**-- can include physical violence or threats, bullying, verbal and emotional abuse, and sexual harassment.
- **Threats or violence from family members, including boyfriends or girlfriends**-- typically involves the spouse or partner of a worker coming to the workplace and threatening or attacking the worker with whom they are involved.

## **B. Employer responsibilities under state and federal laws for workplace violence prevention (10 minutes)**

- Review fact sheets #1 which explains employer responsibilities under OSHA and #2 which explains the state Child Labor Laws, highlighting the information that pertains to violence prevention (employers under 18 must have an adult supervisor after 8 PM).

## **C. Addressing Workplace Violence Example (15 minutes)**

1. Explain that the group will now discuss ways to create safer workplaces, including identifying and addressing policies and procedures that contribute to a potential workplace violence situation and training.
2. Start by asking participants to share more details of the dangerous situations they had identified at the beginning of the workshop. (If no one has any experience with a dangerous situation, use one of the attached examples).
3. Explain that each small group will need to come up with a way to address the problem in their scenario and act that out for the group. Once you have been assigned a scenario, the group will answer the following questions:
  - What should the business owner have in place to prevent this kind of problem? Discuss and write down the **policies** (rules) that need to be established and what should be included in **training** to make it safer.
4. Divide the group into small groups of 3-6 participants.
5. Assign one of the real stories or (if not enough available) give participants copies of Handout #2 or Handout #3. Have extra copies available.
6. After about 10 minutes, bring the group back together.
7. Ask several of the groups (or all, if there is time) to report back on their recommendations for addressing the workplace violence examples.

8. After each report back, ask the group if anyone else has something they would add. If the participants haven't mentioned any of these ideas, point out the following:

#### **Scenario #1: Jayden's Story**

Jayden works at a convenience store. Last week a customer came in to return some food he purchased. It was against store policy to accept the return, so Jayden politely told the customer he would be unable to give a refund.

The customer became very angry and yelled repeatedly at Jayden before leaving the store. Jayden told him that there was nothing he could do. When the customer continued to yell, he asked the customer to please leave the store. The customer refused and put his face near Jayden, yelling, "I want my money." The customer looked like he was about to hit Jayden, causing another customer present to call 911. When the angry customer heard the person on the phone, he fled the store.

#### **Scenario #2: Taylor's Story**

Taylor works at a pharmacy. He sees a customer put aspirin and other medicinal products into his pocket. Taylor walks over to the customer and says, "Are you going to pay for those?"

The customer put his hand in another pocket and pulled out a knife. The customer then ran out of the store. Taylor began to run after him, telling him to give back the medicine. The customer turned around and began to run toward Taylor with the knife. Taylor then began to run back inside the store, and the customer fled.

#### (Sample responses) The employer should:

- Establish a policy that an adult must always be in the store
- Establish a policy about what workers should do if there is an angry customer
- Train workers about the policy, and about how to act when confronted with an angry or irrational customer
- Post the police emergency number (911) at each work station to remind staff to call the police if threatened, in order to defuse the situation and reduce the risk of violence
- Place return and exchange policy signs prominently around the store

#### **D. Developing your own workplace violence prevention plan (10 min)**

- Ask the participants to think about what they have learned today and the list of workplace violence issues they discussed at the beginning of the training
- Review the violence prevention checklists and ask participants to consider:
  - What do you already have in place? (Physical design, policies, training)
  - What would you need to change? (Can you make these changes in a month, 6 months? When?)
  - What will you include in a training for your employees on these workplace policies?
  - What other help or resources do you need to implement your violence prevention plan?
  - How will you review your plan so you can keep it up-to-date?
- Divide into pairs to discuss these questions and ask participants to complete the self-assessment form and discuss with your group partner. Be prepared to give a short report back to the large group.

# Summary

**Time Needed:** 10 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Post-Questionnaires
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## Detailed Leader's Notes

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### A. Summary

- Give a brief summary of the workshop – today we identified risks and discussed store design/layout, policies and training that can reduce the risk of violence.
- We hope you will be able to return to your businesses and develop and implement plans that work best for you.
  
- **Ask: Are there any questions?**

### B. Post-Questionnaire

1. **Hand out the Post-Questionnaire.** Explain that they don't need to put their names on it. This Post-Questionnaire just helps us find out if you learned the information. Please show us how much you have learned.

## Handouts

1. Pre-Questionnaires
2. Handout 1: Check list for violence prevention
3. Handout 2: OSHA fact sheet on violence prevention;
4. Handout 3: Massachusetts Guide for Working Teens
5. Handout 4 and 5: Role-Plays: Addressing Workplace Violence
6. Handout 6: Workplace Violence Self-assessment Form
7. Handout 7: Post-Questionnaires

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## Pre-Questionnaire: What Do You Know About Workplace Safety?

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*This is not a test. We are interested in your ideas and opinions. Please mark a response for every question.*

(Circle the correct answer: True, False, or Don't Know)

1. To protect employees, the cash register should be hidden from view.

**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**

2. Employees under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult after 8:00 PM.

**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**

3. During the daytime, you may keep open the door used for deliveries.

**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**

4. It is only necessary to train the employees who work at night on violence prevention procedures.

**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**

5. The Department of Workplace Violence is responsible for enforcing workplace regulations at retail businesses.

**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**

6. There are 3 kinds of measures to reduce workplace violence:

- a. physical design of the business
- b. customer behavior
- c. training of employees

**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**

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## Handout 1: Checklist for Workplace Violence Prevention

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This sample checklist can help employers identify present or potential workplace violence problems. It contains various factors and controls that are commonly encountered in retail establishments.

Not all of the questions listed here fit all types of retail businesses, and this checklist obviously does not include all possible topics that specific businesses need. Employers should expand, modify, and adapt this checklist to fit their own circumstances.

Yes	No	N/A	<b>Store Layout/Design</b>
			Do workers have access to a telephone with an outside line?
			Are emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services, and an internal contact person posted next to the phone?
			Are emergency telephone numbers programmed into company telephones?
			Is the entrance to the building easily seen from the street and free of heavy shrub growth?
			Is lighting bright in outside, parking and adjacent areas?
			Are windows and views outside and inside clear of advertising or other obstructions?
			Is lighting adequate to see clearly in all indoor areas?
			Is the cash register in plain view of customers and police cruisers to deter robberies?
			Is there a working drop safe or time access safe to minimize cash on hand?
			Are security cameras and mirrors placed in locations that would deter robbers or provide greater security for employees?
			Are there height markers on exit doors to help witnesses provide more complete descriptions of assailants?
			Are employees protected through the use of bullet-resistant enclosures?
			Can exit doors be opened only from the inside to prevent unauthorized entry?
			Are there panic buttons?
			Is there an alarm system?
			Is there a secure place for workers to store their personal belongings?



Yes	No	N/A	<b>Policies / Procedures</b>
			<b>Staffing:</b> Is someone responsible for store security? Do workers know who is responsible for security ? Are at least two persons required to work on all shifts? Are other protective measures in place when workers are working alone? Are employees under 18 always supervised by an adult after 8 PM (as required under Massachusetts law)?
			<b>Handling Cash:</b> Are drawers of unused, empty cash registers left open? Is there a policy to limit the number of cash registers open during night hours? Is there a policy of maintaining less than \$50 (or similar amount) in the register? Are employees required to use drop safes and/or lock boxes? Are signs posted notifying the public that limited cash, no drugs and no other valuables are kept on the premises? Are transactions with large bills (such as over \$20) prohibited?
			<b>Physical access/barriers</b> Is there a policy of when doors should be locked. Are workers required to keep doors locked before and after business hours. Are workers required to lock doors used for deliveries and garbage removal when not in use. Are deliveries be made during normal daytime operations. Are as few keys as possible issued, and locks changed if keys are lost or not returned by former employees. Are security devices (locks, cameras, lighting, alarms, etc.) tested on a regular basis and repaired promptly when necessary. Have you developed and implemented procedures for the correct use of physical barriers, such as enclosures and pass-through windows.
			<u>Prepare for a robbery or other violent incident</u> Have you established liaison with local police and state prosecutors. Do you report all incidents of violence or suspicious activity. Do you require employees to report all assaults or threats to a supervisor or manager. Do you keep a log of such incidents to help determine any necessary actions to prevent future incidents

		<p><u>Procedures during a robbery</u></p> <p>Have you included the following procedures in the event of a robbery?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Try to stay calm.</li> <li>2. Give the robber the money he/she asks for.</li> <li>3. Do not resist.</li> <li>4. Do not make any sudden movements to upset the robber.</li> <li>5. If possible, try to get a good look at the robber so that you can describe him/her later (and compare the robber to the height marker).</li> <li>6. Note the direction of flight of the robber.</li> <li>7. Without exposing yourself to harm, get a description of the robber's vehicle.</li> <li>8. After the robber has left, <b>call 911</b> before you do anything else.</li> </ol>
		<p><u>Procedures after a robbery:</u></p> <p>Have you included the following procedures after a robbery?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>CALL 911.</b></li> <li>2. Do not touch anything that the robber may have touched (for fingerprints).</li> <li>3. Ask any witnesses to stay, or get their names and telephone numbers (to be reached by the police).</li> <li>4. Step outside the store when the police arrive so they will know that the robber is gone and you are safe.</li> <li>5. Do not discuss the amount of money taken with anyone other than the police.</li> <li>6. Write down the physical description of the robber, what he/she was wearing, and what he/she touched while inside the store.</li> </ol>
		<p><u>Procedures for dealing with abusive customers:</u></p> <p>Have you included the following procedures to deal with abusive customers?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Tell the customer to stop.</b> Do this right away, before the behavior continues.</li> <li>2. <b>Tell the customer why the behavior is inappropriate.</b> If the abuse continues, ask the customer to leave.</li> <li>3. <b>Report the incident</b> to your boss or the person who deals with these situations.</li> <li>4. If you believe the abusive person is following you, <b>call the police.</b></li> </ol>
		<p><u>Procedures for dealing with shoplifters:</u></p> <p>Have you included the following procedures to deal with shoplifters?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DO NOT</b> accuse the person of stealing.</li> <li>2. <b>DO NOT</b> try to use your body to stop the person.</li> <li>3. <b>DO NOT</b> lock the door to keep the person from leaving.</li> <li>4. Stay at least an arm's length away from the person.</li> <li>5. Give the person a chance to put the item back.</li> <li>6. <b>DO NOT</b> confront the person</li> <li>7. <b>CALL THE POLICE</b> if you feel there is a chance you could get hurt.</li> </ol> <p>After the shoplifter leaves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DO NOT chase or touch</b> the shoplifter.</li> <li>2. Write down a description of the shoplifter's clothes, <b>especially the shoes.</b></li> </ol>

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## Handout 4: Addressing Workplace Violence Role Play / Sarah's Story

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Sarah works at a convenience store. Last week a customer came in to return some food he purchased. It was against store policy to accept the return, so Sarah politely told the customer he would be unable to give a refund.

The customer became very angry and yelled repeatedly at Jayden before leaving the store. Sarah told him that there was nothing he could do. When the customer continued to yell, he asked the customer to please leave the store. The customer refused and put his face near Sarah, yelling, "I want my money.". The customer looked like he was about to hit Sarah, causing another customer present to call 911. When the angry customer heard the person on the phone, he fled the store.

Discuss the following questions in your group. Then work in your small group to come up with a different ending to the story. Think about:

What should the business owner have in place to prevent this kind of problem?

What should the employer include in the **training** of employees, and what **rules or policies** should be established, in order to decrease workplace bullying and harassment.



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## Handout 5: Addressing Workplace Violence Role Play

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Taylor works at a pharmacy. He sees a customer put aspirin and other medicinal products into his pocket. Taylor walks over to the customer and says, "Are you going to pay for those?"

The customer put his hand in another pocket and pulled out a knife. The customer then ran out of the store. Taylor began to run after him, telling him to give back the medicine. The customer turned around and began to run toward Taylor with the knife. Taylor then began to run back inside the store, and the customer fled.



Discuss the following questions in your group. Then work in your small group to come up with a different ending to the story. Think about:

What should the business owner have in place to prevent this kind of problem?

What should the employer include in the **training** of employees, and what **rules or policies** should be established, in order to decrease workplace bullying and harassment.

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## Handout 6: Workplace Violence Self-Assessment Form

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- What is already in place at your store? (Physical design, policies, training)
  
- What would you need to change? (Can you make these changes in a month, 6 months? When?)
  
- What will you include in a training for your employees on these workplace policies?
  
- What other help or resources do you need to implement your violence prevention plan?
  
- How will you review your plan so you can keep it up to date?

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## Handout 7: Post-Questionnaire: What Do You Know About Workplace Safety?

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*This is not a test. We are interested in your ideas and opinions. Please mark a response for every question.*

(Circle the correct answer: True, False, or Don't Know)

1. To protect employees, the cash register should be hidden from view.  
**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**
  
2. Employees under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult after 8:00 PM.  
**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**
  
3. During the daytime, you may keep open the door used for deliveries.  
**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**
  
4. It is only necessary to train the employees who work at night on violence prevention procedures.  
**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**
  
5. The Department of Workplace Violence is responsible for enforcing workplace regulations at retail businesses.  
**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**
  
6. There are 3 kinds of measures to reduce workplace violence:  
physical design of the business  
customer behavior  
training of employees  
**TRUE    FALSE    DON'T KNOW**
  
7. What 1 or 2 things did you learn today that you plan to use to make your business a safer place to work?