



## **Workplace violence is on the rise: Educating your tenants and their employees to minimize effects**

December 09, 2013 - Long Island

As a property manager for over twenty-five years, I have witnessed an increase in violence in the workplace. This is not a popular topic, but none the less it needs to be shared. A few years ago, I was managing an office building and a person came through the front doors of building with a firearm and killed his girlfriend, shot her boss and various other employees associated with the business establishment and ultimately killed himself. As a property manager or landlord what is our responsibility to circumvent this occurrence from ever happening again? Do we put our head in the sand like the ostrich? An old myth, but you get my point. This article is for those concerned landlords and property managers that want to go beyond to protect and minimize the workplace violence episodes. With the economy in a downward spiraling position, threatened cut backs in the employment arena and the country literally upside down, with so many uncertainties, this is a recipe for a change in people's behavior patterns.

Please understand that no building nor any place is exempt from bullying, harassment, assaults, and homicides. There are positive steps that landlords and property managers can implement for instance, make a diligent effort to know your tenants, talk to them regularly. By having dialogue, you can gather a general indication to the atmosphere of one's workplace. Sponsoring a topical seminars by having a qualified guest speaker that is an expert on workplace violence, sharing the early signs and key points helps to prevent workplace violence.

Educating your tenants and their employees will more than likely minimize the effects of violence, in the workplace. Self-help books are a great source. In the past, I have posted in various buildings that I manage self-help books on numerous topics such as: increasing sales, networking, raising employees self-confidence and morale and are you a team player? This is a strategy that is always welcomed and keeps you connected to your tenants. Equipping and encouraging tenants builds long lasting tenancies and brings results, not to mention a great ice breaker to begin a continual dialogue regarding the current book topic. There are some good books on bullying and violence that one can become aware of the early prevention signs that can be of some help, not only for the working force, but towards our families and communities. Getting proactive is a key component, always learning, willing to change and making a difference in your generation. I found the best method of operation is not to handle life horrific matters in a defensive position, but rather on the offensive. An ounce of prevention is still worth a pound of cure. Violence is gaining momentum throughout society and we must learn more about keeping our tenants safe. Tenants need to feel secured and protected and to be ensured that their landlords and property manager are working hard to preserve and to protect. I always informed tenants to use the buddy system, leaving the building in groups at least two people at a time. The definition of the buddy system is "In adventurous or dangerous activities, where the buddies are often equals, the main benefit of the

system is improved safety; each may be able to prevent the other becoming a casualty or rescue the other in a crisis."

When this system is used as part of training or the induction of newcomers to an organization, the less experienced buddy learns more quickly from close and frequent contact with the experienced buddy than when operating alone. If one feels unsafe one should never take a chance, but to tell someone and expect some help from management. We must adopt a zero tolerance mentality when it comes to violence. Life is much too short and working together will help minimize the effects of violence. Please make sure that buildings are well illuminated with no dark corners. Common sense in most instances will go a long way, but I believe common sense is an action word. Workplace violence resources are available and I recommend a book called "Potential Work Place Violence Prevention and your Organization Success," by Bill Whitmore, chairman & CEO of AlliedBarton Security Services. This problem is not going away and lets work hard and smart to minimized. Patrick Caroleo is the president and CEO of The Dove Organization, Ltd., Ronkonkoma, N.Y.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540