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**THE SALEM CITY
CRIME PREVENTION
CONNECTION**

SALEM CITY
POLICE

CHIEF BRAD S. JAMES
www.pondtown.org

PRESENTED BY THE SALEM CITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
30 WEST 100 SOUTH SALEM, UT 84653 (801) 423-2312

Safety in the workplace

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Violence in the workplace hit the national news again in August when an employee at a beer distribution facility in Connecticut began opening fire and eight innocent people were brutally murdered. While the details of what occurred and what led up to the incident are debated, the fact is that workplace safety and prevention of violence in the workplace is a necessity.

With the tragedy that occurred in Connecticut the collective thoughts of the country are once again geared towards workplace safety; however, one cannot forget that violent acts ending in injury or death occur somewhere in a workplace every day. Certain professions have a higher incidence rate because of the nature of their work such as police officers, taxi drivers, corrections officers and others, but some of the most violent acts have occurred in places that had no obvious potential for such unfathomable violence.

Prepare today by reviewing the policies of your employer. If you are in a position to recommend or effect change in a lacking safety and prevention program, don't hesitate; we never know when crime will strike. If you are an employer it is imperative that you create, to the best of your ability, an organization with safety protocols and an environment where employees can freely report concerns without threat of reprisal.

Be a safe employee...

There are many steps that you can take to enhance your safety and that of your co-workers. Awareness is a good first step. Think about looking out before going out – when leaving at the end of the day, take a peek outside before going out to your vehicle. If you see someone suspicious, call law enforcement. Have awareness in the workplace by knowing your co-workers and observing significant changes in behavior or attitude that could, in some circumstances, be the building blocks for future violence. A significant change, especially one that includes talk of violence, newfound hatred, unusual comments about weapons, could be warning signs and may warrant a discussion with the supervisor.

A safe workplace also comes down to the security of the facility. Keep doors locked that are supposed to be locked – far too often doors are propped open or left ajar because an employee figures "I'll be right back." Don't take the chance of leaving an easy access point for persons intent on committing a crime.

Let your boss know! If something is wrong and you notice a security deficiency, let your employer know.

If you're the boss...

Be aware of significant personality changes in employees. While they are not indicative of only persons capable of violence, there are some significant warning signs including: increased anger/agitation, new discussion of weapons and harming persons, drug use, theft, changes in honesty, unusual withdrawal from work/friend groups and other significant personality changes.

Encourage your employees to come forward with their concerns and make sure to take the steps necessary to appropriately address concerns and maintain a safe work environment.

Consider creating control barriers (doors or staff monitored areas) that prevent unauthorized persons from entering certain areas and requiring employees to have picture identification cards.

Employee assistance programs can be a great benefit for those going through difficult times. They provide an outlet with

help where an employee, who may have a private reason for their change of behavior, can get the assistance they need in a confidential and unimposing way.

Finally, consider creating a progressive and detailed workplace violence policy. Require all employees to attend a yearly training class on workplace violence prevention and response.

HOME SECURITY 101 Knock, knock....who's there?

No it's not a joke, it's real life...knowing when to open and when not to open the front door. It's important to have a family action plan in place for how to handle the infamous "knock knock" at the front door.



The general rule of thumb for young family members is not to open the door unless they know for sure who it is and a parent or guardian has told them that it's ok to open the door. They should also be reminded not to give out any indication that they are home alone (*if they are old enough to be home alone*) and instead should use comments like "my dad can't come to the door right now," or even making out loud comments in the house that would lead someone to believe they are not home alone, such as "mom, someone is at the door!"

I have a nifty chain on my door that I can use so that we can "crack" the door open and talk with someone, isn't that ok?

Have you ever seen a movie where someone cracks open the door, using their "chain" for security and the bolt cutters come through and cut the chain? While that may seem farfetched in the real world, it could actually happen, but more realistic is someone forcing the door open. The chain provides very little security strength with very short screws holding the chain plate in place and it can easily be popped out if the door is forced.

For adults home alone, there can be those annoying late night knocks which poses the question "do I answer or not?" Here's some food for thought; the majority of home burglars are looking for one type of house only; an unoccupied house! If when the knock at the door comes, and the person inside reacts by becoming overly silent (hoping the visitor will go away) they are sending one message only...no one is home! So if the visitor at the door is looking for that unoccupied home, they think they've just found it.

So here's the plan: when the knock comes during those unusual hours, don't pretend you're not home, but instead let them know you ARE home. If you're all alone, announce out loud in the house "I'll get the door!" This tells the person on the front porch that there must be more than one person home and if they were intent on committing a crime, they will certainly think twice. Then go to the front door and talk to them through the door without opening it, even a crack. Indicate that you and your housemate(s) are getting ready for bed and that they can leave information about their cause and you'll get it in the morning.

What if they say they are the police or the fire department and they need to talk to me right away?

The rules still apply for not opening your doors to someone you don't know, however if you can visually verify that they are our emergency services personnel (you see they are not only in our usual uniforms but you can see their emergency services vehicle) and you ask them to show identification through your peep hole that you are satisfied with, then open up. If you can't completely confirm who they are then call our non-emergency line (or if emergency situation dial 9-1-1) and tell the dispatcher that someone is at your door indicating who they are and you're not sure. If they're legitimate the dispatcher will let you know it's all clear, if not, they'll be sending us out to investigate!

Clunk, clank, sputter... vehicle breakdown



The feeling of dread when your car takes its last gasp, the warning lights come on, the engine fails...now what?

It can happen anywhere at any time so it's important to be prepared for a vehicle breakdown, flat tire or other vehicle mechanical difficulty that can leave you stranded or worse. Prepare for just such an emergency by having the right equipment and mindset.

Outfit your vehicle

Include the following equipment in your vehicle's inventory of safety equipment: flashlight, tire changing equipment (a spare tire), first aid kit, something warm in case you need to be out of the vehicle, flares or other hazard lighting devices, a fire extinguisher and any small tools that may be of assistance in a minor repair.

Get out of the lane of traffic if at all possible by pulling over to the shoulder and as far from traffic as possible. You may need additional space around your vehicle to make the needed repairs so give yourself plenty of room. Pull to the right shoulder whenever feasible versus stopping on a center median. Let other vehicles know you are there and your vehicle has become inoperable by activating your hazard lights and raising the hood.

There can be an inclination to exit and stay out of your vehicle, but in a highway situation that could actually put you in more risk. Remember, your vehicle is a partial steel cage surrounding you that can provide protection from other vehicles. If you are out on foot, you don't have that protective barrier. The best position is to be in the passenger's seat with your seatbelt on.

Under ideal circumstances you may have a cell phone to call for assistance. If not, and there is a roadside callbox or other place within walking distance that you can get to in order to make a call, then consider safely setting out to make the call for help.

Considering *staying* in your car?

Imagine being on a roadway that's dark, deserted and in the middle of nowhere and then your vehicle breaks down. Talk about a dreadful feeling! If you are alone and on that deserted roadway consider actually leaving your vehicle and staying in a place of concealment until help arrives such as in the shrubs or behind some trees. Someone intent on doing harm to you won't let a car window stand between you and them, but if they don't see you, they can't harm you!

Don't forget to not surprise emergency services when they arrive on scene. Announce yourself and approach slowly with your hands visible and explain what you are doing!

The Monthly 2do List**Check Your Credit**

When was the last time you did a credit check on yourself? By federal law, you can receive a copy of your credit report from each of the three credit bureaus free of charge once per year. With the current economic conditions many of us may not want to see our credit report, but the fact is that we need to!

If your credit has been jeopardized by an identity thief or other fraudulent activity, you may not know for several weeks, but your report will show the activity, usually within 30 days of it occurring. The longer the fraudulent activity goes on, the more damage it can cause and the more effort it will take to correct the problems a thief can cause.

Take time today to check your report at www.annualcreditreport.com or call them at (877) 322-8228. The process is free and if you identify some fraudulent activity, the credit bureaus can guide you through the process of reporting the activity and getting it removed from the report. They can also place a fraud alert on your account which will make it nearly impossible for someone to unlawfully open a credit account in your name for a period of time.

Check it out today!



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