



SAFETY MOMENT

February 2014 Aggression in the Workplace

No one can say with any certainty how they will react when faced with a difficult or stressful situation. It helps to think through potential scenarios ahead of time and to be alert to the signals of an escalating situation:

- Be aware of changes in the behavior of the person you are with, especially if they are becoming angry or irritated. It is rare for aggression or violence to come out of nowhere.
- Try to use your communication skills to defuse a difficult situation. Think about what you would say and how you would say it.
- If the person you are with is becoming angry, try to remain calm. Do not become angry yourself.
- Once in a safe place, report the event to your supervisor.

Safety Tips for Dealing with Aggression:

- Trust your instincts, and never underestimate a threat
- If you feel uneasy – take action right away
- Avoid entering an aggressor's personal space or touching them, as this may make the aggressor feel threatened and can escalate the situation
- Be aware of your body language
- Be assertive, but avoid meeting aggression with aggression
- Use an exit strategy – have a plan for excusing yourself from a difficult situation
- Apply diversion techniques to distract the aggressor while you make your exit
- Use your voice – shout out a specific instruction, such as "Call the police"
- If available, use a personal safety alarm

The earlier you identify a potential problem, the more options you have for avoiding it. If all else fails, your goal should be to get away.