

## **APPENDIX 2. WARNING SIGNALS OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

Certainly not everyone who demonstrates one or even several of these behaviors is potentially violent. As supervisors, you must exercise the best judgment in all of these cases. Common sense and concern for the safety of all individuals involved should be paramount in any decision you pursue.

Human behavior is unpredictable - we may never know what will "spark" abnormal behavior in an individual. However, we do know that violent behavior rarely surfaces without warning. If a pattern becomes obvious to the extent that the work of the organization is being impacted, the Labor Relations Section of the Human Resource Management Division should be contacted, through the parent division, for advice regarding intervention.

**Note:** The following lists the most common characteristics identified by numerous authors and studies of violence in the workplace.

- Non-communicative loner, with no social network
- Intimidation of others (verbal and/or physical; harassing phone calls and stalking are examples)
- Obsessive behavior
- Any destructive behavior, even if minor (such as knocking over a desk, trashing an office, smashing the time clock)
- Sudden changes in disposition, evasive or extremely personable, out of character
- Disregard for the safety of coworkers
- Threats to harm self or others
- Has low self-esteem
- Little tolerance of others.
- Coworkers feel employee is capable of committing violent acts, comment on individual being "strange," "wound too tight," "a time bomb ready to go off"
- Lies, exaggerates, overreacts consistently
- Extreme reaction to change, new policy, and/or procedures
- Moral righteousness and believing the agency is not following its rules and procedures
- Inflexible to hearing new ideas or suggestions, and may take them as criticism of their methods
- Receives minimally acceptable ratings
- Loss of job with no viable options
- Feels frustrated or stymied in job
- Low or no job satisfaction
- Inability to take criticism of job performance, holding a grudge, especially against a supervisor; oftentimes verbalizing hope for something to happen to the person against whom the employee has the grudge
- Dramatic or sudden change in quality of work, work habits, dress (one extreme or another)

Appendix 2

- Perceived office pressures/job stress
- Blames others for failure and disappointments
- Perceived unfairness, injustice or malice in others that is not warranted
- Domestic problems (marital stress or separation)
- History of substance abuse
- History of violent episodes or criminal acts. Talks about killings/violent acts in past or as if planning
- Expression of extreme desperation over recent family, financial or personal problems
- History of violence towards females, animals, and children
- Fond of violent movies/television
- Fascination with weapons
- Carrying a concealed weapon or flashing a weapon to test reactions
- Fascination with incidents of workplace violence