

Personal Safety, MSU and You

Staff Strategies for
Personal Safety and Crime Prevention at
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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What is your definition of crime prevention?



- Locking the door at night
- Locking the car
- Walking in pairs after dark
- Not hitchhiking
- Turning on the porch light after dark
- Keeping your telephone number private

Definition of Crime Prevention



“The anticipation, recognition
and appraisal
of a crime risk and the
initiation of action
to remove or reduce it.”

ANTICIPATION



- The ability to observe settings and situations and assess what opportunities exist for crime to occur
- Think like the bad guy – just temporarily!
- Know the risk before you're faced with the situation

RECOGNITION



- Recognize suspicious activity and do something about it sooner, not later
- The ability to identify suspicious persons, unusual activity, things that are out of place
- We would rather respond to a “suspicious activity” call than come back two hours later to investigate a burglary

APPRAISAL



- A basic premise of crime prevention says that you are more likely to successfully *prevent* crime if you know which *types* of crime you are likely to experience.
- What crimes are most likely to occur at your workplace? Prepare according to the risk.
- There are no guarantees, only the opportunity to reduce the risk.

INITIATION OF ACTION



- Take steps to remove or reduce the risk
- Develop a workplace safety policy
- Prepare a safety plan and practice it regularly
- Educate employees about the risks and safety plan
- Learn about crime prevention and encourage your co-workers to do the same

What types of crime occur at MSU?



- Almost *any type* of crime can occur *anywhere* at *any time*.
- Statistical data can help us decide what type of crime we are most likely to experience, so we can take steps to prevent it.

2003 Crime Statistics at MSU



- Murder 0
- Robbery (not burglary) 1
- Sex offenses – forcible 1
- Sex offenses – non-forcible 0
- Aggravated assault 1
- Arson 3

2003 Crime Statistics at MSU



- Burglary 15
- Criminal Damage to Property 156
- Criminal Damage to Vehicles 49
- Theft (all degrees) 85
- Vehicle theft 2

Which type of crime are you *most likely* to experience?



- Murder? 0
- Robbery? 1
- Sex Offense? 1
- Theft? 102
- Vandalism? 205

Preparation is the key!



- *Pre*-pare for the eventuality that crime will affect your workplace
- Develop a workplace safety plan and review it regularly, making changes as needed
- Teamwork is a great foundation for crime prevention



Workplace Violence



- Homicide is the third leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the US (OSHA 2000)
- In 2000, there were 674 workplace homicides, representing 11% of all fatal occupational injuries in the US (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2000)
- In 1999, 18% of all violent crimes were committed while the victims were on duty (National Crime Victimization Survey 1999)

Workplace Violence



- **On a national average, 1.8 workers per 100 reported being assaulted at work in 1999**
Social service workers = 13 per 100
Health services workers = 9 per 100
- **Nat'l rate of violent crimes experienced by people at work is 13 in 1000**
Police officers = 261 in 1000 (Nat'l Crime Victimization Survey 1999)

Workplace Violence Risk Factors



- Contact with the public
- Exchange of money
- Delivery of passengers, goods & services
- Having a mobile workplace (taxi, patrol car)
- Working w/ unstable or volatile persons in a health care, social service or criminal justice setting
- Working alone or in small numbers

Workplace Violence Risk Factors



- Working late at night or during early morning hours
- Working in a high crime area
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in a community based setting (Nat'l Institute of Occupational Safety & Health NIOSH 1996)

Workplace Violence Protective Factors



- A comprehensive workplace safety policy that involves human resources, local law enforcement, legal department, union representation, etc.
- A regularly repeated, comprehensive workplace violence training program
- “Training should not be regarded as the sole prevention strategy.” (OSHA 1999)

Where is MSU?



- Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan – updates currently with the cabinet
- Some areas have supplemental plans that go with the campus ERP. (Health Services, Library, Marketing/Communications)
- Work to be done in other areas
- Do you know where to go in the event that your work area is effected by an incident?

Workplace Violence Protective Factors



- A carefully considered workplace layout which includes appropriate barriers between employees and customers or clients (i.e. counters of appropriate height and width, tempered glass barriers at counters, available exits, etc.)
- Staff trained to recognize workplace violence risk factors in employees and clients

When Domestic Violence Comes to Work



- Staff should be trained to recognize domestic violence warning signs in co-workers
- Responsibility for protecting the employee does not lie with the co-worker
- Multiple resources are necessary to address problem – employee assistance programs, human resources, law enforcement, legal department, etc.

When Domestic Violence Comes to Work



- If DV victim co-worker will discuss problem openly, bring in a resource to help develop a safety plan for her –local resource: CADA
- Management may choose to stagger employee's work times and locations to avoid a pattern
- Management may develop guidelines to use screen calls from the abuser, make the employee unavailable, monitor any threats made via the receptionist, etc.

Office Safety

Diffuse & Report Incidents



- Remain calm and pleasant with irate callers, customers or coworkers – You stay safer and more in control by not going to their level
- Try to listen to what the person is saying. Make it clear that you can only help if they themselves stay calm
- Keep aware of tone, body position, and implied or actual threats
- If it's clear that you are not going to be able to assist the person, call for a supervisor
- Document the incident as soon as possible or call the MSU Security Department

In a confrontation...



- Evaluate the threat and the ability of the perpetrator to carry out the threat
- Use calming, quiet language
- Encourage the perpetrator to sit down and talk it out. Most workplace violence can be averted just by getting the perpetrator to sit down.
- Offer the customer/client some cold water and invite them to sit and discuss the problem.
- Offer solutions and empathy; do not argue

In a confrontation...



- If the confrontation turns physical, consider your options
- Yelling, screaming to attract attention might work in a stranger attack situation
- Appear to be cooperative and wait for an out
- Negotiate (take my car keys, let me go)
- Comply (armed robbery)
- Prepare to physically resist if necessary

In a confrontation...



- If you choose to physically resist, you must be prepared to injure the subject and go all the way
- You can't start to physically resist, stop, then try another tactic

In a confrontation...



- Use items at your disposal as weapons – stapler, heavy flashlight, high heeled shoe
- Hit or kick the attacker in vulnerable areas – eyes, nose, throat, groin, shin, toes
- If one technique isn't working, try another

Campus Safety



Fear-Inducing Incidents
(Suspicious Packages/Devices, Bomb Threats,
Biologic Threats)

- Don't touch the item – leave it where it is
- Leave the area and inform others as you do – unless you have been exposed
- Close doors behind you
- Call Security at Ext. 2111 and follow campus emergency procedures
- Make yourself available to authorities

Campus Safety



Fear-Inducing Incidents:
(Telephone Threat)

- Get as much information as you can from the caller including time, location and type of incident (bomb, biologic threat, etc.)
- Write down the conversation – use the Bomb Threat Checklist
- Trace call using *57
- Call Ext. 2111 and follow instructions
- Make yourself available to authorities

Other risks



- Theft of purses, wallets, petty cash
- Vandalism
- Theft from vehicle
- Motor vehicle theft
- Lions & tigers & bears

Theft in the Workplace



- Opportunity for theft exists in almost every workplace
- Theft of petty cash, office equipment, mechanical equipment, tools, time
- Maintain good cash control practices in your workplace
- Maintain good key control practices in your workplace

Theft in the Workplace



- Keep purses, wallets, car keys, valuables locked in your desk drawer
- Do not allow unexpected service workers into your workplace and let them work unattended
- Be aware of thieves working in pairs – one distracts you at the counter while the other steals your purse, wallet, etc.
- Do not leave valuables unattended

Vandalism



- Park your vehicle in a well-lighted area
- Do not leave valuables in your car
- Make sure exterior lights work properly and turn them on
- Report vandalism to police immediately

Vehicle Break-ins



- Most car prowlers look for cars that are easily (and quietly) accessible.
- Close all windows and lock all doors to your vehicle, even if you will return shortly.
- Park in a well-lighted space.
- Remove your stereo face plate.
- Never leave valuables, ID or cash in the car.
- If your car is prowled, do not touch anything and call police.

Vehicle Break-ins



- Record the serial numbers of any stereo equipment you may have in the car.
- Consider engraving your stereo equipment with your Owner Applied number.
- If the equipment is stolen – report it. If it is later recovered, the officer can use your report to contact you. Serial numbers/OAN of recovered stolen items are matched against a database to see if the owner can be identified.

Motor Vehicle Theft



- 2 cars were stolen off the MSU campus in 2003.
- Always lock your car and don't leave a hidden key nearby or on the vehicle.
- Never leave your vehicle running unattended "to warm up."
- If your vehicle is stolen, report it to police immediately.

If your vehicle is stolen...



Be prepared to provide police with:

- Color, year, make, model of the car
(i.e. Red 1988 Honda Accord 4-door)
- License plate, significant identifying features
(i.e. primered front quarter panel, custom paint, etc)
- Insurance & Registered Owner information

Speaking of cars...



- Central Minnesota winters present several driving hazards. Be prepared to drive in the snow, slush and sleet.
- Better yet, stay home if you can.
- If you are traveling over area passes, call 511 before you leave to assess pass conditions.
- Always carry an emergency kit in your car.

Emergency Kits Should Contain:



- Extra clothing and appropriate footwear
- Food and bottled water
- Extra windshield wipers and wiper fluid
- Anti-freeze
- Sand or cat litter
- Shovel
- Flares
- Gloves, scarf, hat
- Blankets
- Flashlight with batteries
- Fire extinguisher
- Jumper cables
- Extra ice scraper
- Tire chains (know how to use them!!!)

Other Road Hazards...



- In 2003, MSU made 201 underage consumption arrests. How many drove? How many over 21 drove?
- If you observe a driver who may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, call 9-1-1.

When describing a vehicle, think CYMBAL



- Color
- Year
- Make/Model
- Body
- And
- License

- Be prepared to provide direction of travel, etc.

Safety on the Go



- When you leave, tell someone else where you're going and when you're coming back.
- Leave phone numbers of where you can be reached.
- Keep your car doors locked when traveling.
- In traffic and at stop lights, "read" the situation and always leave yourself a way out.

Safety on the Go



- Keep your purse or wallet secured near your body.
- Women – do not wear your purse around your neck.
- Be aware of your surroundings and be prepared to change your course if necessary.
- If you're being followed, go into a public place such as an open business.

Emergencies on Campus



- Use the blue phones to connect immediately with police dispatch.
- Know your location and be able to give an address if possible.
- Stay calm and let the dispatcher guide the conversation.
- Do not hang up until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.

Emergencies on Campus



- Alert others to the emergency and ask for help from passersby if necessary.
- Be prepared to answer questions that the emergency dispatcher will have.
- If the threat is still present, whether it be a suspect, fire, or other, advise the dispatcher and attempt to go to a safer place.
- Do not move injured persons unless the threat of letting them stay where they are is greater than their injury.

Wrapping it up....

Questions? Comments?



For more information about crime prevention...

- Contact the MSU Security Department at 389-2111.
- Visit the Partners in Safety website at www.mnsu.edu/safety
- Visit the MSU Security website at www.mnsu.edu/security

