

**Chapter 1 : New Benefits Secured for Postal Support Employees (PSEs) | APWU**

*8 Safety, Health, and Environment Occupational Safety and Health Program General Authority. The Postal Service is subject to Public Law Number , the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of , pursuant to the Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act (PESEA) of*

Postal Service has an obligation to ensure the safety of its employees by creating and maintaining a violence-free work environment. Workplace violence can occur at or outside of a postal facility while an employee is working and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicides. Postal Service employees who have been assaulted can notify their manager, file a formal Equal Employment Opportunity EEO complaint or grievance with the Postal Service, notify internal law enforcement organizations [ U. Postal Inspection Service or the U. The Postal Inspection Service investigates assaults and threats against employees, while the OIG investigates allegations of hostile work environment and sexual harassment. Either can pursue criminal charges or refer the case to the Postal Service for further action. The Postal Service administers administrative action, such as letters of warning, suspensions, or removals as appropriate. The Postal Service established the Workplace Environment Tracking System tracking system as its national repository for workplace environment incidents to analyze data, identify trends and develop preventive measures. On July 8, , the Postal Service issued a memorandum instructing all headquarters, area, and district offices to use its tracking system when managing workplace violence cases starting August 1, . In addition, threat assessment teams are required in each district to respond to and assess violent situations; and advise employees on what to do in the event they witness or are victims of violent behavior. The Postal Service requires facilities to display workplace violence posters and publications in postal facilities. On March 13, , the Postal Service responded to a congressional inquiry by describing the measures it takes to prevent sexual assault and harassment of its employees. In addition, Congress requested the number of sexual assaults and outcomes reported by Postal Service employees for and . Our audit covers workplace violence incidents that occurred from September 1, , through September 2, , a period during which the Postal Inspection Service recorded workplace violence cases nationwide. What the OIG Found The Postal Service has a comprehensive workplace violence program to identify, review, report, and address employee assaults nationwide. The Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service appropriately addressed all workplace violence cases in the six selected districts reviewed. In these districts, the Postal Inspection Service investigated cases, 60 of which involved Postal Service employees as assailants. The Postal Service imposed administrative actions, including suspensions and notices of removal, in all 60 cases, as required. However opportunities exist to enhance the workplace violence program. Specifically, Postal Service officials did not always record all incidents of workplace violence in the tracking system, effectively use threat teams to review assault outcomes and develop preventive measures, and display all workplace violence posters and publications used to educate employees on identifying and reporting workplace violence incidents in postal facilities. These and other issues occurred in the six districts we reviewed because: District Human Resources managers responsible for maintaining the tracking system database did not ensure responsible officials entered assault complaints into the tracking system as required. In addition, the policy does not give specific instructions regarding the deadline for doing so. There were no controls to ensure that threat assessment team activities were completed, including required training. Facility managers were not fully aware of the requirements to display workplace violence posters and were not required to check periodically that all workplace violence posters were displayed. The Postal Service was responsive to Congress by providing information regarding how they prevent and respond to workplace violence incidents in reporting 68 employee sexual assaults that resulted in EEO complaints. However, all sexual assaults do not result in EEO complaints. Although the Postal Service qualified its response as pertaining only to EEO complaints, the inclusion of related Postal Inspection Service cases would have provided a more complete response. Further, the Postal Service could not rely on the tracking system as a central repository for sexual assault data because officials were not always recording the data in the tracking system, as required. As a result of these conditions, there is an increased risk the Postal

Service will not effectively analyze data and identify trends to address workplace violence incidents. Furthermore, without a single accurate source of data in this critical area of employee safety, it is more difficult to determine where problems exist and develop preventive measures. What the OIG Recommended We recommended management establish additional controls to ensure that responsible officials enter workplace violence cases into the tracking system; and that threat assessment teams comply with established guidelines, ensure personnel are adequately trained on the tracking system and threat assessment team responsibilities, and conduct periodic reviews to ensure all required posters and publications are displayed.

**Chapter 2 : Postal Service Workplace Violence Program | USPS Office of Inspector General**

*Health of USPS employees in the workplace: hearing before the Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, House of Representatives, One Hundred Second Congress, first session, July 11,*

Posted on May 9, by Federal Disability Retirement Attorney Stress symptoms are not always visible Stress is that pernicious aura, neither visible nor definable, with a spectrum of tolerance particularized by individuals, and which pervades silently and invisibly but for the manifestations through physical reactions. It can lead to both physical ailments as well as psychiatric turmoil, requiring medical management ranging from prescription medications to hospitalization. Are there signs of stress where one could have predicted the actions or reactions of another? As a silent killer of incremental gnawing, stress impacts different people in variegated ways, and can often be the primary foundation for multiple medical conditions , but rarely diagnosed as such. OPM may dismiss your stress claim as being situational: Stress can be the exacerbating force in compounding and complicating already-existing medical conditions. Stress may even affect the way we present our legal cases What role stress plays in such an application; how it is characterized; the manner in which it is presented; where in the compendium of medical conditions it should be stated “ all are important in the complex narrative presentation of a Federal Disability Retirement application, for any Federal or Postal employee who is considering filing for the benefit of Federal Disability Retirement. In the end, however stress is described, one thing is certain: It can be physical ” as in manual labor which, often because of repetitive use and impact, can result in injuries or occupational hazards; as well as mental and emotional , resulting in secondary or tertiary medical conditions as a natural and direct result thereof. One often thinks of the gatekeeper as merely he who guards the physical security of a piece of property. But stress also requires a gatekeeper ” especially for the psychological impact which it portends. In conjunction with medical conditions often associated with it, however, it can be effectively and persuasively be identified and delineated. All of us are ultimately gatekeepers for the things which impact our lives. Each of us have innate spectrums for tolerating varying levels of environmental factors, including workplace stress. And while stress itself may not be the single best basis for exiting the environment, there will surely be other medical conditions which result from the stresses , which will justify preparing, formulating and filing for Federal Disability Retirement benefits from the U. Office of Personnel Management. Those who are not in the same shoes as a person who suffers from psychiatric medical conditions, fail to understand the vicious cycle ” of the impact of the medical condition itself, upon the very ability to proceed in a productive manner. Yet, the puzzling question is: The vicious cycle of a person beset with psychiatric conditions involves the paralysis of behavior and the ability to create and produce. Unfortunately, the world around us fails to understand or have the requisite empathy for such behavior. To get out of the cycle of paralysis, the sufferer of psychiatric medical conditions will often need the advice and legal assistance of someone who can guide, prompt and implement. The world is an uncaring system of rules and regulations; empathy and understanding, unfortunately, are not written into the law of life.

**Chapter 3 : Injured on the job, then fired: postal workers allege mistreatment by USPS | US news | The Gu**

*Health of USPS employees in the workplace: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization of the Committee on Post Office and Second Congress, first session, July 11, [United States.*

How can this issue be fixed so employees are more productive and can live a healthy lifestyle? Implementing and promoting health and wellness is not just an investment in the employees, it benefits the employers as well. Utilizing a workplace wellness program inhibits absenteeism and presenteeism while promoting productivity and retention. With this information, they can create personalized preventative plans that are much more effective than generalized education and information. Plans include primary prevention for employees with risk factors leading to chronic diseases. Also included is secondary prevention, used to improve disease control among employees with manifest chronic conditions such as arthritis, asthma, or diabetes. Preventative care offered by employers reduces reactionary assistance ex: Provide Healthy Snacks Remove the temptation. If there are sodas and candy in the vending machine, or donuts for breakfast, employees are forced to bring in their own healthy food or succumb to an unhealthy diet. Employers can discuss the benefits of healthy eating with employees as well as create a survey to identify their favorite options. Replacing soda with water, and candy with granola bars helps promote a healthy work environment by reducing available junk food options. Open communication with employees about the change, and education regarding healthy substitutes for the usual snacks helps ease the transition while developing a like-minded environment dedicated to health and wellness. Paid Fitness Memberships Rewards, incentives, and benefits are great techniques to increase motivation in the workplace. These techniques can also promote health and wellness by providing benefits such as a gym, spa, or yoga membership. Amenities such as an on-site gym give employees the opportunity to exercise more frequently and together, creating a strong work environment. Offering group classes that help educate workers on the benefits of exercise and diet before or after work give them an incentive to be at work as well as enjoy it. Companies such as Google offer on-site gyms while others, like Microsoft, provide funding for their employees to attend full-service gyms. Physical wellness correlates with productivity, and offering benefits such as fitness memberships will result in employee retention. Access to Nurse Advice Lines, and Office Ergonomics In association with team wellness development, more personal options are beneficial as well. Nurse advice lines are a convenient method of private communication via phone or internet with a health professional about symptoms, diseases, and illnesses. Implementing ergonomics helps fit the job to the worker. If they truly provide a healthy work environment, they can look forward to multiple benefits. Consistent employee reviews and surveys show that wellness programs increase satisfaction in the workplace. This includes better teamwork, communication, and fosters greater job position effectiveness. Recruiting new employees is time consuming and expensive, ergo retaining the same employees is beneficial to the company. If they treat their employees well by offering benefits and a comprehensive wellness program, they will have more incentive to stay. Sponsoring employee health directly correlates with increased productivity. Workers will work harder if they are healthy and enjoy the work environment that surrounds them. Understanding human behavior is more than the basis of psychology â€” it is an essential component of virtually every business and organization. The USC online Master of Science in Applied Psychology prepares professionals to excel in the fields of consumer and organizational psychology.

**Chapter 4 : Promoting Health and Wellness in the Work Environment**

*The Postal Service participates in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, which provides excellent coverage and flexibility with most of the cost paid by the Postal Service. There are many plans available, including Fee-For-Service, Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and High Deductible & Consumer-Driven Health Plans.*

The Oklahoma postal tragedy brought national attention to the unfortunate, but growing, phenomenon of workplace violence. Stories of workplace mass murders by unstable employees became commonplace for the local and national news media and the headlines were sensational. In August of , a part-time letter carrier walked into an Oklahoma post office and killed 14 of his co-workers before turning the gun on himself. The Oklahoma postal 1 tragedy brought national attention to the unfortunate, but growing, phenomenon of workplace violence. Indeed, we see the effects of this dangerous combination in our workplaces on a regular basis. Statistically speaking, workplace homicides represent only a small portion of violent incidents in the workplace—approximately one percent. What, then, are employers supposed to do? What is Workplace Violence? Where does a personality quirk end and a potential risk begin? To answer that question, we first need to look at how we define the problem of workplace violence. Generally, people think of workplace violence solely in the context of physical assaults or homicides. Such conduct can be seen in the form of shaking fists, throwing objects, destroying company property, written or verbal threats, swearing, insults, condescending language, hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking and the like. We examine those risks and strategies below. A few years ago, in an effort to curb the increasing incidence of violence in its workplace, the United States Postal Service engaged the services of several mental health professionals to study its environment and its employees. Below is a compilation of some of the most common factors. Needless to say, the company quickly terminated this employee and took several precautions to prevent a violent situation at or after his termination meeting many of those precautions are discussed later in this article. Clearly, this employee had problems that needed to be addressed immediately. In other cases, are the signs as clear? Generally speaking, a violence-prone or destructive individual will display some or all of the characteristics listed below: Unstable individuals are not the only factors that must be addressed when dealing with issues of workplace violence. Is subject to rapid and unpredictable change in the form of increased downsizing or rapid expansions in relatively short periods of time? Fosters company executives, managers and supervisors who are dismissive of employee feedback and ideas or whose leadership styles could be described as autocratic. Demonstrates a double standard in the application of policies and procedures between certain groups of employees, e. Has failed to implement effective mechanisms for addressing grievances or concerns? Has failed to train supervisors or managers to recognize truly troubled employees and provides no assistance to those who are in need of help? Lacks opportunities for job rotation or advancement? Permits external disruptions to prevail in the work environment, e. Fails to perform background checks on new hires, resulting in persons with violent pasts working in the facility? Continues to promote, rotate or ignore problematic, less competent or emotionally charged individuals who should not be in management level positions? Fails to perform regular safety and security reviews of the premises and has no policy against workplace violence? As you can imagine, any of these factors alone could present problems in your workplace. The unfortunate reality is that many companies have several of these factors working at any particular time, thus dramatically increasing the risk of an incident-prone environment. Why Should Your Company be Concerned? Overview Of Theories Of Liability. Employer liability for failing to take appropriate action in preventing workplace violence can be substantial. Potential liability exists under a number of legal theories. In short, employers have a legal duty to provide reasonable protection to their employees and members of the general public from violence in their workplace. Most states, including Georgia, also impose employer liability for workplace violence pursuant to state common-law theories of negligent hiring or retention, respondeat superior, failure to warn with regard to prospective employer recommendations , and premises liability. For purposes of this article, we focus on those theories—negligent hiring, retention or supervision, respondeat superior, and failure to warn—that concern the employer-employee relationship. Negligent Hiring And Retention. Notice

also can be imputed to the employer via customer or co-worker complaints. For purposes of establishing liability, the question is whether, when faced with evidence of violent or harassing tendencies, the employer took effective, meaningful disciplinary action to combat the conduct. As the following case illustrates, an employer may be held liable for the subsequent death or injury of a co-worker or other person if an employee with known violent or dangerous propensities is hired or retained. In the matter of *Harper v. City of East Point, Ga.* In particular, the evidence showed that, prior to having hired the officer, the City was aware that the officer had pled guilty to making harassing phone calls and had lied about the incident on his employment application. Every person shall be liable for torts committed by his servant by his command or in the prosecution and within the scope of his business, whether the same are committed by negligence or voluntarily. The classic example of claims brought under a respondeat superior theory concerns persons who perform security for their employers's. Bouncers, for instance, are hired to protect the premises and keep out undesired or unruly patrons. In some cases, however, the overzealous actions of employees providing a security function have resulted in liability for their employers. For example, in the case of *Odom v. The waitress* had punched and poured hot coffee on an unruly customer while attempting to remove the customer from the premises. A third area of potential liability for employers concerns the information provided to prospective employers about former employees. The Georgia Code, however, requires that, in order for the immunity to apply, such comments must be provided in good faith and limited to the following subject areas: An employer will not be protected under Georgia law if it is shown that the information was provided in bad faith i. In addition, employers should keep in mind that while Georgia law provides immunity from liability for statements made at the request of a prospective employer, it does not protect information voluntarily provided by a former employer without such a request. In an unpublished Florida state court decision, *Jerner v. After being hired, then fired, by his subsequent employer, the individual shot the five workers, killing three, before turning the gun on himself.* In a California decision, *Randi W. Livingston Union School District, P.* But because liability may attach if disclosures of information are subsequently deemed improper, we highly recommend that you consult with counsel before disclosing any such information. Given the potential liability caused by dangerous employees and work environments, what can an employer do to reduce the risk of workplace violence? Listed below are a number of practical tips to help minimize the potential for violence in your work environment: Include a statement in that policy that weapons are banned from the premises. Train supervisors and managers to recognize and report troubling conduct. Require employees to report any threats and abusive behavior. Educate employees that their reports need not be limited to death threats. If possible, set up an anonymous system of reporting. Be sure to investigate all threats of violence. Have an action plan in place for responding to an incident of workplace violence. Take proactive steps during the hiring process: Conduct thorough background checks. Make sure applicants identify all prior employers and their reasons for leaving each former place of employment. Ask applicants to explain periods of unemployment. Make job offers conditional upon satisfactory results from reference and background checks. Make sure reasons for termination are not a surprise. Provide employees with regular oral and written evaluations of their performance, including specific goals, areas of improvement and an express statement of what will happen if no improvement is shown. Think ahead and take appropriate precautions when terminating employees: Some suggest terminating on Mondays, rather than Fridays. The idea here is that the employee will have an opportunity to begin the job search immediately instead of having a weekend to stew about the termination. Select an appropriate location for the termination meeting. If possible, hold the termination meeting in an office near an exit. This strategy minimizes the potential of exposing many others to a potentially violent situation, and allows the terminated employee to leave or be escorted from the premises discreetly. Choose a time for the termination when the potential for onlookers is small. Have another manager or supervisor retrieve coats, keys and other immediately needed personal effects and bring them to the termination meeting room without comment to onlookers. Explain to the terminated employee that any other items will be mailed to him or her within the next few days. Assess your security measures regularly. Easily fixed, but often missed, areas of potential risk include broken or ineffective locks and poor lighting, especially in parking areas. A particular note should be made here about domestic violence. Domestic-related incidents continue to

be a source of violence in the workplace. Domestic issues that start in the home often follow an employee to the workplace because the perpetrator knows this is the one place the victim can be found. If your company becomes aware of domestic violence issues involving one of its employees and has legitimate concerns that the threat may follow him or her into your workplace, you have some options. First, you can offer the employee time off until the situation is resolved. If possible, offer at least a portion of the time off with pay. This strategy removes a possible target from your workplace and allows the employee to focus on reaching some sort of resolution without worrying about the financial repercussions of missing work. Endnotes In the three years prior to the Oklahoma incident, postal employees had been killed by current or former co-workers in Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia. Statistics indicate postal employees are less likely to be homicide victims than other workers. Postal Service Annual Report, For Mental Health Servs.

**Chapter 5 : OIG: Postal Service Workplace Violence Program – Postal Employee Network**

*A Postal Service contribution of 65% in the first year of employment and 75% thereafter to the insurance premium for family or self-plus one for PSEs enrolled in the USPS Non-career Health Care Plan. Previously the USPS only contributed to only single coverage.*

You can download the memo here. In August of , USPS Headquarters Delivery Operations issued an instructional letter to the field advising that they are required to thoroughly examine all fuel systems for any leaks and that they be free of corrosion during each preventative maintenance inspection. Please ensure that proper and complete vehicle inspections are performed before and after driving a vehicle to perform postal duties. The video from states that you should drink eight 8-ounce cups of water per day. If this mandatory stand-up talk has not been given in your station, please reach out to your branch president, who should have received it. Whenever there is high heat, outdoor workers are at increased risk for heat-related illnesses and deaths. In fact, every year thousands of workers experience heat-related illnesses, and dozens more are killed by heat, and it happens in every part of the country The workers most at risk for heat-related illness are in construction and agriculture, but there are many outdoor workers in other industries who are at increased risk as well. These include workers in transportation, sanitation and recycling, building and grounds maintenance, landscaping services, oil and gas operations, and anyone else who does strenuous work in the open air. We need your help to get the word out to employers that they are responsible for providing workplaces that are safe from excessive heat. This means regular breaks for workers so they can cool down. It means regular access to water so workers can stay hydrated. It means training for workers on the symptoms of heat illness—and what to do if they see a co-worker showing signs of dehydration or heat stroke. Here are key pieces of advice from the safety talk: Hydrate before, during and after work. Prevention is important, so make sure to maintain good hydration by drinking at least 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes. Dress appropriately for the weather. On warm days, make sure to wear light colored, loose fitting, breathable clothing to keep body temperatures down. Utilize shade to stay cool. When possible, use shaded areas to stay out of direct sunlight. Know the signs of heat stress. You should understand what heat stress is, and how it can affect your health and safety. Here are some things to look out for: The entire text of the press conference is available here for your review. Read it and all the heat-related illness material posted here on our website and pass it along to your brothers and sisters to prevent tragedy. Are you drinking enough water? Do you know the signs of heat illness? Some tips on avoiding heat-related problems, and the symptoms of—and necessary action to take for—heat exhaustion and heat stroke: Drink plenty of liquids. Be prepared to act by learning correct first aid procedures ahead of time. At times, workers may be required to work in hot environments for long periods. When the human body is unable to maintain a normal temperature, heat-related illnesses can occur and may result in death. This fact sheet provides information to employers on measures they should take to prevent heat-related illnesses and death. Following an investigation, citation and challenge and trial, a decision was issued on September 10, Click here to read more. Enforcing heat safety rules On July 24, , John Watzlawick, an Independence, MO, letter carrier, lost his life as a direct result of heat illness. USPS challenged the citation. A decision was issued on Sept. Carriers have asked a number of questions about M and its application outside the Independence post office. The first page of the guide advises as follows: OSHA does not have a specific standard that covers working in hot environments. Nonetheless, under the OSH Act, employers have a duty to protect workers from recognized serious hazards in the workplace, including heat-related hazards. This guide helps employers and worksite supervisors prepare and implement hot weather plans. It explains how to use the heat index to determine when extra precautions are needed at a worksite to protect workers from environmental contributions to heat-related illness. Workers performing strenuous activity, workers using heavy or non-breathable protective clothing, and workers who are new to an outdoor job need additional precautions beyond those warranted by heat index alone. In May of , the USPS distributed a Mandatory Stand-up Talk for Supervisors , which required that they train themselves on heat safety, train their employees, monitor the weather, acclimate employees to the heat and have a plan in place to respond to the needs of

employees during heat advisories. In the event that a shop steward or branch officer wishes to investigate management action or lack of action related to a heat abatement program in your office, you may use this form to request information. Smartphone heat safety tool: The app includes a quick way to calculate the heat index and see appropriate protective measures that should be taken before someone gets hurt. Filing an OSHA complaint: The Occupational Safety and Health Act, at Section 11 c , mandates that No person shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this Act or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding or because of the exercise by such employee on behalf of himself or others of any right afforded by this Act. If you believe that management has retaliated against you, you have the right to file a whistleblower complaint within the day time limit provided for postal employees. All of the information necessary to file a whistleblower complaint can be found here. Letter carriers who are exposed to hot and humid conditions can use the app to check the heat index and learn about the relevant protective measures. Click here to get your current heat index from The Weather Channel”and bookmark the page for future reference. The app also forecasts the hourly heat index throughout the entire workday, giving employers information they can use to adjust the work environment as needed to protect workers.

### Chapter 6 : Safety and Health | National Association of Letter Carriers AFL-CIO

*NALC, other postal unions, the Postal Service and three postal supervisors' organizations created and signed the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace in Feb.*

### Chapter 7 : WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: RECOGNIZING RISK FACTORS AND FORMULATING PREVENT

*Learn about US Postal Service, including insurance benefits, retirement benefits, and vacation policy. Benefits information above is provided anonymously by current and former US Postal Service employees, and may include a summary provided by the employer.*