

# Safety Is the Ultimate Priority in Changing Business Landscape

Preventing workplace violence is an increasing concern

by Doc Elliot



▶ The defining business trend of 2020 means employers are boosting protocols, from COVID-19 hygiene to workplace violence prevention, to keep employees and customers safe.

It's the dawn of a new era for business owners in a rapidly changing business climate that has been fraught with confusion and misunderstanding. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a windfall of new safety and health protocols requiring immediate implementation and ongoing consistency in order to maintain business operations. Typically, these protocols are implemented by front-line workers who, typically, are not prepared for the kind of blowback they receive from disgruntled customers who refuse to adhere to safety procedures such as mask requirements and social distancing recommendations.

These type of interactions frequently turn hostile – or even violent — pitting employees against customers in situations that raise concerns for the safety of workers and customers as well as risk and liability to business owners.

The pandemic isn't the only thing that has created a perfect storm for tensions in the workplace. Increased social, political and racial tension has also driven the incidences of public violent outbursts. A sharp rise in domestic violence cases is also linked to the shocking trend toward public disturbances and assaults. Online, these incidents have become viral fodder, humorously coined as “Karen” incidents, but the real-life causes and potential effects of violence in public is much more severe.

According to violence prevention experts, it's an alarming trend that most business owners are not prepared for. Nearly 65% of business owners do not have protocols in place to address workplace violence.

Now, more than ever, it's become a priority for business owners to keep their employees and customers safe, whether its enhanced health, hygiene and safety protocols or violence prevention. We saw how quickly corporations of all sizes implemented COVID-19 safety and sanitation protection protocols, but what people don't hear about is that the demand

for organizations to offer some sort of conflict resolution or violence prevention training has skyrocketed in every state as well, and oftentimes they don't know where to find that type of training. We've experienced a 300% increase in demand for workplace violence prevention training in all industries, to help companies, employees and even their customers to stay safer during these escalated times.

Healthcare facilities and law enforcement continue to drive the strongest demand for anti-violence training and the retail industry is now rapidly working to standardize violence prevention training for stores.

It's become an everyday occurrence within the healthcare field where the ER nurses and doctors will be at the receiving end of multiple physical assaults as the result of a combative patient and that is what we train hospital employees and to handle.

But now we're seeing the same behaviors and outcomes within other industries, such as retail, air travel and hospitality, and since they are not that accustomed to that dynamic, businesses don't know what to do and people are getting hurt.

It's now become a responsibility for all businesses to provide some sort of violence prevention training to their employees so that they know how to prevent a situation from becoming escalated in the first place in order to avoid conflicts instead of having to deal with them physically.

Some states require violence prevention training for certain industries. Safety training experts anticipate that more states will adopt violence prevention training requirements in the coming years.

It's clear that business owners are now having to address more aggression toward themselves and their employees and unfortunately their hands are tied in terms of responding physically, so the need for de-escalation training is more important than ever these days. At a time where keeping people safe is a priority, workplace violence prevention training is key to establishing a culture of safety across all industries. ■



A nationally renowned Federal Crisis Negotiation Specialist, Doc Elliot is founder and president of Phoenix Training Group. Since 1976, Phoenix Training Group has been the nation's leader in workplace violence prevention training, customizing effective anti-violence training programs for corporations across all industries.

The training includes violence predictability recognition, verbal de-escalation and negotiation training, physical aggression protection, to active shooter education. Course participants develop invaluable skills that will give them the ability to respond in healthy and productive ways, learning to spot the warning signs and react safely to a host of situations ranging from customer hostility all the way to life-threatening situations. Employers will be able to provide a workplace that encourages employee wellness and a supportive environment where everyone can feel safe and comfortable. [phoenixtraininggroup.com](http://phoenixtraininggroup.com)



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