

# Critical Incident Control in Your Business



by Wayne Black

## CRITICAL INCIDENT CONTROL IN YOUR BUSINESS

Regaining control of your business by preventing critical incidents, such as internal theft, employee misconduct, sexual harassment, accidents, or workplace violence, can be factors that make or break your business.

**Don't hire the walking lawsuit!  
You have every right to know who's working for you.**

**•Initiate pre-employment screening for criminal and civil history—**Criminal history screening can be more important than prior job references. Not all police agencies and courts always contribute to state police record bureaus. Therefore, local police department and court checks should be made with both the federal and state criminal justice systems in your area. Many times, while there does not appear to be an adjudication of guilt, there may be a plea of no contest or nolo contendere, during which the defendant (or your prospective employee) actually tells the judge under oath that he or she committed the crime. In most states, this is considered a guilty plea.

**•Consider psychological profile testing for critical positions—**The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) is recommended.

**•Make sure written policies regarding zero tolerance for workplace violence are clear and enforced—**The common thread in almost every instance of workplace violence is that coworkers knew there was a problem before it happened. In most cases, sensitivity training and a good plan to handle threats and violence will keep you and your company out of the six o'clock news crime report. Train supervisors to know the early warning signs of potential violence in the workplace. Immediately deal with threats before they turn into acts.

**•Take a step in the right direction with a drug-free workplace—**By screening those who need to steal to support their drug habits, you eliminate most internal theft.

**•Know your computer network—**Internal and external, strict E-mail policies are a must. Any employee that uses your network should have a password that is peculiar to them and changes every six months automatically. Control, record, and be able to recover (including restoring deletions) what employees do on your system and the Internet. A clear, concise policy will keep you and your business out of trouble. Remember, the network and computers are your property, and you may be held responsible for the actions of your employees.

**•Establish a telephone accounting system—**A good call accounting system will assist in internal investigations regarding theft or other misconduct. It will also help you control long-distance charges and promote effective time usage. If you are recording or monitoring calls, you may have a legal problem and you should consult your labor lawyer.

**•Protect your employees—**A safe work environment results in happy and motivated employees, which inspires greater productivity. Local fire departments, police departments, and security professionals will normally survey a business for potential safety problems. Have the survey completed before you are notified of a problem or incident.

**•Log your planning and good deeds—**It is important to document any proactive, as well as corrective, steps you take to make your business a safer and more secure organization. Many businesses keep "good deed books" that serve as ongoing diaries of positive business practices.

## Black & Associates

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