

Personnel Safety: We Don't Want Any "Kung-Fu Fighting"

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Objectives

- Understand why your agency should be concerned about associate safety in the community.
- Identify 4 safety issues reported by home care associates.
- Utilize an interdepartmental team to assess safety issues in your agency, develop safety training for your associates and revise policy and procedure.

Why Should We Be Concerned About Associate Safety In The Community?

- Mandate from OSHA
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Expenses related to on-the-job injuries

Mandate from OSHA

- The OSHA Act of 1970 states that all employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical injury.

Increase In Demand For Home Healthcare Workers

- Home care is one of the most rapidly growing industries in the country.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 896,800 workers were employed in home healthcare services in 2007.
- The BLS projects that home healthcare employment will grow 55% between 2006-2016 making it the fastest growing occupation of the next decade.

Increase In Retention of Associates

- Rate of turnover is high in healthcare workers, but especially high in home healthcare workers.
- Some turnover rates may be as high as 75%.
- The cost of orienting and training new associates is very high.

Cost To Agencies For Injuries

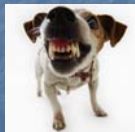
- The BLS reports that there were 27,400 recordable injuries to home healthcare workers during 2007.
- There may be an underreporting of injuries and this is due to a variety of reasons.

Hazards to Home Healthcare Workers

- Weapons
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Domestic Violence
- Animals
- Weather



What Can We Do?



John Knox Village Personnel Safety Task Force

- Multi Disciplinary
- Goal: Assess what hazards associates believed they encountered, review and revise policies, and develop ongoing associate safety training.

Associate Survey



- Survey tool used by John Knox Village
- Results validated what managers believed were hazards
- Revealed unsafe incidents had not been reported

Actions Taken

- Developed a safety assessment conducted during first visit and shared with all associates seeing patient
- Developed Incident Reporting Tool
- Revised Policy and Procedure
- Developed an annual safety training program

Recommendations for Employers

- OSHA encourages establishment of violence prevention program
- Encourage reporting of unsafe incidents
- Conduct training
- Provide cell phones to associates
- Consider employer-supplied vehicles, emergency alarms, or bright flashlights
- Consider associates working in pairs

Recommendations for Associates

- Visit high crime areas in early part of the day
- Have accurate directions to patient homes
- Park in well lighted areas
- Keep car windows rolled up and doors locked
- Be alert and aware of surroundings
- Notify employer of weapons in the home
- If necessary, leave the home
- Always TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT

References

- CDC. Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care & Social Service Workers
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare
