

**Food Safety and Inspection Service
Third Annual Report on Workplace
Violence Prevention**

Fiscal Year 2001

A large graphic on a red background. It features a black silhouette of a hand holding a handgun. The hand is positioned in the upper left, with the fingers wrapped around the handle of the gun. The gun is pointed downwards and to the right. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast appearance.

**Workplace
Violence**

It's real...know what to do

Dedication



**“Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us ... We will not falter and we will not fail”
-GEORGE W. BUSH**

On September 11th, 2001 our lives were profoundly altered by the terrorist attacks suffered at the hands of hate. The nation wept, but those tears strengthened our commitment to the heroes that went before us and sacrificed their very lives in the name of freedom. We honor all Americans. We honor those in service, forever bounded together in patriotism.

The Third Annual Report on Workplace Violence Prevention is dedicated to the American spirit. May those who have gone before us, not be forgotten. May we maintain the dignity and respect of their memory in solidarity and care for each other.



In Remembrance

Within the last year, a FSIS employee lost her life at what appears to be a case of domestic violence. The tragic events that took place that lead to the loss of life is an ominous reminder of the ramifications that domestic violence perpetuates. We at FSIS wish to remember her life and honor her memory. We must do all that we can to prevent all forms of violence against employees, customers, and family members. To do this we must make our attitude and treatment of domestic violence issues consistent with the Agency's overall goal of preventing workplace violence. It is our goal to continue to learn from hard lessons and to reassess the Workplace Violence Prevention Program as we progress. As is in the past with our fallen coworkers, we rededicate our efforts to ensure that our bereavement is an opportunity for growth in respect to lost life.

Additionally, within the last year a FSIS employee took his own life. It is important for us to remember this employee and empathize with the problems that become so burdensome that the depths of despair overcome the will to live. Agency employees who have experienced the tragic loss of coworkers and friends to suicide are not alone in their grief. The entire FSIS family grieves. We must continue to focus on the warning signs that warn us of despair in our employees. We must also carry that focus into action by taking practical steps to provide alternatives to such a final and irrevocable decision to end life.

Suicide Prevention



The Surgeon General's Call to Action developed in a 1998 National conference on suicide prevention, introduced a blueprint for addressing suicide that incorporated **'Awareness, Intervention and Methodology'** as a framework for suicide prevention. (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/calltoaction.htm>)

Warning signs for Suicide: Previous suicide attempts, mental disorders, alcohol and substance abuse disorders, family history of suicide, hopelessness, impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies, financial loss, depression, experience of recent loss/death in the family, direct / indirect statements with regard to suicide, giving away of prized possessions, physical illness, terminal illness, and isolation.

Suicide prevention resources are available to employees, families and customers. These resources include the National Suicide Prevention Hotline Number, FSIS Workplace Violence Hotline Number, the Employee Assistant Program and the EAP Coordinator.

For more information on suicide prevention, domestic violence, and other topics related to them, contact the Workplace Violence Prevention Assessment Team. There are many informational resources available that are updated often. Information is critical to understanding and prevention.

Acknowledgements

The efforts of the Milbank Memorial Fund (Attachment 1) and the Agency Task Force Report 2000 (Attachment 2) continue to impact on FSIS Workplace Violence Program improvements and future goals. Program enhancements and improvements, made in response to the Taskforce on Workplace Violence Prevention and the Milbank Memorial Fund recommendations are outlined in Attachment 3.

We appreciate the efforts of all FSIS employees to do their part in preventing workplace violence. Many efforts are not as visible as those included in this report. At the heart of all Agency efforts is the power of each employee to be a force for change. We gratefully acknowledge those efforts, seen and unseen, to make the workplace more civilized and less disrupted by workplace violence. All things positive begin and end with each of our valuable employees.

Introduction

This report documents the Food Safety and Inspection Service workplace violence prevention effort that follows the Second Annual Workplace Violence Prevention Report.

The most tragic terrorist act on United States soil took place on September 11, 2001 in New York, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania. The events surrounding the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon continue to echo within our hearts and minds.

In September 2001, Deputy Administrator Ron Hicks sent a letter (Attachment 4) to all FSIS employees in which he relayed the following:

“All of us are shocked over the tragic events of recent days in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. The horrific loss of life, the attack on our fellow Americans, and the impact on our way of life seems beyond understanding and acceptance.”

“In staying safe, we hope that you remain aware what is happening around you and don’t lose sight of the everyday hazards of our work and life. It is easy to become preoccupied and distracted during traumatic times. We rely on the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our employees, and we stand ready to be of assistance should you need our help.”

The relationship between domestic and foreign terrorist attacks to workplace violence is significant. Most of the casualties of these incidents, like those in Oklahoma City, were workers who came to their workplace like any other day, only to have violence invade and tragically alter it. The Deputy Administrator’s comments support the commitment to all Agency personnel and the programs that support personnel safety. One of many such programs that combat violence in the workplace is the Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

Although, we can not always stop tragedy from taking place, we can utilize preventive methods that help to decrease potential dangers or volatile situations. We are all profoundly affected by the world events, but how can we as Agency employees make a difference? How can we contribute? **One way is through awareness training. It is essential, in order to prevent potentially violent situations to learn how to recognize the warning signs.** Employees should know how to recognize and report signals that may lead to acts of violence. Suspicious behavior, things that are clearly out of place, and intuition are things that should be reported to one's supervisor, the Workplace Violence Prevention Program, and Technical Services Center, as appropriate. Once again, the overall effort begins and ends with the observations and actions of each of our valuable employees.

June 21, 2001 marked the one-year anniversary of the San Leandro, California tragedy in which two FSIS Compliance Officers and a State of California investigator lost their lives in the line of duty.

In response to the demand for program improvements, the Workplace Violence Prevention Program continues to make progress with regard to incident reporting, documentation management, training, and statistical measurement.

During the FY 2001 reporting period, employees and customers used resources including:

- The 24-hour toll-free pager number (1.888.894.6217) for the FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Assessment Team.
- Methods prescribed in FSIS Directives 4735.4 and 4735.7.
- Telephone calls and Outlook email messages to the Workplace Violence Prevention Assessment Team
- Supervisory and Chain-of-Command mechanisms of notification.

The workplace violence incident statistics for fiscal year 2001 are components of a "systems approach" to assessing and managing the workplace violence prevention effort. This systems approach to the program is a key recommendation of the Milbank Memorial Fund report, as identified in Attachment 1.

Workplace Violence Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 Incident case files are divided into two categories, Hotline Reported Cases and Non-Hotline Reported Cases. These files are maintained, monitored and updated by the Workplace Violence Prevention Assessment Team. Hotline Reported Cases are incidents reported by utilizing the FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Program 24-hour hotline number (1.888.894.6217) or contacting the applicable prevention program analyst. Non-Hotline Reported Cases are incidents reported via correspondence and/or other sources.

FY 2001 statistics for both Hotline and Non-Hotline Reported Cases totaled 252 documented incidents, of which 93 incidents were threats from within the Agency. The remaining 169 incidents were threats from outside sources.

Hotline and non-hotline reported cases are assigned Case Control Numbers (CCN) and tracked in the Workplace Violence Prevention database. FY 2001 revealed a substantial increase of hotline reported cases totaling **161** as compared to FY 2000 with 82 cases reported. Documented hotline usage of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program by Agency employees and outside sources increased by **96%** in FY 2001. During this same period, **91** non-hotline reported cases were reported.

Comparison of Workplace Violence Hotline Reported Incidents by District

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Alameda	2	22
Albany	14	22
Atlanta	6	10
Boulder	5	7
Chicago	0	7
Dallas	2	7
Des Moines	6	8
Greenbelt	8	11
Jackson	0	14
Lawrence	4	6
Madison	3	4
Minneapolis	0	6
Philadelphia	2	8
Pickerington	3	4
Raleigh	7	10
Salem	6	5
Springdale	9	10

**Origin of Workplace Violence
Hotline Reported Incidents – FY 2001**

- **72** of **161** incidents reported were allegedly instigated by Agency personnel; 6 were a result of FSIS Directive 4735.7 usage and 13 entailed OIG involvement and/or referral.
- **89** of **161** reported incidents were allegedly instigated by outside sources.
- Overall workplace violence hotline reported incidents resulted in increased prevention program usage, of which **55 %** were a result of FSIS Directive 4735.4 usage, **33%** were reports received from within the Agency, **8%** entailed OIG involvement and **4%** were a result of FSIS Directive 4735.7 usage.

**Dispositions - Workplace Violence Hotline Reported Incidents Allegedly
Instigated by Agency Personnel**

Of the 72 hotline reported incidents of workplace violence allegedly instigated by Agency personnel 9 resulted in dismissals or resignations; 5 in suspension; 7 in counseling referrals; 19 in either verbal instruction and/or letters of instructions, VDIP, Last Chance Agreements and reassignments; 10 required no further action; and 22 are being monitored and pending dispositions.

**Dispositions - Workplace Violence Hotline Reported Incidents Allegedly
Instigated by Outside Sources**

Of the 89 reported incidents from outside sources 5 resulted in employee dismissals; 20 in corrective actions and improved communications based on the Agency personnel and outside sources to resolve disputes respectively; 18 in Letters of Assurance from plant management; 4 involved temporary withdrawal of inspection; 7 in Law Enforcement and/or criminal intervention; 18 required no further action; and 17 are being monitored and pending dispositions.

Comparison of Workplace Violence Non-Hotline Reported Incidents by District

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Alameda	6	7
Albany	3	3
Atlanta	13	10
Boulder	6	2
Chicago	5	2
Dallas	1	2
Des Moines	17	8
Greenbelt	1	4
Jackson	13	15
Lawrence	13	4
Madison	4	4
Minneapolis	2	0
Philadelphia	7	6
Pickerington	2	4
Raleigh	26	9
Salem	5	0
Springdale	13	11

Origin of Alleged Workplace Violence Non-Hotline Reported Incidents

- 11 of 91 reported incidents were allegedly instigated by Agency personnel.
- 80 of 91 reported incidents were allegedly instigated by outside sources.
- Overall, workplace violence non-hotline reported cases reflected: 81% were a result of 4735.4 directive usage, 12% were reports received from within the Agency and 7% entailed OIG involvement.

Dispositions - Workplace Violence Non-Hotline Reported Incidents Allegedly Instigated by Agency Personnel – FY 2001

Of the 11 non-hotline reported incidents of workplace violence allegedly instigated by Agency personnel 2 resulted in corrective action; 1 resulted in no further action; and 8 are being monitored and pending dispositions.

Dispositions – Workplace Violence Non-Hotline Reported Incidents Allegedly Instigated by Outside Sources – FY 2001

Of the 80 reported incidents by outside sources 8 resulted in plant employee dismissals; 34 resulted in improved communications based on Agency personnel and outside sources to resolve disputes respectively; 27 in corrective action of which 9 cases involved Letter's of Assurance from the plant and 12 involved plant instruction to their employees; and 11 are pending dispositions.

* Several cases were precipitated by misunderstandings with regard to supervisory chain of command (Agency and customers, and poor 'initial' conflict resolutions). Communication efforts to obtain better understanding of Agency regulatory process and customer concerns provided a level at which discrepancies could be resolved quickly and efficiently.

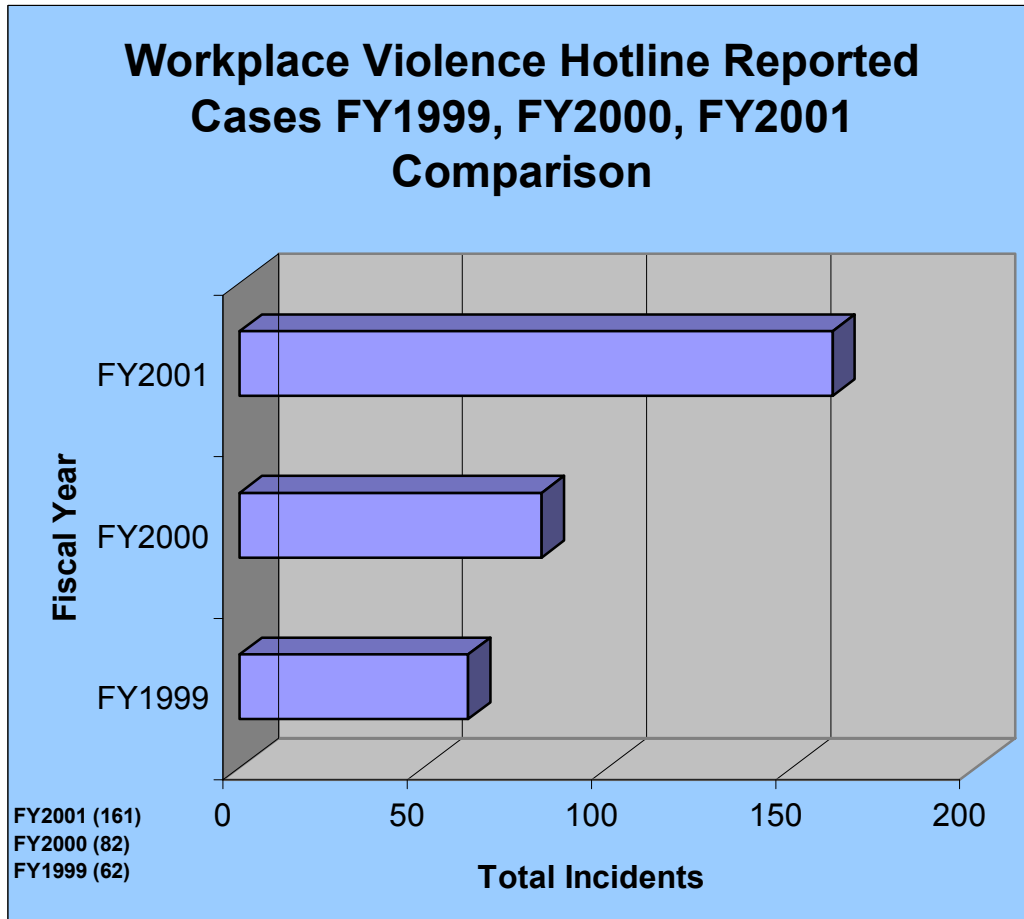
Workplace Violence Case Incident Graphs - FY 2001 (See Attachment 5)

1. Case Category Descriptions
2. Threat to Life Case Categories
3. Agency / Outside Source Comparison
4. Imminent / Developmental Case Comparison
5. Reported Cases as Compared by District
6. Reported Cases as Compared by State
7. Gender Comparison of Subject
8. Gender Comparison of Victim

No reference or conclusions should be made concerning the Districts showing an increase in cases. There may be other Districts with as many cases that had not communicated with the Workplace Violence Program. Any questions concerning this report can be directed to John Campbell – 202.690.1999

Fiscal Year 2001, 2000 and 1999 Comparison

When comparing the Workplace Violence Reported Incidents of FY 2001, FY 2000, and FY 1999 the following factors must be taken into consideration. Ongoing training and awareness initiatives may account for increased reporting of documented incidents. Additionally senior managers have announced that managers/supervisors will be held accountable if workplace violence issues are not addressed. It is expected that continuing program implementation will result in increased reliability and detailed data tracking.



FY 2001 (161) Hotline Cases
FY 2000 (82) Hotline Cases
FY 1999 (62) Hotline Cases

Accomplishments FY 2001

This past year there have been significant accomplishments in relation to the Workplace Violence Prevention initiative.

- Improved awareness of the Workplace Violence Prevention 24-hour Hotline response phone number (1.888.894.6217) and utilization by Agency personnel and outside sources.
- An FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement, FSIS Notice 04-01 was distributed to all employees. (Attachment 6)
- An FSIS Firearms policy FSIS Notice 13-01 was distributed to all employees. (Attachment 7).
- The completion of FSIS Directive 4735.4 Revision 2 (Draft), providing clarity in the reporting process concerning incidents of Threats, Harassment or Intimidation from outside sources. (To be distributed)
- Workplace Violence Prevention video development for Work Unit Meeting presentation available to all FSIS Employees.
- Workplace Violence Prevention emphasis letter was distributed to All Field Supervisors. (Attachment 8)
- Workplace Violence Prevention program development letter (Draft) to All FSIS Employees. (To be distributed)
- Workplace Violence Prevention constituent letter. (Attachment 9)
- Completion of the USDA Workplace Violence Prevention (closed caption) video.
- Development with regard to the FSIS Next Step video for FSIS Work Unit Meetings to be utilized by Field Operations.
- Workplace Violence incident database upgrade and cross references to provide better measurement and accountability with regard to workplace violence, Subjects (i.e. Subjects), Victims, Descriptions, Establishments, States, and District Management Case Incidents. The upgrade of database also added three new descriptive categories to incidents of violence to include: Domestic Violence, Stalking and Vandalism.
- Shared information and continued joint effort with respective authorities such as Compliance (Enforcement), OIG and Local, State and Federal Law Enforcement.
- A presentation and discussion with Compliance regarding workplace violence incident reporting.
- Three Workplace Violence Prevention Analysts were hired in FY 2001 to staff the Workplace Violence Prevention Program.
- Listening Sessions were held throughout the country in which workplace violence concerns were heard and program initiatives discussed. Feedback gathered during the sessions will continue to assist future program objectives and developments.
- Workplace Violence Prevention Program and Hotline number brochure was distributed to all employees.

- Articles have been published in The Beacon identifying issues that have been recognized as concerns by the program managers. Included in an article were cutout telephone information cards for employees.
- Workplace Violence Prevention Training conducted at various locations incorporated a 1-4 hour presentation in which detailed information was provided regarding workplace violence, the warning signs and how to report potential situations.
- Presentations were made to various groups including State governments, industry, other Federal agencies, and private groups concerning the prevention program.
- A wallet/purse/planner information card was developed identifying FSIS workplace violence points of contact and other assistance resources. This information will assist employees on obtaining guidance and assistance for situations at the lowest possible level of concern in an effort to improve proactive prevention of problems.

**Workplace Violence Prevention Outreach Training
FY 2001 Sampling of Customers**

FDA Employees
Georgia State Directors
National Turkey Federation
Rhode Island Department of Agriculture and Markets
New York State Managers
New York State Supervisors Training
New York State Sheriff Officials
Passport Agency
Raleigh District Office/ Listening Sessions
Pinkerington District Office/ Listening Sessions
Minneapolis District Office/ Listening Sessions
Lawrence District Office/ Listening Sessions
Atlanta District Office/ Listening Sessions
Dallas District Office/ Listening Sessions
ADR Human Resource Managers and Diversity Training
Boulder District Office/ Listening Sessions
Albany District Office/ Listening Sessions
Philadelphia District Office/ Listening Sessions
Technical Service Center
Western, Midwestern, and Eastern Laboratories (Alameda, St Louis, Athens)
Des Moines District Office/ Listening Sessions
Video Presentations with NJC to discuss Workplace Violence Prevention Video and Distribution
All 17 District Officers, Circuit Supervisors, and Union Representatives
U.S. State Department Senior Managers
North Carolina State Directors
Texas State Health Department
South Carolina State Agriculture Division Managers
Health and Human Services Senior Managers
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Personnel Management

**Workplace Violence Prevention Outreach Training
FY 2001 Sampling of Customers (continue)**

*Minnesota Department of Agriculture
National Association of State Meats, Food Directors
International Dairy Food Association
Northeast Food and Drug Officials Association
Radnor, PA, Town Supervisors
North Eastern Food and Drug Officials Association
National Association, State Meat Food Division Eastern Region
School Systems in Maryland and New York*

Overall fiscal year 2001, the Workplace Violence Staff has provided training to a total of 3,547 Agency Personnel and non Agency Personnel (i.e. industry, constituents, Local, State, and Federal Agencies).

Feedback from Training Evaluation Forms

Responses from training session evaluation forms completed by course participants provided the following information:

Questions and Evaluation Responses:

- 1. The objectives of the Workplace Violence Prevention Course were clearly presented.*

67% of attendees Strongly Agree, 29% Agree, and 4% Somewhat Agree

- 2. The Workplace Violence Prevention Course provided very useful information.*

64% of attendees Strongly Agree, 33% Agree, and 3% Somewhat Agree

- 3. I am satisfied with what I learned as a result of attending the Workplace Violence Prevention Course.*

64% of attendees Strongly Agree, 30% Agree, and 6% Somewhat Agree

Issues of Concern

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2001, there have been several serious domestic violence incidents related with the workplace. These incidents involved not only serious physical abuse, but also overwhelming emotional mistreatment placed on the victim. Not only does abuse effect the well being of the victim and family, but also coworker and program effectiveness. FSIS considers domestic violence prevention vital in the maintenance of employee safety and health. Empathy and a willingness to help if asked for help should be a primary concern for all FSIS managers and supervisors. While the sensitivity of this matter is not an easy one to deal with, it is not an option to ignore an employee's signals for help. We should make sure that we keep resources available and user-friendly, while respecting the right to privacy.
- While consistent reporting continues to be an expectation of the Agency, gaps remain in the reporting processes that warrant appropriate management efforts. This emphasizes the need for continued training, work unit meetings, and communication to make certain that the reporting process is being used consistent with Agency policies and directives.
- Although there has been an increase of FSIS form 4735-4 usage in FY 2001, there is still a need for complete documentation of incidents in a timely manner. The 4735-4 forms require legibility and concise details of incidents and should be fax-ready. The Form Flow program, which is available on Field Operations computers, provides employees an electronic version of the 4735-4 form to aid in the reporting process of workplace violence incidents. In addition, supervisors should ensure that paper versions of the 4735-4 form are available in the FSIS office. While employees are directed and expected to complete the 4735-4 form themselves, supervisors should assist employees who may need help filling out the form.
- There are a significant number of conflicts within the Agency that escalate into incidents of alleged threat, harassment, and/or intimidation. There is a need for more timely intervention. This should occur in such a way as to encourage local problem solving methods. The Workplace Violence Prevention program should be used to assist supervisors in their efforts to manage and hopefully prevent conflicts. The Workplace Violence Prevention Analysts can help supervisors in their efforts and give continuity to management when employees call for assistance. There have been many instances when this has worked effectively when supervisors have involved the analysts early in the process. The Workplace Violence Prevention Program is not a substitute for the immediate supervisor or chain of command. It is an enhancement of existing systems of management and an alternative resource when supervisors do not effectively respond to problems. Employees should keep their supervisors informed of their concerns and supervisors should use available resources to effectively manage local workplace violence prevention efforts.

Current and Near Term Initiatives

- Implementation of one analyst position to cover the West Coast.
- Review the possibility of adding a computer specialist position to maintain interactive web based communication, as recommended by the Taskforce on Workplace Violence Prevention.
- Computer Based CD for Workplace Violence Prevention training.
- An expanded and accelerated training to continue the prevention effort at all levels and in all program areas. Training is being tailored to fit the problems and specific needs of each office. Some training is designed to fit within work unit meeting timeframes so that it is practical and easily implemented, respecting fiscal and program limitations.
- Exploration of methods to improve reporting and intervention into incidents of conflict within the Agency with regard to potential or actual workplace violence conditions.
- Inclusion of specific language in FSIS Directive 4735.3, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct, to specifically address an employee obligation for treating others with dignity and respect and to specifically identify unacceptable behavior, as it relates to preventing workplace violence.

Missions Summary

The Workplace Violence Prevention Program is a work in progress. Continued application of resources is needed to facilitate effective preventive measures through efficient program implementation.

Steps taken to address the urgent issues of workplace violence account for the volume of this report. The value of recognizing shared goals and coordinating common efforts opens the way for new initiatives consistent with Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point methodology. Some parties continued to voice the opinion that conditions within the HACCP environment have caused conflict and may be a contributing factor to the overall potential for workplace violence. It may also be suggested that the HACCP environment should be a proving ground for open communications, which should offer a 'systematic' and business-like problem solving background for preventing violence. While these lines of thinking may be equally valid, it is the application of behavior that is the world our employees live in. Working in such an environment requires open-minded thinking, the courage to try new ways of problem solving, and the willingness to put honesty and objectivity into action. This requires us to explore a bold initiative in shifting old ways of thinking and behavior into a proactive process that lessens conflict and encourages team oriented thinking. The effectiveness of continued initiatives will be measured in what occurs in the workplace rather than what happens in the policy-making arena.

With new approaches to the working environment, we must also take a bold look at the sociological, economic, and psychological background of the world that we all live and work in. It becomes incontrovertible that conditions outside of the workplace are often central issues to workplace violence. We must broaden our approach to proactive thinking to include factors outside of the confines of the workplace, while respecting the privacy of our employees. The beginning of such an approach lies with the ability to recognize the needs of our employees and to provide empathy, compassion, and assistance when the employee needs us most. This area needs improvement. While mechanisms are in place for employee assistance, we are seeing examples that indicate a need for improvement in practical intervention in problematic situations that show up in the workplace. Not taking this into account in an overall prevention effort misses the mark on approaching core issues rather than reacting to symptoms of a failure to do so. To accomplish these things will require a combination of theoretical exploration and grounding in real-world application of practical ideas. FSIS has the ability to do this now with resources within its reach. The success of such an initiative lies with our willingness to try new ideas and accept innovative, perhaps unconventional methods.

It is the FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Program's goal to take case studies and present concerns, with data gathered from our current mechanisms and the combined all resources within this report to map a proactive approach towards solutions.

FSIS wishes to thank all of our employees, the groups that have helped us along the path, our critics, and those who work quietly in the background. Workplace violence prevention is a goal shared by all. Let us share the responsibility as well.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. The Link to Milbank Memorial Fund Report on Conflict and Violence in the Food Safety Workplace
2. The Link to Agency Taskforce Report 2000
3. Status Report on Milbank Report and Taskforce Recommendations
4. Letter from Deputy Administrator Ron Hicks to All FSIS Employees dated 9/13/01
5. Workplace Violence FY 2001 Case Graphs
6. FSIS Notice 04-01 - Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement
7. FSIS Notice 13-01 - Firearms in Work Establishments
8. Workplace Violence Prevention Emphasis Letter to All Field Supervisors dated 9/22/01
9. Constituent WPVP Training Invitation Letter dated 7/19/01

In Memory

Jean Hillery, Thomas Quadros, and Bill Shaline, were killed in June 2000, while in performance of their regulatory duties. May the hard lessons learned from their loss not be in vain, but serve to remind us each day of our duty to transform tragedy into a better life for those who follow in their footsteps.



**Compliance Officer
Jean Hillery**



**Compliance Officer
Thomas Quadros**



**Senior Special
Investigator, State of
California,
Bill Shaline**

Attachment 1

Conflict and Violence in the Food Safety Workplace:

**A Report on Meetings Convened by the Milbank
Memorial Fund at the
Request of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in
Fulfillment of a
Cooperative Agreement of September 2000**

<http://www.milbank.org/0107foodsafety.html>

Attachment 2

Web Link to the Taskforce 2000 Report on Workplace Violence Prevention

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/topics/violence.htm>

Attachment 3

Status of Recommendations from the Taskforce on Workplace Violence Prevention and the Milbank Memorial Fund Report on Conflict and Violence in the Food Safety Workplace

During the fiscal year 2000, the Taskforce on Workplace Violence Prevention was formed to reassess critical issues in the aftermath of the murder of two FSIS Compliance Officers and a State of California investigator in San Leandro, California. The findings of the Taskforce are detailed in its report, "*Workplace Violence Prevention Taskforce 2000 – Report of Recommendations*". A link to the web site containing the report can be found in Attachment 2 of this report. Following the Taskforce meetings, the Milbank Memorial Fund organized meetings to determine the scope, makeup, and possible solutions to workplace violence issues in the food safety workplace. The findings of these meetings are detailed in the report, "*Conflict and Violence in the Food Safety Workplace: A Report on Meetings Convened by the Milbank Memorial Fund at the Request of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Fulfillment of a Cooperative Agreement of September 2000.*" This attachment will address the status and timeline of the recommendations made in the Taskforce and Milbank reports.

The Taskforce 2000 report identifies current FSIS accomplishments, which were completed prior to the report's release. Other core issues identified in recommendations by the Taskforce are works in progress and are at various stages of advancement. Many of the recommendations will be a continuing process with no clear completion, an example being *changing the culture*. Movements of this nature will be maintained indefinitely. This attachment will endeavor to comment on where we are in those kinds of processes, relative to the Taskforce assessment.

Taskforce Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

Provide cell phones to employees for personal security, beginning with compliance officers.

Status - Completed

Cell phones have been provided to Compliance Officers and many Circuit Supervisors. The Workplace Violence Prevention Assessment Team (WPVPAT) is currently performing risk assessments on other assignments, locations, and situations to determine where additional cell phones may be needed.

Communicate to industry the Agency's zero tolerance policy on workplace violence
Status – Completed

This recommendation is addressed in this and the previous Report on Workplace Violence Prevention.

Conduct employee interviews to determine extent of incidents, safety, and security needs/gaps

Status – In Progress

The implementation plan for the interview process is near completion. Implementation was delayed in order to bring into full operation the three new Workplace Violence Prevention Analyst positions. The analysts will implement the interview process once the plan has completed the clearance process. It is expected that the employee interviews will begin in early 2002 and be completed before the end of the fiscal year 2002. Listening sessions with interactive discussions with FSIS employees throughout the country were conducted during the fiscal year 2001. Members of the WPVPAT participated in these listening sessions. In addition, the WPVPAT has significantly increased its exposure and interaction with FSIS employees, which has addressed, to a large degree, this recommendation.

Allocate adequate resources to Inspectors-in-Charge (IICs) to meet with their inspectors and, separately, with plant managers

Status – Completed

The Next Steps Work Unit Meetings, which included meetings with plant representatives, were accomplished during the fiscal year 2001. Also ongoing work unit meetings with inspectors have been funded and provided for. Weekly meetings with plant managers are a program routine, which addresses a diverse range of issues, including workplace violence prevention. Emphasis letters, training, and other management communications have placed workplace violence prevention as a high priority, which has driven the response to this recommendation.

Ensure that there is adequate police coverage in potentially violent situations

Status – Completed

Completed as described in the Taskforce 2000 report.

Near-Term and Long-Term Recommendations

Change the Culture

Status – Ongoing implementation

The Next Steps Work Unit Meetings included specific instructions with regard to communications, workplace violence prevention, and addressing the regulatory role in the HACCP environment. Specific Workplace Violence Prevention training has focused on helping FSIS employees in all program areas to understand Agency policy; their rights and responsibilities regarding working in an environment that is free of violence, threats,

harassment or intimidation; their responsibility for striving for non-adversarial relationships on the job; reporting of situations that may present a potential for workplace violence; and a zero tolerance policy for reprisal against those who report incidents and situations. Reporting of all threat and violence incidents is now mandatory.

Collect and Analyze Information/Data
Status – Ongoing implementation

As shown throughout this and the previous annual reports, improved reporting and tracking of the data within all forms of reporting have shown significant improvements. The WPVPAT database is at the heart of a systems approach to managing the prevention program. This has proven to be a critical tool in accurately identifying trends, gaps, and the specific makeup of the overall concerns. The WPVPAT can access the database from the field in real time, giving critical feedback to concerns in advance of encounters. The WPVPAT has worked closely with District Enforcement Operations, District Managers, and senior FSIS managers to identify potential and actual problem areas. In many cases, information contained within the database has been used to apprise Compliance Officers of situations in advance of their arrival at a specific location; thus giving options and alternatives to situations that may become hostile or violent. This is a critical step to preventing incidents like the tragedy in San Leandro, by providing threat assessment information *before* violence opportunity is encountered. The WPVPAT continues to refine this process and be using similar data tracking methods for assembling feedback in the aforementioned employee interviews

Identify Safety/Security Measures
Status – Ongoing implementation

District Enforcement Operations has done specific work in this area throughout the fiscal year 2001. The WPVPAT has applied risk/threat assessment consistent with the specific concerns within this Taskforce recommendation. The WPVPAT uses information gathered through the various reporting methods to weigh the facts of situations against the measurement of known risk and threat patterns. This gives the WPVPAT information that can guide supervisors and managers to take steps to avoid developing situations that present a risk. The WPVPAT continues to refine this process and is currently researching sources of outside guidance to improve work already done.

Establish/Revise Policies and Procedures to Support the Desired Cultural Change
Status – Ongoing implementation

FSIS Directive 4735.4, Reporting Assault, Threat, Intimidation, or Interference has been revised to address this recommendation. Reporting is now mandatory when a threat or assault is known. The revised directive provides for more direct involvement by the WPVPAT to monitor and assist the investigation process, as well as provide for more timely tracking of reported incidents. Revision 2 of the 4735.4 directive is currently in

the clearance process. The WPVPAT is developing a proposal for incorporating specific language into FSIS Directive 4735.3, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct, to address behavioral expectations with regard an *anti-harassment* policy. This will provide for a clear understanding of unacceptable behavior and sanctions should employees engage in such behavior. This helps address a gap that was identified by the Taskforce regarding reporting internal confrontational behavior, which is not plainly addressed in a manner consistent with the principals of FSIS Directive 4735.4.

Provide Training

Status – Ongoing Implementation

Workplace Violence Prevention training was provided to all Consumer Safety Inspectors, Veterinarian Medical Officers, Circuit Supervisors and District Managers within the Next Steps Work Unit Meetings. Compliance Officers are getting specific workplace violence prevention training in Verbal Judo and safety training at Artesia, New Mexico. The WPVPAT is conducting a variety of formats for prevention training at all levels and in all divisions within FSIS. In addition, the WPVPAT is extending this training to industry and other outside organizations as described in the Accomplishments section of this annual report. As of the end of the fiscal year 2001, specific workplace violence prevention training (in addition to the Next Steps module) has been provided for approximately 2,417 FSIS employees and 726 employees from other sources. Continued expansion and improvement of training is a high priority in the prevention effort.

Communicate Policies, Procedures and Incidents

Status – Ongoing

Actions to address this recommendation are described in the Taskforce report and previously described initiatives within this report.

Develop a Systems Approach

Status – Ongoing as described throughout this annual report.

Use Civil and Criminal Penalties

Status – Ongoing

FSIS has imposed criminal penalties on persons that threaten or assault FSIS employees. FSIS has extended this into terrorist related activities, hoaxes that are perpetrated within the FSIS work environment, and other workplace violence incidents. FSIS continues to explore legal avenues to control and penalize activities that are used to threaten employees, their family members, and our customers.

Provide and Adequate Budget
Status – Completed

FSIS had fully funded and supported the significant expansion of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program. This includes the addition of the three analysts added to the Labor and Employee Relations Division staff during the fiscal year 2001.

The Recommendations of Milbank Memorial Fund Report on Conflict and Violence in the Food Safety Workplace

While some of the recommendations within the Milbank Report are similar to those of the Taskforce report, other issues unique to the Milbank meetings have required a specific response. FSIS considers itself well on the way in implementation of the recommendations within the Milbank Report. The following are issues identified within the report's Action Agenda:

Improve the Timing and Effectiveness of the Appeals Process
Status – Near Term Implementation

FSIS Field Operations is currently developing an action plan for ensuring audit and accountability for the appeals process. Timely processing of the appeals process was emphasized during Next Steps Work Unit Meetings.

Increase HACCP and Food Safety Education and Training for Industry and Department Employees
Status – Near Term Implementation

Ongoing education and training of FSIS employees was accomplished in the fiscal year 2001 with Next Steps Work Unit Meetings. This effort will be continued and expanded on as FSIS Field Operations develops an action plan for increasing the scientific basis of food safety pilot training projects for joint training of Agency and Industry employees. It is important to note that 35 Consumer Safety Officer positions were created and filled in the fiscal year 2001. This represents the beginning of a broad initiative to improve the scientific methodology applied to the FSIS role in the HACCP environment. Implementation of the Consumer Safety Officer role will address multiple issues identified in the Milbank Report call for improvements in the focus of HACCP implementation.

Design and Implement Enhanced Programs to Prevent Workplace Violence Status – In Progress

Evidence of the progress on this front is contained in this report. While we have come a long way on this path, we recognize that there are many more issues to address to fulfill the expectation within this recommendation. For example, FSIS will be expanding the relationship with industry, assemble FSIS participation in a collaborative effort with National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and consult with industry groups in an effort toward joint training. FSIS is already sharing information from the Workplace Violence Prevention Program with industry, which fosters networking and a free exchange of ideas. This effort will continue and grow as the prevention program evolves.

Improve the Inspection Process Status – In Progress

The aforementioned improvements in the inspection process are one aspect of the Agency's attention to this recommendation. As a part of the overall improvement effort, FSIS has implemented Food Safety Systems Correlation (FSSC) teams. FSIS Notice 42-01 outlines the purpose of the teams, which directly addresses this recommendation:

Quoting FSIS Notice 42-01, "FSIS will evaluate the information that FSSC teams gather to determine how program personnel are following the inspection methodologies as specified in FSIS Directive 5000.1 and in other relevant directives and notices. FSIS will use the information gathered by the FSSC teams to determine the need for training, correlation activities, and instructional materials. FSIS will not use the results to rate the performance of inspection program personnel. FSIS' goal is to ensure that food

safety related inspection program activities are carried out in as consistent a manner as possible throughout the country. Although not the team's focus, it will be inevitable that, at times, the team will identify trends in establishment approaches to regulatory requirements that are questionable and that need correlation. These types of findings will be considered in deciding what types of correlation and training should be provided to in-plant program personnel and, if they are interested, to establishments."

Review Compliance Procedures Status – In Progress

As previously stated in the status of the Taskforce recommendations, Compliance is actively evaluating and revision procedures to address the concerns of this Milbank recommendation. Compliance is actively communicating with FSIS' Workplace Violence Prevention Program in advance of compliance visits to situations that are cause for a safety concern.

Establish an Ombudsman

Status – Under Discussion

FSIS is currently discussing the feasibility of adapting current mechanisms to address the concerns of this recommendation. FSIS will report on its complete response to this recommendation as soon as possible.

Review and Improve Crisis Management Plans **Status – In Progress**

Individual topics identified in this recommendation have been covered in this report and attachment. FSIS continues to innovate the Workplace Violence Prevention Program to identify areas where crisis management may need strengthening. Regarding industry plans during recall situations, this is one of many topics being addressed through the In-Depth Verification process, as detailed in FSIS Directive 5500.1, Conducting Targeted In-Depth Verification Reviews.

The Taskforce and Milbank recommendations continue to be a driving force in the policy and application of workplace violence prevention efforts. Questions, comments, and concerns regarding the FSIS response to these recommendations should be directed to Mr. Donald Mussachio, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Office of Management. Mr. Mussachio may be reached at 202-720-4744. All mail for the Administrator's office should be sent to:

1400 Independence Avenue
Room 1166-South Building
Washington, DC 20250



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Office of Management
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Attachment 4

September 13, 2001

To: All FSIS Employees

From: Ronald F. Hicks
Deputy Administrator
Office of Management

Subject: Attack On Our Nation

All of us are shocked over the tragic events of recent days in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. The horrific loss of life, the attack on our fellow Americans, and the impact on our way of life seems beyond understanding and acceptance. It is nearly impossible to think of anything but the images of the disaster, the people who have lost their lives, and the loved ones who struggle to survive the pain.

As we set out on a path to recover from this terrible loss, I wish to express my deep concern for all our employees, especially the ones who have lost friends or loved ones in this tragedy. Please know that we are concerned for each of you and wish to provide the support that you may need to cope with this terrible situation.

For those who may have lost loved ones, friends, or associates, please know that we are here for you and your families. We stand ready to provide support for you in ways that we are able. Employee Relations Specialist, Roslyn Robinson, is available to assist in arranging support through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Ms. Robinson's telephone number is 202.720.5657, and her email address is Roslyn.Robinson@usda.gov. You may also contact our Employee Assistance Program directly by calling 800.523.5668 or TDD 1.800.882.7610.

You may be experiencing many feelings at this time: anxiety, lack of concentration, guilt, hopelessness, a variety of physical symptoms, mood swings, and an extreme sense of sadness. These feelings are all quite normal. Talk about your feelings with coworkers, your supervisor, and your families. It will help in relieving some of your anxieties. It is also welcome if you listen to others. I have attached a list of suggestions for helping co-workers cope with grief.

Your children, I'm sure, are a major concern to you, also. At times of crisis, their imagination can run in all directions. Our EAP counselors advise us that the best way to address the issue of helping children work through their grief is to be open to their questions. Answer as honestly as you can and reassure them that you will do whatever it takes to keep them and yourself safe, and, above all, let them know that they will be cared for.

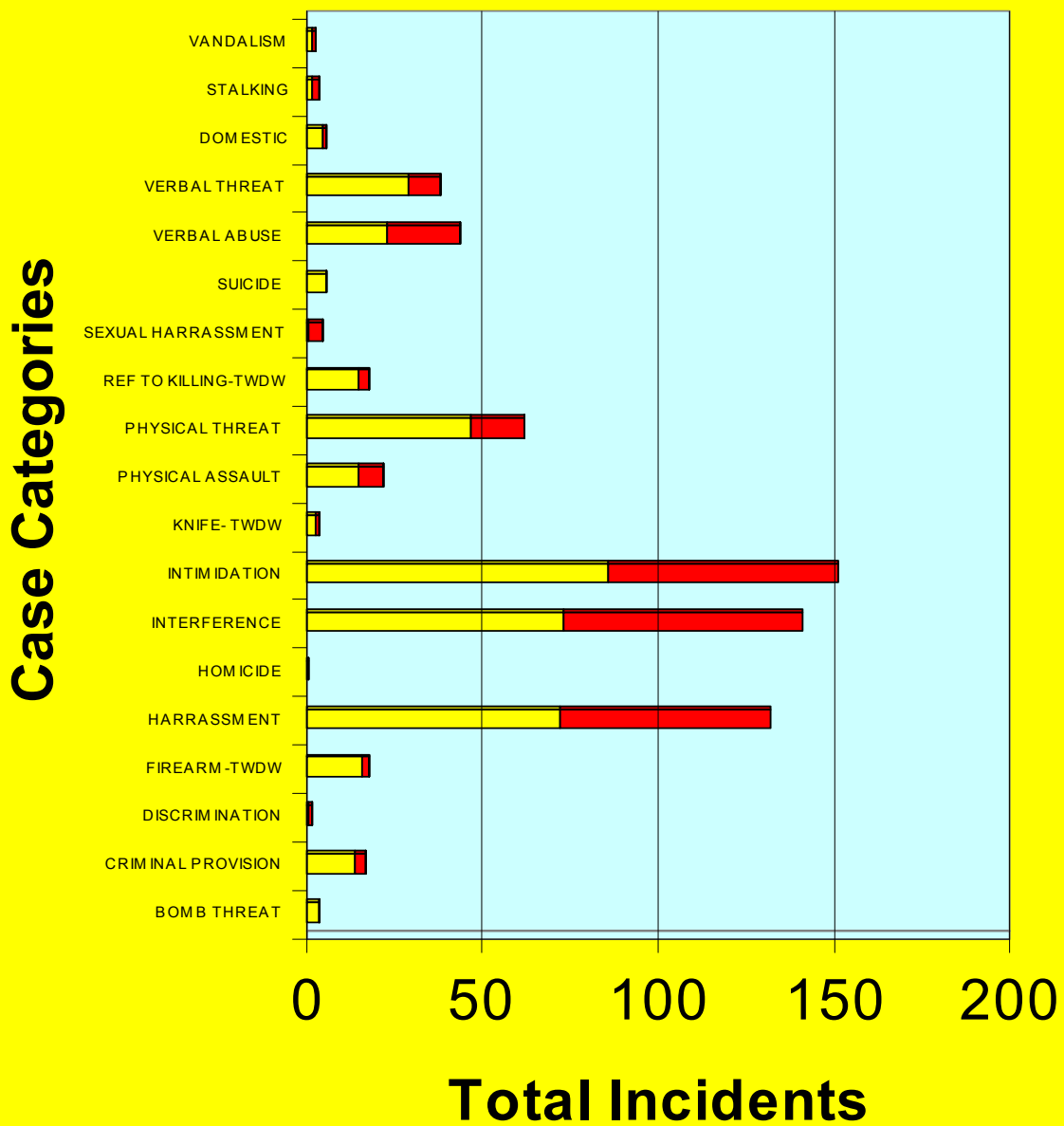
Please be mindful that our sense of anger and want for justice is natural and understandable. We have all been injured in some way by this life changing event. But justice will come in due time and by the people who are responsible for delivering it. Whatever our feelings about what happened, we must make certain that treating each other with dignity and respect is a priority. We have a diverse workforce, and it may become tempting to allow our frustration to vent itself in negative ways.

In staying safe, we hope that you remain aware what is happening around you and don't lose sight of the everyday hazards of our work and life. It is easy to become preoccupied and distracted during traumatic times. We rely on the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our employees, and we stand ready to be of assistance should you need our help. Our work in FSIS does not stop and we must continue to maintain a safe meat, poultry, and egg supply for our nation and the world. All of us at FSIS have reason to be thankful and proud of what we do and who we are, as an organization, as a nation, and as individuals.

Thank you all for the work that you do and please continue to persevere during these trying times. Be proud and renewed in our strength together.

Attachment

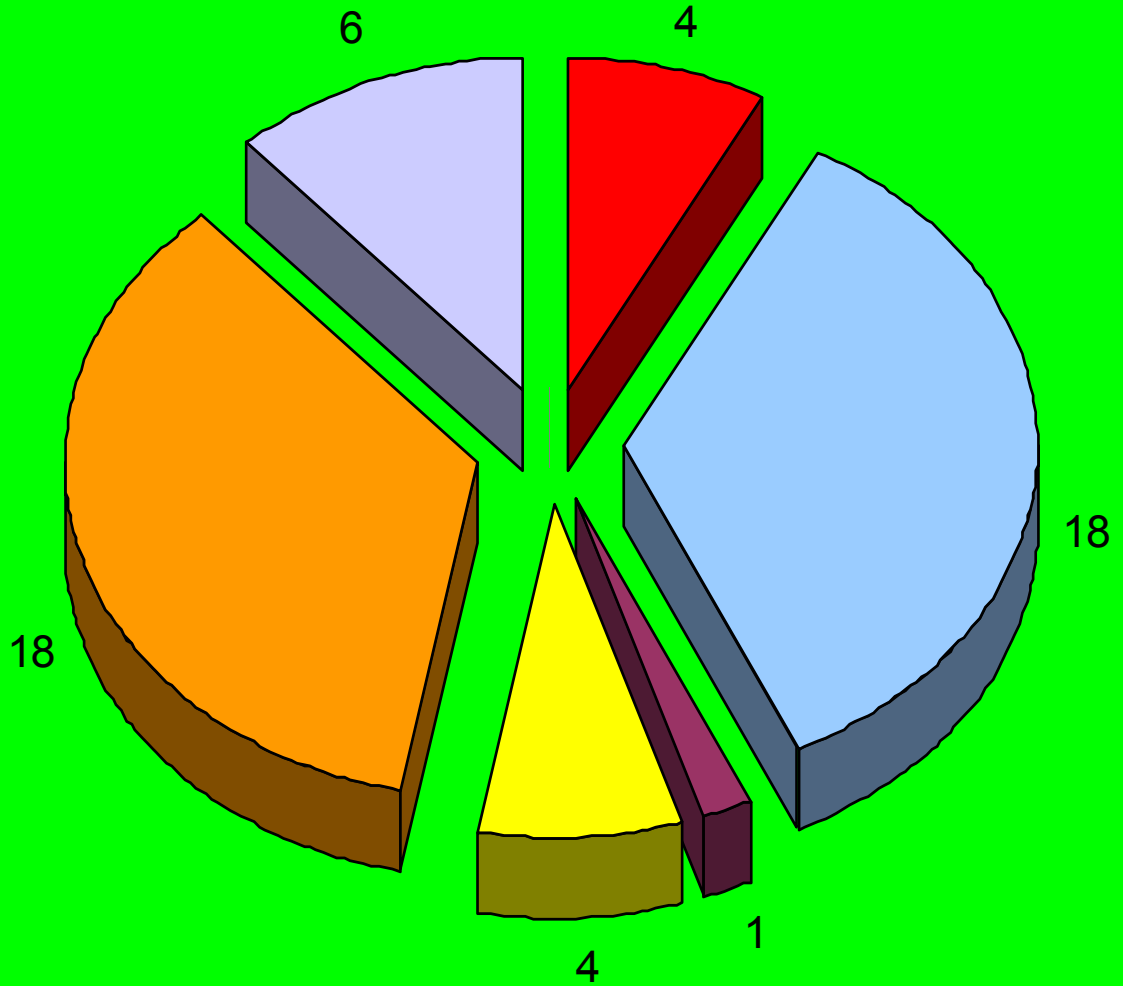
Workplace Violence Incidents Overall Cases FY2001



■ Hotline Reported Case Files
■ Non-Hotline Reported Case Files

TWDW = Threat with Deadly Weapon

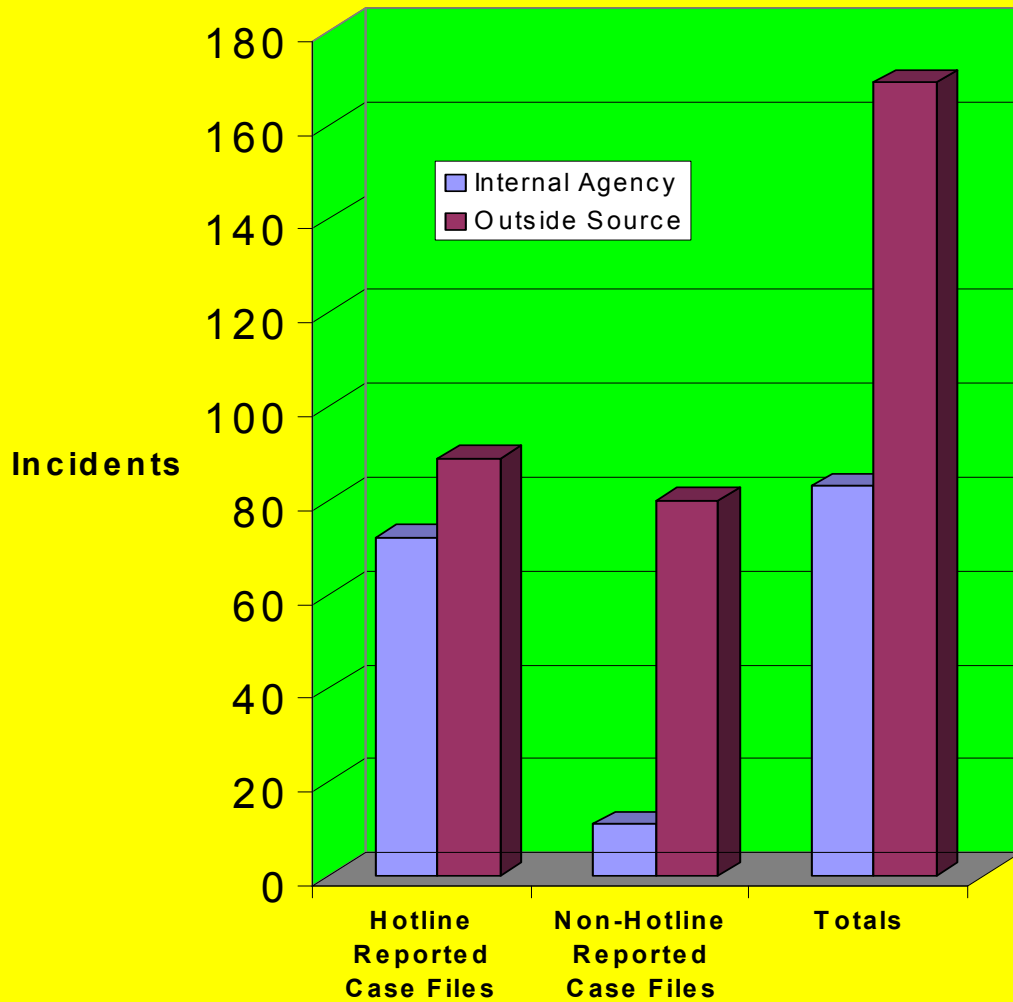
Workplace Violence Incidents Threat to Life FY2001



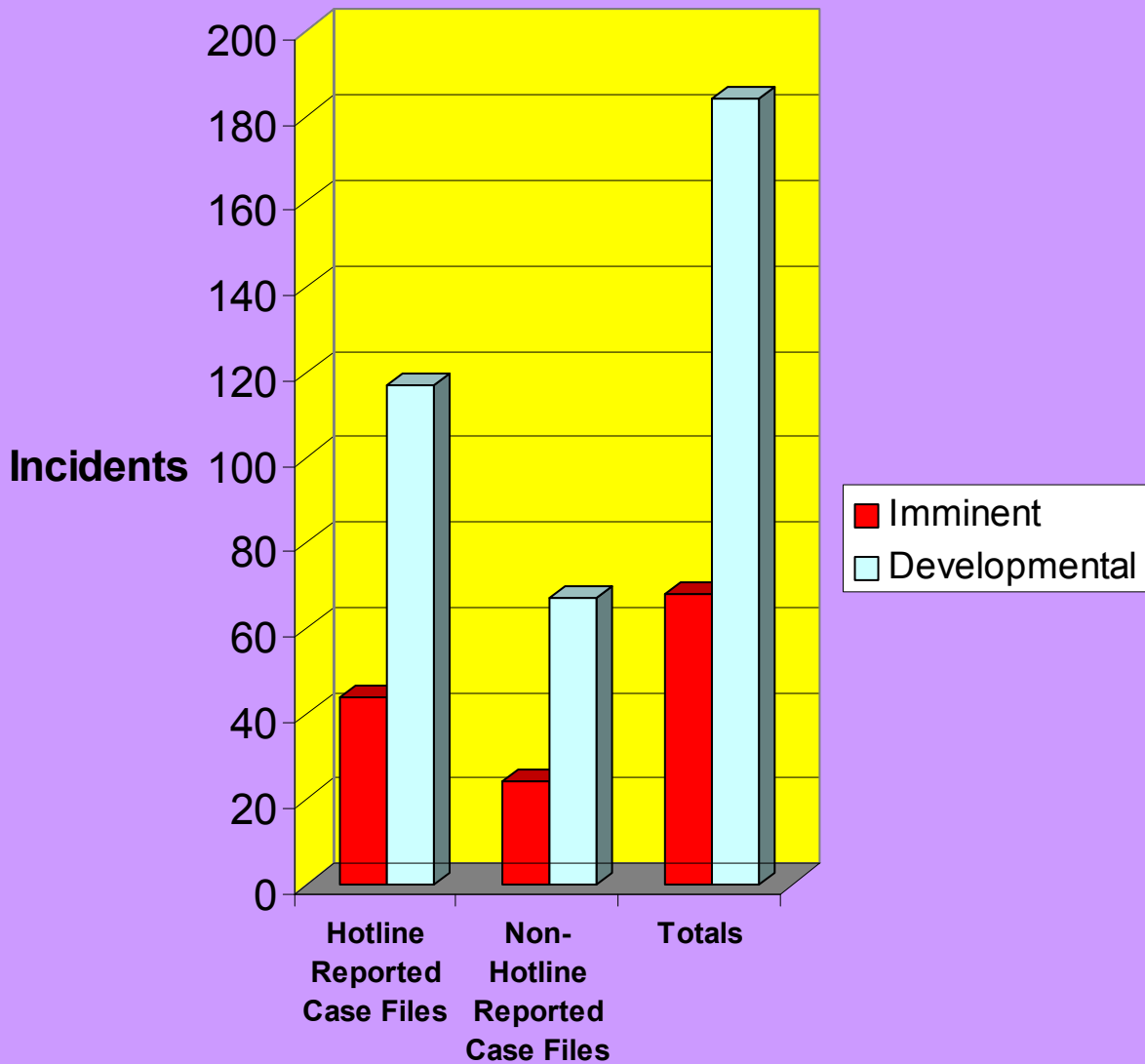
- BOMB THREAT (4)
- FIREARM (18)
- HOMICIDE (1)
- KNIFE (4)
- REF TO KILLING (18)
- POTENTIAL SUICIDE (6)

OVERALL CASES IN THREAT TO LIFE CATEGORIES (Total 51)

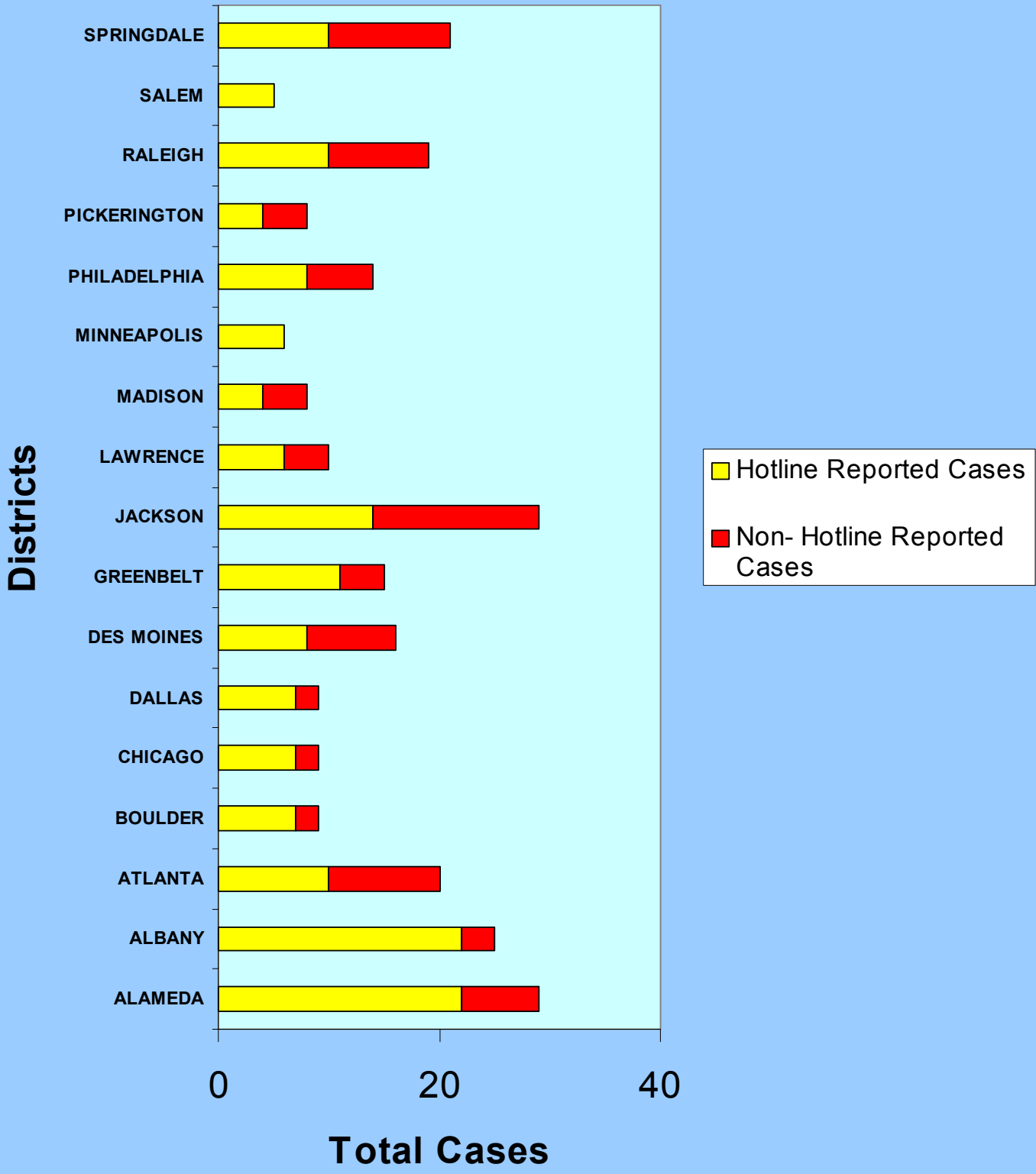
Workplace Violence Incidents Internal Agency / Outside Source FY2001



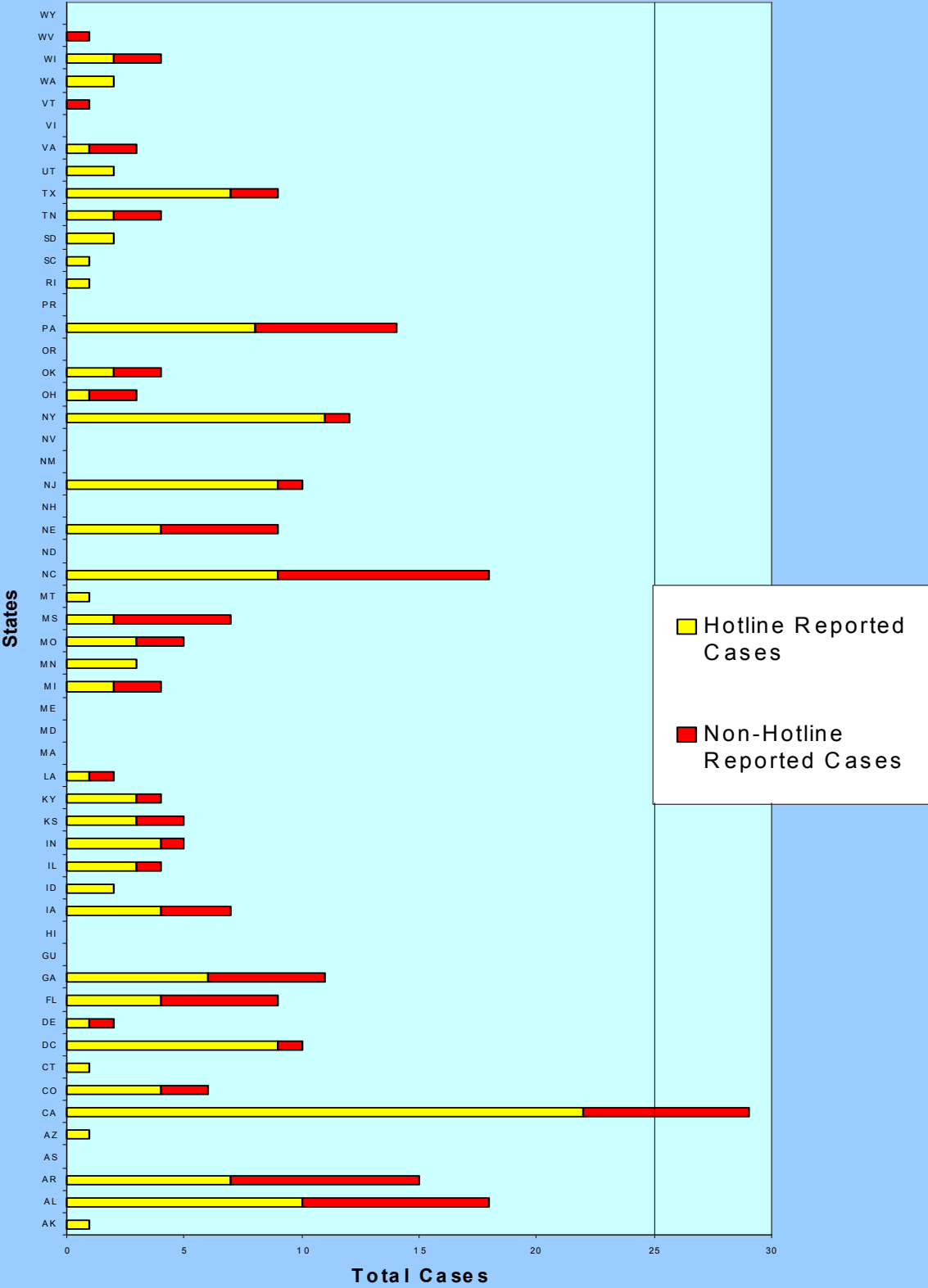
Workplace Violence Incidents Imminent/Developmental FY2001



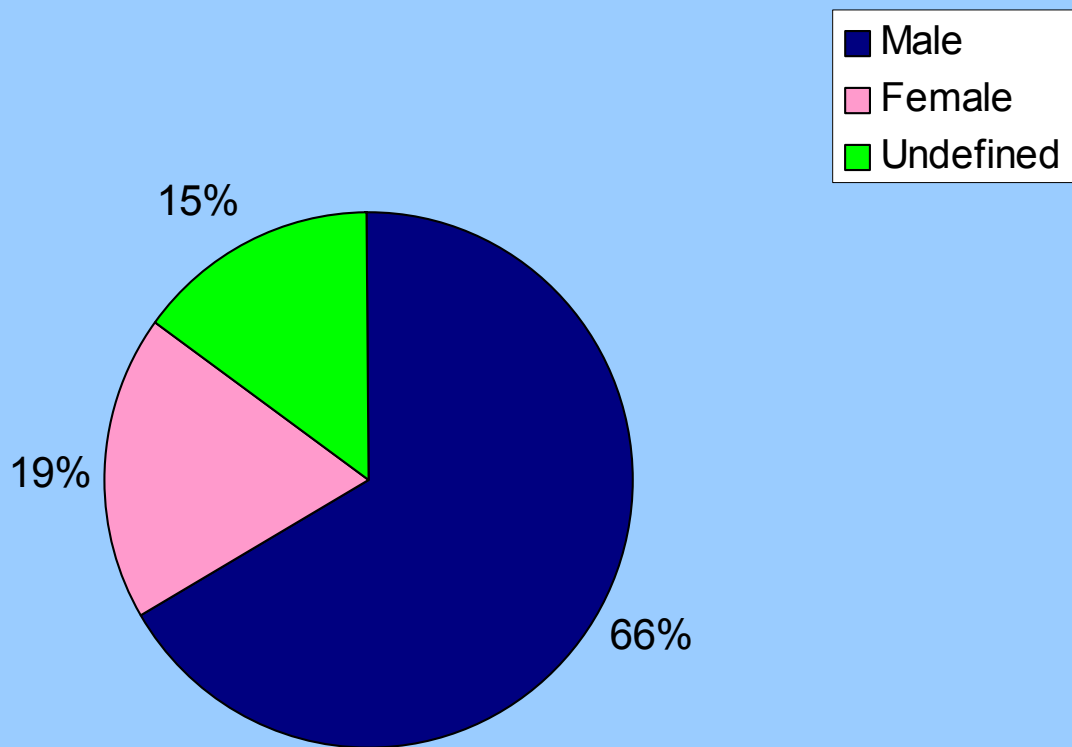
District Overall Cases FY2001



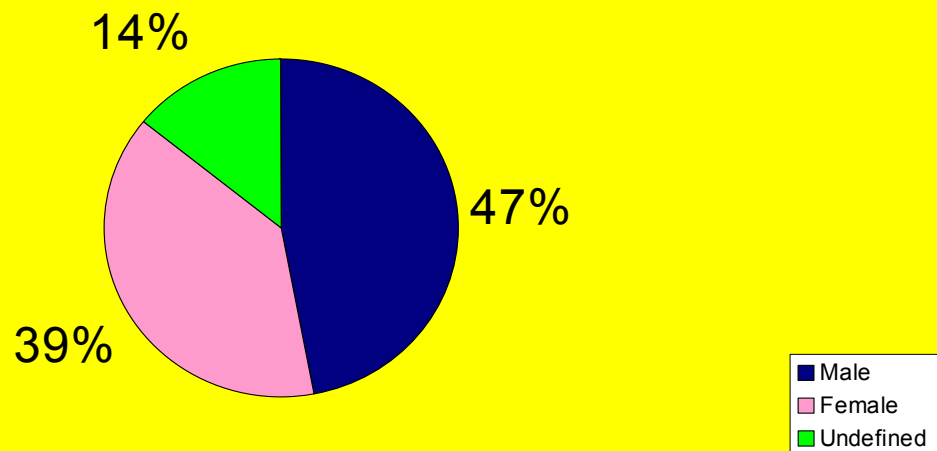
Overall Cases FY2001 by State



Workplace Violence Overall Incidents "SUBJECT" (Gender) Comparison FY2001



Workplace Violence Overall Incidents Victims (Gender) Comparison FY2001



No reference or conclusions should be made concerning the Districts showing most cases. There may be other Districts with as many cases that are not communicating with the Workplace Violence Program.

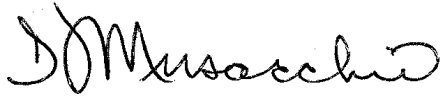
*Any questions concerning this report can be directed to
John Campbell – 202.690.1999*

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY STATEMENT

Violence or the threat of violence, by or against an FSIS employee is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. **Possession, use, or threat of use** of a deadly weapon is not permitted at work or in vehicles when used for official business. Violators are subject to serious disciplinary action and possible criminal charges.

An employee must report any act or threat of workplace violence promptly to the supervisor, manager, or other official. In an emergency, an employee reports violence directly to law enforcement officials. Management acts immediately on each complaint of workplace violence. If a manager fails to take action, an employee calls the next line supervisor or a member of the FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Assessment Team. An employee may reach the **assessment team members** on the 24-hour, toll free pager number by calling **1-888-894-6217**. Team members return pager calls as soon as possible.

Remember, it is each employee's responsibility to prevent workplace violence. We should **treat every employee fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect at all times.**



for Deputy Administrator
Office of Management

Attachment 6

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

<h1 style="margin:0;">FSIS NOTICE</h1>	13-01	3/21/01
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FIREARMS IN WORK ESTABLISHMENTS

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides guidance to address concerns on the presence of firearms in federally inspected plants and other locations where FSIS employees carry out responsibilities under the law and regulations.

II. BACKGROUND

A. FSIS employees must carry out inspection and enforcement duties in a manner that upholds high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality. Agency inspection and compliance personnel represent USDA and must make decisions in an atmosphere free of unreasonable distractions, including distractions that pose a risk to safety and personal security.

B. This notice supplements guidance on reporting incidents of assault, threats of assault, intimidation, or interference in **FSIS Directive 4735.4, Revision 1, Reporting Assault, Threats, Intimidation, or Interference**, dated October 22, 1997.

III. POLICY

It is FSIS policy to protect employees from assaults, threats of assault, intimidation, or interference relating to the performance of their official duties.

IV. LEGAL POSSESSION

A. The presence of firearms in official establishments and other locations where FSIS employees carry out their duties is not uncommon. A wide variety of Federal, State, and local laws govern the possession of firearms.

B. The mere presence of a firearm by an individual or business regulated by FSIS does not constitute an act of intimidation or interference, under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), or Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA) or Title 18 of the United States Code, Crimes and Criminal Procedures. The Agency does not have a legal basis to prohibit or restrain the possession of the firearm if:

DISTRIBUTION: All Field Employees; All Offices	NOTICE EXPIRES: April 1, 2002	OPI: LERD – Office of the Director
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1. The possession of a firearm by an individual in an FSIS inspected or regulated facility is in accordance with Federal, State or local laws and,

2. The firearm is not used in a manner to intimidate or interfere with the official duties of an FSIS employee.

C. There are situations when firearms have been in official establishments for many years with the knowledge of FSIS personnel, and their presence has not been an issue. Establishments may have firearms for security reasons or for the control or downing of animals.

D. It is possible that private businesses may impose restrictions on the possession of firearms on their premises. FSIS will encourage plants or other businesses to re-evaluate the need to keep firearms at their place of business and to assure that they are properly secured.

V. FIREARM VIOLATIONS

A. **Violation.** Under no circumstances are plant personnel allowed to bring firearms into the government office of an official establishment. Possession of firearms in any USDA laboratory or office is prohibited.

B. Agency Actions.

1. FSIS determines when the presence or use of firearms may constitute a violation of the criminal provisions of our statutes and should be referred for court action or when the threat posed meets the provisions of FSIS Directive 4735.4.

2. FSIS may make appropriate case referrals through District Enforcement Operations if indiscriminate handling or storage of firearms violates FMIA, PPIA, EPIA or Title 18.

3. Each office manager, compliance supervisor (CS), and inspector-in-charge (IIC) is to ensure that a Title 18 poster is hung on the entry way to each building and office that houses FSIS employees. The office manager, CS, or IIC calls the supply center to order the poster (order number GSADC-8911101946) and hangs it up if there is none displayed.

VI. SAFETY PROCEDURES

Exercise good judgment in determining when actions or statements constitute interference with official duties or pose a risk to safety. Supervisors and employees will be held accountable when it is found that they were aware of a potentially harmful situation and failed to take appropriate action. FSIS personnel:

A. **Must remove themselves from danger, contact local law enforcement officials immediately, and follow FSIS Directive 4735.4** if at any time there is an actual assault, threat, or other immediate danger.

B. **May refuse to engage in conversations or conduct meetings with plant personnel:**

1. When firearms are present or used inappropriately.
 2. If an employee believes that the presence of a firearm constitutes an unreasonable risk due to past instances of carelessness or questionable indiscriminate behavior.
- C. **May ask plant personnel to secure or remove any firearm if:**
1. It is displayed or presented in a manner that is threatening or intimidating.
 2. Industry employees demonstrate signs of anger or hostility towards them.
- D. **May curtail normal processes and take any of the following actions** if the presence of firearms precludes effective dialogue and resolution of issues:
1. Discontinue discussions of non-compliance issues. If appropriate, move the discussion to another location where a firearm is not present.
 2. Seek law enforcement assistance as backup.
 3. Withhold the marks of inspection if the danger is unreasonable.

VII. **DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS**

A. **Documenting Incidents.** Employees and immediate supervisors are to continue to follow the policy and procedures provided in FSIS Directive 4735.4 to document incidents of assault, threat, intimidation, or interference.

B. **Reporting Incidents.**

1. **Hostile Environment.** Careless or indiscriminate handling or storage, jokes or horseplay, or belligerent or hostile exchanges are not tolerated. Report the information to the supervisor, the District Manager or Assistant District Manager for Enforcement and with the Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator, who can be reached on the toll free, twenty four-hour pager, 888-894-6217.

2. **Other Incidents.** Report the information to the Workplace Violence Coordinator if you feel or are concerned that State or local laws have been violated. Information and the contact telephone numbers for the immediate reporting of incidents are in the Preventing Workplace Violence Brochure dated February 1999. Request immediate assistance from local law enforcement and the Office of the Inspector General.

VIII. **WITHHOLDING AND SUSPENDING INSPECTIONS**

A. FSIS may withhold the marks of inspection and suspend the assignment of inspectors when Agency employees are not able to carry out their responsibilities without fear or intimidation because of the actions by plant personnel. These actions must be coordinated through the district manager.

Food Safety and Inspection Service Third Annual Report on Workplace Violence Prevention

B. These actions are not designed to punish wrongdoers, but to protect employees. Withholdings or suspensions are lifted when FSIS determines that plants have taken steps that assure the safety of FSIS employees and unimpeded application of critical food safety judgments.

IX. CRIMINAL PENALTIES

A. The FMIA, PPIA, and EPIA each provide criminal penalties for violations.

B. Assault or threats to government officials may also violate the provisions of Title 18 of the United States Criminal Code. Criminal penalties are imposed through the United States District courts.

X. PREVENTION TASKFORCE

FSIS has established a task force on Prevention of Workplace Violence to recommend ways to improve the Agency's efforts to address incidents of assault, intimidation, and interference with FSIS personnel. It is expected that the task force will recommend culture and operational changes, which will be introduced to both government personnel and individuals and businesses covered by the Federal meat, poultry and egg products laws.



Deputy Administrator
Office of Management



August 30, 2001

TO: District Managers
All Field Supervisors

FROM: John Campbell
Workplace Violence Prevention Coordinator

Through: Dr. Mark Mina
Deputy Administrator, Field Operations

SUBJECT: Workplace Violence Prevention Emphasis

This letter is to remind supervisors of their responsibility to effectively address incidents involving assault, threats, intimidation, or interference against inspection personnel. Supervisors must ensure that all provisions of FSIS Directives 4735.4 and 4735.7 are effectively conveyed to plant management and inspection personnel. In addition, supervisors shall be held accountable for the effective administration of these directives in an overall effort to prevent workplace violence.

Incidents that clearly present inspection personnel to an imminent danger threat, or situations where employees are assaulted, shall be addressed immediately. Actions to mitigate the situation should include withholding of inspection/removal of FSIS personnel from the hostile site, notification to the local law enforcement authorities, and actions as prescribed by FSIS Directive 4735.4.

Incidents that are of a level lower than imminent danger shall be documented on FSIS form 4735-4, and procedures followed as designated. Where it is found that a plant manager/employee has assaulted, threatened, intimidated and/or interfered with an FSIS employee, plant management must implement corrective actions and preventive measures to ensure that incidents are not repeated. Actions to decisively end incidents of threats, intimidation, or interference against inspection personnel may include withholding inspection by removing inspection personnel until a meaningful preventive measure is presented to effectively address the recurring issue.

Professionalism is a two way street. In no case shall FSIS tolerate Agency personnel engaging in hostile acts, which threaten the safety and well being of plant or program personnel. Complete investigation of alleged incidents will include due process and respect of personal rights. FSIS employees who are found to have threatened, struck, harassed, intimidated, retaliated against, or otherwise caused duress through hostility shall be dealt with in an effective manner that ensures an end to such activities.

Administrative actions in response to incidents involving FSIS employees engaging in these types of activity may result in disciplinary actions, which could include dismissal.

There should be no misunderstanding the seriousness of preventing workplace violence. All FSIS and industry management personnel are expected to put workplace safety and treating people with respect at the highest priority. Immediate action is required by all FSIS supervisors to take the necessary steps to accomplish this.

Food Safety and Inspection Service Third Annual Report on Workplace Violence Prevention

The Workplace Violence Prevention Program has four specialists with designated areas of responsibility to help provide assistance to you when needed. They are as follows:

John Campbell, call anytime day or night on the 24 hour pager 888-894-6217

Daytime phone numbers, 202-690-1999, cell phone 202-421-5135, and fax number 202-690-1666

E-mail, John.Campbell@USDA.GOV

Areas of responsibility by Districts: Albany; Philadelphia; Minneapolis; Madison; and Salem

Deborah Linder,

Daytime phone numbers, 202-690-4038, cell phone 202-489-9660, fax number 202-690-3938

E-mail, Deborah.Linder@USDA.GOV

Areas of responsibility by Districts: Pickerington; Greenbelt; and Chicago

Eileen Foresman,

Daytime phone numbers, 404-562-5916, cell phone 404-964-2311, and fax number 404-562-5930

E-mail, Eileen.Foresman@USDA.GOV

Areas of responsibility by Districts: Alameda; Boulder; Des Moines; Lawrence; and Atlanta

Alvin Sewell,

Daytime phone numbers, 850-942-8370, cell phone 850-321-5295, fax number 850-942-8371

E-mail, Alvin.Sewell@USDA.GOV

Areas of responsibility by District: Jackson; Raleigh; Springdale; and Dallas

Thank you in advance for your immediate support for this very important initiative.



Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-3700

Text of Letter to Constituent Groups: Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program

July 19, 2001
Constituent Groups and Contacts of
United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Dear Constituent:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) developed a Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program three years ago and has taken a very aggressive approach in training its employees. This training includes identifying the warning signs of potential workplace violence, what to do once these signs are recognized, and what programs are available to provide assistance and guidance in resolving workplace violence issues.

The Department's Workplace Violence Prevention policy clearly states that it is the employee's responsibility to help prevent workplace violence by treating everyone with dignity and respect. Departmental policy also emphasizes that employees who fail to treat others with respect and/or supervisors who fail to act on warning signs that they are aware of, will be held accountable. The FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Program exists to carry out USDA's policy of prohibiting acts or threats of violence against persons or property in the USDA workplace. This policy applies to violent threats or acts, whether committed by USDA employees or by the individual outside of USDA.

Workplace violence is a national concern and requires everyone working together in an effort to ensure a safe and professional work environment. In this regard, I believe it is imperative that Industry and the Agency work together in this very important undertaking as a national concern.

In an effort to facilitate the liaison with Industry, John Campbell, FSIS Workplace Violence Prevention Coordinator, is available to meet with interested parties to identify how FSIS can work simultaneously and help each other in the prevention process. A training program, similar to that given to FSIS employees, is also available for your organization, and be customized to meet your specific needs. If you are interested in having Mr. Campbell meet with you and your organization, please have a member of your staff contact him at (202) 690-1999. Mr. Campbell may also be contacted via e-mail message at John.Campbell@USDA.GOV.

Thank you for your interest and support in preventing workplace violence.

Sincerely,
/s/ Ronald F. Hicks
Deputy Administrator
Office of Management