

# Recent US Tragedies Illustrate Two Workplace Violence Threats



Violence can erupt in a workplace for various reasons. A pair of recent tragedies in the US illustrate two types of workplace violence threats.

**Disgruntled former employee.** If an employee believes he's been unfairly fired or otherwise disciplined, or that he's not being treated properly in the workplace, he may lash out violently, going after the people he blames for his mistreatment (such as supervisors and members of senior management).

On April 8, 2017, a trainer was fired from an Equinox gym in Miami, FL after a workplace altercation. He was escorted from the premises. But he soon returned to the gym with a handgun and shot his two supervisors before shooting himself. All three died.

**Estranged spouse.** When a couple has become estranged, one party—usually the male—may attack the other in her workplace, especially if there's a history of domestic violence in the relationship. And too often innocent co-workers or others get caught in the crossfire.

On April 10, 2017, a teacher's estranged husband entered the elementary school where she worked in San Bernadino, CA. He went to the front office, telling them he needed to drop something off with his wife. There was no indication he was armed at the time.

He went to his wife's classroom and opened fire on her. He then killed himself. The wife died as did an eight-year-old student who was standing near her at the time. A nine-year-old student was injured and is in the hospital.

For more on workplace violence and its various forms, see these OHS Insider resources:

- Warning signs of workplace violence
- Train workers on how to respond to an active shooter
- 5 strategies for addressing domestic violence in the workplace
- Checklist for a workplace domestic violence program
- 11 dos & don'ts for dealing with a workplace violence incident
- How to establish an effective threat assessment team.

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