



Workplace Risks: Mitigating Threats to Your Office & Employees

Persistent, tragic shootings – often committed by disgruntled current and/or former employees – have illustrated the importance of sensitive, diligent workplace security. As the current economic downturn continues to force layoffs, angered former employees are more likely to disrupt your working environment – sometimes through planned or unplanned acts of violence, threats against offices or employees, or theft of trade secrets and other IP risks.

Polaris recommends that your team plan ahead, including the possibility for adverse outcomes, to mitigate the risks posed to your team, your productivity, and for your peace of mind. To help Clients navigate the sensitive risks of layoffs, Polaris composed this overview of relevant strategies.

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52%

of surveyed tech employees reported that they suffer from anxiety or depression – 5x the average rate in the UK. 66% experienced work-related stress. (BIMA)

TECH-SPECIFIC STRESSORS

The technology sector faces unique security challenges; employees in the field encounter especially difficult working conditions, and are often stressed and strained by long hours and tight schedules. These psychological stressors are only exacerbated by tech's turbulent job market, as employees increasingly fear the loss of their jobs, compounding risks.

20%

higher criminal charge rates were reported among workers recently removed from their jobs, suggesting a correlation between job loss and crime. (Labour Economics)

THREATS POSED BY EX-EMPLOYEES

Unstable job markets create unsecure job sites. Fired employees pose pronounced risks of criminal activity, according to academic studies – including violent threats, and threats to your brand or intellectual property. To ensure the safety of your offices and employees, requisite security measures should be taken during terminations, including access changes and exit interviews.

55%

of employees are unaware of whether their workplace has violence prevention plans. 30% do not feel prepared for a potential incident. (National Safety Council)

ENSURE OFFICE PREPAREDNESS

Security plans are useless if employees are not aware of them. Whether facing external threats from bad actors or ex-employees, or internal threats from disgruntled workers within your ranks, concrete security planning is essential to the safety of your workforce. All corporate offices should have plans in place to tackle active shooters, workplace violence, and more, with employees being regularly trained and prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PHYSICAL SECURITY PRESENCE

When firing employees onsite, be sure to keep a physical security team on call. Onsite guards are essential – especially when an in-person employee is let go.

TIMING OF TERMINATIONS

Access control measures must be changed immediately following or alongside layoffs. Too often, disgruntled employees have continued access to their old offices and data, which puts personnel and IP at risk.

POST-LAYOFF SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

Following significant layoffs, employers should consider social media monitoring to track the sentiment and mindset of terminated employees. This measure can proactively identify potential risks.